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An Englishman and a Servant of the Publick

MAJOR-GENERAL THOMAS GAGE,
1763-1775

Andrew David Struan



UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

*Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of
the University of Glasgow for the award of the
degree of Master of Philosophy by Research*

September 2006

The Department of History
The Faculty of Arts

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ABSTRACT

ANDREW DAVID STRUAN

DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY BY RESEARCH

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of Major-General Thomas Gage during his time as Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces in North America from 1763 to 1775. Using Gage's official and private correspondence to the Secretaries of State, the thesis examines Gage's management of Native American and foreign affairs; his position and influence during the Anglo-American Crises of the 1760s and 70s; his political role and influence upon imperial policy of the time; and, lastly, his conduct while Governor of Massachusetts during the descent to open warfare between Britain and the American Colonies.

The main focus of this study is to examine the impact Gage – as the highest military appointee and, arguably, the central political figure in the colonies – had on the American Revolution. By examining the information, opinions and ideas Gage transmitted to officials in London, the work aims to discover exactly how Gage shaped official British thinking towards the Americas. Furthermore, the work will also study Gage's other impact on the management of the Indian populations and the Spanish and French settlers and colonies in the Americas.

This thesis builds on the works of Clarence E. Carter and John R. Alden who, in the 1930s and 40s, published a collection of Gage's correspondence and the only full biography of Gage respectively. It will examine Alden's conclusions to decide whether, over fifty years later, our opinions of Major-General Thomas Gage need to be re-evaluated.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library, London
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent
OxfordDNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office, Lewes, Sussex
Gage Corr.	Carter, Clarence E., <i>The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State</i> (New Haven: two vols, Yale University Press, 1933).
NA	National Archives, Kew, London

INTRODUCTION

In 1948, John Richard Alden published the first major biography of Thomas Gage after the discovery of large collections of Gage's official correspondence in the early part of the twentieth century.¹ Alden's book built on the work of Clarence E. Carter who, in 1931 and 1933, published a collection of Gage's letters in two volumes covering Gage's tenure as Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces in North America from 1763 to 1775.² Alden's study formed the basis of what has since become an historical consensus on Thomas Gage's role in the growth of American Revolutionary sentiment: Gage was seen as a capable – but not exceptional – military commander who, with limited political and military power to support him, tried his best to control the rebellious American colonists. In addition, John Shy published in 1978 an essay covering the correspondence between Gage and his friend, the Secretary at War from 1765 to 1778, Viscount Barrington.³ Further, Shy published Gage's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in 2004, in which he suggests that Gage was not the correct choice to head the British army in North America, calling him a 'good soldier but no warrior'.⁴ Since Alden's work was published, however, there have been many significant advances in our understanding of the imperial crisis between the American colonies and the metropolitan British centre of the Empire, and also in our conceptions of the idea of 'Britishness' and the rise in British nationalism in the eighteenth-century.

¹ J. Alden, *General Gage in America, Being Principally a History of his Role in the American Revolution* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948).

² C. Carter, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State* (New Haven: two vols, Yale University Press, 1933).

³ J. Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion: Private Correspondence of Lord Barrington with General Gage, 1765-1775' in *Sources of American Independence: Selected Manuscripts from the Collections of the William L. Clements Library*, Howard H. Peckham, ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

⁴ J. Shy, 'Gage, Thomas (1719/20-1787)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10275>, accessed 12 April 2006].

It is in this context of shifting reflections on the relationship between the Americans, the British and the idea of Empire that Gage's role in the administration of the colonies must be reconsidered and re-evaluated. The purpose of this thesis is to revisit Gage's correspondence with the principal Secretaries of State from 1763 to 1775 to establish what impact he had on the descent to war. The major focus will be on re-assessing Gage's role in the clash between Britain and the American colonies to establish his position in the narrative of events and to provide a better understanding of the nature of the Anglo-American conflict.

This thesis is divided into five chapters covering Gage's role in the Americas. The first chapter, which is split into two sections, will cover Gage's relationship with, and management of, Indian affairs and foreign relations. Considering issues from the Pontiac Rebellion in 1763 and the management of French and Spanish subjects into the newly acquired territories to the Falkland Island Crisis with Spain in the early 1770s, this chapter will examine Gage's role in pivotal crises and situations not directly involving British subjects. The second chapter will scrutinise Gage's role during the Anglo-American crises of the 1760s; this chapter will concentrate, in two sections, on the Stamp Act Crisis of 1765-66, and on the Townshend Duties Crisis (and its aftermath in 1768-69). The third chapter will examine the challenges to Gage's authority from British officials in America. The fourth chapter is the major focus of this work and will, in the first section, look at Gage's relationship with the Secretaries of State and his political role; and, in the second section, examine the private correspondence between Gage and the Secretary at War from 1765, Viscount Barrington. The fifth and final chapter will cover Gage's role after the Boston Tea Party. Gage returned to America in 1774 with extensive powers as the Governor of Massachusetts and was given the task of enforcing the Coercive Acts passed in that

same year by the North Ministry. This final chapter will thus discuss Gage as a political governor and a military commander by looking at his political and military actions in and around Boston; his perception of events outside Boston and Massachusetts; and his reports to officials in Britain.

Unfortunately for the British historian, much of Gage's original correspondence is now to be found in the William Clements Library in the midwestern United States. However, Carter's editions cover the breadth of the Gage correspondence with British officialdom and provide an easily-available source for all historians - these editions will therefore be used throughout this thesis to provide easy continuity and accessibility for future scholarship in this area.⁵ Although Carter's editions omit the correspondence between Gage and American officials (for example, the colonial governors, Indian Superintendents and various subordinate officers), this thesis' focus on Gage's relations with British politicians and the impact he had on their decision-making means any such omissions do not affect the requirements of the present work.⁶ And finally, any meaningful consideration of a single individual will inevitably be accompanied by issues of generalisation and narrow insight; these, in my view, do not in any way diminish the need to re-study Gage and his correspondence in order to provide new reflections upon eighteenth century politics.

Archival sources have also been employed throughout this thesis; the National Archives at Kew, the British Library, the Centre for Kentish Studies and the East Sussex Record Office all hold invaluable sources relating to Gage. The National

⁵ Having checked several of the published letters against originals in British archives I, like prior historians, have come to the conclusion that Carter's work is a reliable and accurate source for scholarly research into Gage and his correspondents.

⁶ Davies edition of the *Documents of the American Revolution* has not been used in this piece to allow for a single reference-point for Gage's documents. As Carter's editions cover the entire scope of Gage's military command, all reference (where appropriate) will be made to these editions. For alternatives, see K. Davies (ed.), *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783* (Shannon: twenty-one vols, Irish University Press, 1972-1981).

Archives hold much official material relevant to Gage and also provide information on the position and estimation of Gage's abilities and character from British contemporaries. The British Library holds a large collection of documents on the Stamp Act Crisis – including some of Gage's correspondence with colonial governors and assemblies – as well as certain of the papers of Viscount Barrington. The Centre for Kentish Studies holds many of the Amherst papers and, as a result, contains information on Gage's relationship with his predecessor and friend. Finally, the East Sussex Record Office – being only a few miles from the Gage family home at Firle – holds personal and family papers (including Gage's last will and testament).

Historiography of the Imperial Crisis

Until the start of the twentieth century, the generally-accepted reason for the American Revolution was that of the outrage at the oppression of natural liberties by the tyrannical kingship of George III. The Revolution, as stated by such historians as George Bancroft, George Otto Trevelyan, and W.E.H. Lecky, was an attempt by Americans to remove the threat to liberty by the would-be Autocrat, George III. Moving away from such simplistic analyses, Carl L. Becker famously championed the 'Progressive Interpretation', which portrayed the Revolution as an internal class struggle and conflict. According to Becker, the fight with Britain was not about sovereignty but was rather an attempt by the unprivileged to ensure both suffrage and fairness in America. This 'Progressive Interpretation' held sway until 1945, when Robert E. Brown and B. Katherine Brown presented the view that, with the considerable franchise for the assemblies in the colonies, the fight was about defending democracy, rather than attaining it.

The argument over democracy, and the fight for it, has in recent decades become seemingly irrelevant. More recent studies have shown that, rather than a class struggle, American politics of the time were a series of internal struggles for power between different factions. The Revolution, as a result, was merely the accumulation of advantage by the faction that most ardently opposed British policy and control. Although such a view expresses how the revolution came about in the end, it fails to address why subjects in the colonies held such views. The American colonists created in America a 'New England' of liberty and freedom and viewed British politicians and the appointees of those politicians in the Americas – as tyrannical overlords trying to impose an outdated and illiberal system on a people who, by God's will, should be free. The currently-accepted belief is that there was a clash over sovereignty between the American colonists and the British politicians; while British politicians viewed their actions to be constitutional and measured, the patriot American colonists and their friends in Britain saw any attempts to 'regulate' or 'control' the colonies as an attack on liberty and freedom.⁷

In the past few decades, there have been some significant analyses of the nature of the British army in North America and of the study of Britain and British America in general. These works have significantly enhanced our understanding of the complex nature of the Anglo-American world which Gage inhabited, and some discussion on the major conclusions and thoughts in current the historiography of this field must also now be considered. In their works, historians such as Sylvia Frey, Fred

⁷ G. Bancroft, *History of the United State: From the Discovery of the Continent* (Safety Harbour: ten vols, Simon Publications, 1879); G. Trevelyan, *The American Revolution* (London: Longmans, 1899); W. Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: eight vols, Longmans, 1878-90); C. Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1766* (Maidson: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960); R. Brown and B. Brown, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955). These interpretations are summarised in P. Thomas, *Revolution in America: Britain and the Colonies, 1763-1776* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992).

Anderson and Stephen Brumwell have analysed the nature of the British army in North America during, and just after, the Seven Years War.⁸ Anderson suggests that the army in North America was 'a blunt instrument at best, but nonetheless one capable of striking sparks wherever it touched' and caused the colonies to become more 'combustible', while Brumwell argues, in a similar vein, that the 'imperial task' undertaken by the Redcoats was a causal factor in the split of the Anglo-American Empire.⁹ Brumwell also discusses the poor reputation of the British army in North America before, during and after the Seven Years War and of the lasting disagreements between the army and American colonists – a disagreement still found in the minds of some Americans, despite the contrary work of what Brumwell calls 'respected scholars' trying to prove otherwise.¹⁰

Similarly, Frey argued that the military was so inherently different from civilian society as to be almost incomparable: men who enlisted were 'forced to radically alter many of the values by which they had lived' and were required to 'accept other kinds of constraints imposed by the military organisation and discipline'.¹¹ Such pessimistic views of the North American army are, however, not the entire story: the soldiers posted throughout the Americas were, as Brumwell argues, 'an highly innovative and flexible military force' which offered a 'prototype for the reformed British forces destined to confront and defeat Napoleon's veterans from 1801'. In addition, Brumwell states, the army provided a sounding-board for the idea of an all-embracing 'Britishness' to be established, which would be formed in the wildernesses, villages

⁸ S. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); F. Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2000); S. Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, p. 733; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 3 and p. 309.

¹⁰ Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 3.

¹¹ Frey, *British Soldier in America*, p. 133.

and towns of America.¹² With these understandings of how the army in North America was functioning during and immediately after the Seven Years War, we must now focus our attention on the other important aspects of current historical thinking which must influence any work on Gage.

In this vein, historians have for the past fifteen years, been analysing the idea of the growth of the 'fiscal-military' state in Britain and the growth of a British sense of nationalism - based in the metropolitan centre of England, but also influenced by the Celtic regions of the British Isles. The archetypal 'fiscal-military' analysis can be found in John Brewer's *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* which is based around a growing awareness of the importance of the fiscal efficiency which provided an effective civil service, a powerful navy and a relatively large army.¹³ In addition to this, however, historians such as Linda Colley, Eliga Gould, David Armitage and T.H. Breen have recently been looking at the idea of Britishness and how it applies to the British Isles (that is, including Scotland and Ireland) as well as the First British Empire in North America.¹⁴ In moving away from the rather cynical view of politics as a power-struggle amongst country gentlemen espoused by Namier, these historians see in Hanoverian Britain a dynamic, modernising and highly commercial world with a 'shifting relationship between an expansive metropolitan state and a loosely integrated group of American colonies'.¹⁵

¹² Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 310.

¹³ J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

¹⁴ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 1992); E. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); E. Gould 'A Virtual Nation: Greater Britain and the Imperial Legacy of the American Revolution', *American Historical Review*, CIV, No. 2 (April 1999), pp. 476-89; D. Armitage, 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?', *American Historical Review*, CIV, No. 2 (April 1999), pp. 427-45; T.H. Breen 'Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions *Once More* in Need of Revising', *The Journal of American History*, LXXXIV, No. 1 (June, 1997), pp. 13-39.

¹⁵ Breen, 'Ideology and Nationalism', p. 14.

The American Revolution, Gould points out, saw the splitting of a largely hegemonic metropolitan Anglophone society and nation in the Atlantic Empire into two distinct units connected by culture, commerce and language, but no longer the same *nation*.¹⁶ Armitage argues similarly that new analyses of 'Greater Britain' must include comparative histories of 'Atlantic America' and 'Atlantic Europe' and show the links between Britons, Americans and Europeans wherever in the world they may be, while avoiding the 'lingering taint of anti-Europeanism' in studies of British history.¹⁷ It is with these new understandings of the eighteenth century that we must try to re-assess Gage's position and actions.

An Englishman and a Servant of the Publick?

Having established the basis of current historical thinking on the Revolutionary period concerning the North American army and the ideas of Britishness, our attention can now turn to exactly how Gage fits in with the conclusions of these works. That is to say, to what extent can Gage be found to be supporting the idea – through his actions and thoughts – of a fiscal-military state, the idea of growing British nationalism, and the relationship, and 'conflict', between the military and civil branches of government? To that end, we must analyse the works of several other historians to determine their view on Gage's role in these aspects. In addition, the conclusion will have some discussion on this work's views on Gage's engagement with these themes.

In his book, *In a Defiant Stance: The Conditions of Law in Massachusetts Bay, The Irish Comparison and the Coming of the American Revolution*, John Reid discusses the more abstract connotations of law and legality surrounding the American

¹⁶ Gould, *Persistence of Empire*, p. 210.

¹⁷ Armitage, 'Greater Britain', p. 444.

Revolution, and how it impacted on the progression from intangible claims of legal power and constitutionalism to outright rebellion and revolution.¹⁸ In Reid's view of the Revolution, the royal governors and army were not supported by the laws they struggled to uphold – rather, the law was 'more often than not, on the Whig's side' and was used to brow-beat and coerce government officials into accepting the limits of their power and being less 'zealous to their duty'.¹⁹ In addition, Reid points out that 'when General Gage and his colleagues complained about the common law' they were to discover that 'they had been left in America after the defeat of France in 1763 to support the law, [but] were to learn that the law did not support them'.²⁰ Gage was indeed to discover that his position at certain times was almost impossible due to the lack of supporting laws; in the tumults of the 1760s, Gage's position was consistently made almost untenable by the limits on his powers and the lack of support from the civilian authorities (in particular, the various colonial assemblies) who would have been able to give him the legal support needed to quash any rebellions.

In addition to this argument, Brumwell establishes the basis on which the North American army functioned: the army was different from any in the Old World in that it was far more flexible and able to be used in many different 'irregular' tasks and conditions, unknown to armies in Britain and Europe. In addition, the army under Gage's command was far more diverse than most European armies: Britons marched side-by-side with Americans (natives or 'American stock') and with recent immigrants from continental Europe. Moreover, the army in North America also used – for the first time – a large number of Scottish Highlanders which, Brumwell argues,

¹⁸ J. Reid, *In a Defiant Stance: The Conditions of Law in Massachusetts Bay, the Irish Comparison, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

made 'an important contribution towards the formation of a 'British' national identity'.²¹ These new challenges presented to the commanders of the army in North America were certainly present during Gage's command as he struggled to cope with colonial, British, and Native American politics; with issues of trade between British North America and the Bourbon colonies and Indian posts; and, most importantly, with uprisings and rebellions in the established colonies. All of these aspects forced Gage to move outside the 'usual' scope of his military command and become involved in what would, arguably, be civilian matters.

The confusion over the lines between military and civilian powers led, naturally, to disagreements between Gage and the various governors and civilian authorities. After the events of the Boston Massacre, Gage's authority was directly challenged by the acting Governor of Massachusetts. Thomas Hutchinson ordered Gage's commander in Boston, Lieutenant-Colonel William Dalrymple, to remove to Boston without any authorisation from Gage -- an act which Gage 'vainly tried to halt'.²² This point was raised in Parliament by Thomas Pownall, who questioned the demarcation of military and civil powers in the colonies and, with the help of Edmund Burke, attacked the North Ministry (and, in particular, Lord Hillsborough) for allowing the situation to get so out of hand.²³

Such use of troops had come after many years of rejection of support from the military by the civilian governors and colonial assemblies. Francis Bernard, the governor of Massachusetts Bay, feared in 1765, for example, that if he were to invite Gage's troops into Boston to quell any riots or rebellions, that Gage would act

²¹ Brumwell, *Redcoats*, pp. 5-7.

²² C. Nicolson, *The 'Infamous Governor': Francis Bernard and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), p. 207.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

unilaterally and without any reference to the civil authorities. Gage's actions at all other points, however, seems to suggest that this would not be the case -- Gage was consistently aware of the limits of his powers and unwilling to act without express consent, a trait which would ultimately lead to his recall for cowardice and lack of backbone in 1775. Likewise, as the problems in Boston increased during the 1770s, Gage can again be found in disagreement with the colonial governors on the very nature of the Revolutionary sentiments: Hutchinson believed the troubles to be caused by a select few 'ruthless demagogues deluding and inflaming an otherwise well-disposed but inert population' while Gage, as shall be seen, saw the crisis in much more catastrophic terms of a generally popular revolutionary sentiment which would require literally thousands of troops to control.²⁴

Moreover, Gage's position by this time was being questioned by the government in Britain; the suggestion that the Americans were in widespread rebellion was counter to the beliefs of most members of the North Ministry and, as a result, they were unwilling to accept Gage's reports as valid. Bailyn argues that as Hutchinson's and Gage's perceptions of the constitutional arrangement of the colonies as subordinate to the King-in-Parliament, they were unable -- or unwilling -- to accept the changes to the constitutional arrangements the Americans were proposing.

This 'latent toryism' as Reid puts it was undoubtedly a contributing factor to Gage's position on the American crises: Gage remained a child of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and of the constitutional settlement therein (of the undisputed sovereignty of the Parliament at Westminster) and any hints of failure in this matchless constitution would have been an anathema to him. Bailyn also states that the dispatches Gage

²⁴ B. Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 302.

sent, documenting the nature of the rebellion, were 'completely at variance with the official expectation' and that 'they brought Gage's credibility into question almost immediately'.²⁵ There were numerous other examples of arguments and disagreements between Gage and various civil authorities, and the issue of social, legal and constitutional precedent was one that bothered Gage throughout his command. Ultimately, it was the embarrassment of the British army stuck in Boston that led to his removal – however, disagreements with the established view of the civilian Ministry in Britain made his removal that bit easier.

As has already been mentioned, Gage was a child of the Revolutionary Settlement of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century. Gage's upbringing instilled in him a sense of national service and pride: he was amongst the first generation of true converts to Anglicism amongst his family and his attendance at Westminster Public School provided a good English and Protestant education, which Gage seems never to have forgotten. In addition, Gage's father and elder brother were both involved in the politics of Georgian Britain, and were increasingly involved in the affairs of state and of politics, due to their continued abandonment of their family's formerly 'Popish' ways. This shift in Gage's family affiliations – away from the European Catholicism and towards English Protestantism – was further enhanced by his enlistment in the army. Here, as many historians have point out, the nature and character of 'Britishness' was hammered into existence; Gage's role in Flanders, the Highlands of Scotland and Canada as part of a British force fighting enemies of Britain under the flag of a truly British monarch (for George III revelled in 'the glory of the name *Briton*') will have further enhanced Gage's attachment to Hanoverian Britain.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Westminster, Culloden and Canada

Born in 1719 (or early 1720) at Highmeadow, Gloucestershire, the young Tom Gage was the second of three children of Viscount Gage and his wife, Benedicta Maria Theresa Hall. The previous generations of Gage's family had converted from Roman Catholicism as recently as 1715. This meant it was possible to send the eight-year-old Tom and his elder brother, William, to Westminster public school. Leaving in 1736, after eight years, Gage probably formed many important friendships during his school years; Augustus Keppel (later Admiral Keppel), George Keppel (later the Earl of Albemarle) and Welbore Ellis (later the Secretary at War), for example, all attended Westminster School while Gage was there.²⁶ Gage acquired a mastery of Latin at Westminster, and he showed a working knowledge of French later in his life;²⁷ he was a reasonably intelligent man with a fondness for education, although it is unlikely that he went to University himself.²⁸

By 1740, Gage had enlisted in the army as an ensign and, in January 1741, he bought his commission – through the influence of his elder brother's friend, the Duke of Newcastle – as a lieutenant under Colonel Chomondeley. By May 1742, Gage was a captain-lieutenant in an Irish corps, and was made captain by the beginning of 1743. In 1744, Gage was sent as an aide-de-camp to the Duke of Albemarle (the father of his school-time friend, Augustus Keppel) with the British troops sent to Flanders. In 1745, Gage was in Scotland fighting Bonnie Prince Charlie, again as Albemarle's aide-de-camp, where he took part in the battle on Culloden Moor. In 1748, Gage transferred to the fifty-fifth (renumbered soon afterwards to the forty-fourth)

²⁶ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 12.

²⁷ Some of Gage's correspondence with his informers in Boston is written in French.

²⁸ All four of Gage's sons were sent to Westminster Public School and his eldest son went to the University of Göttingen and to Berlin to study the sciences and arts. Alden, however, could find no record of Gage having matriculated at any British University. Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 13.

regiment, stationed in Ireland, and became a major. Promoted to lieutenant-colonel in March 1751, Gage remained with the forty-fourth for almost ten years and it was with this regiment that he sailed to the Americas in 1754.²⁹

Before leaving for the Americas, Gage tried to enter the House of Commons. As was common in the eighteenth century, Gage would have been able to boost and better his military career through having a seat in Parliament. Gage, along with his father, stood for election (and re-election in Viscount Gage's case) in Tewkesbury. Viscount Gage had been the representative of the borough for over three decades; the 1754 general election, however, was to deny both men a seat in Parliament. The roads in the borough were in very poor condition and it was feared by the wealthy inhabitants that they would have to pay for the repairs. As a result, it was decided that the successful candidates must pay £1,500 each towards the repair of the roads. Viscount Gage refused the proposal, but offered to give £200 per year (whether he was elected or not) so long as the original plan was dropped. The people of Tewkesbury, however, refused this idea and two rich London merchants, John Martin and Nicholson Calvert, were returned for the borough.³⁰ The Gages protested against the result in November 1754, but when Viscount Gage died in the last weeks of 1754, Thomas Gage decided to drop the petition and give up any ambitions to enter the Commons. Gage's regiment was ordered from Cork in the autumn of 1754 to counter the French advance into the Ohio River valley and Gage was not to return to the United Kingdom for over eighteen years.³¹

²⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, pp. 13-15.

³⁰ Nicholson Calvert received 252 votes; John Martin received 246; Viscount Gage received 117; and Thomas Gage received 94. L. Namier and J. Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The Houses of Commons, 1754-1790* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), I, 292; L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982).

³¹ Alden, *Gage in America*, pp. 15-17; Shy, *Thomas Gage*, OxfordDNB.

When Gage reached Albany in the autumn of 1755, William Shirley, an American from New England, held the position of Commander-in-Chief. Shirley was unpopular with most: British officials and soldiers disliked him for being American and brash while the Americans at his headquarters – in New York – disliked him for being from New England. A plot was thus hatched to remove him from his office and to have him replaced by a British commander; Gage was involved in this plan, but to what degree is uncertain. During this time Gage sent a letter to his schoolmate, the Earl of Albemarle via John Pownall (an influential agent of the Board of Trade whose brother would later prove rather irksome to Gage). In this letter, Gage insisted that the war against France must be carried out under the direction of Britain and must not, under any circumstance, be controlled by the American colonists. Furthermore, Gage insisted that the command of the armed forces must not be under the control of an American as he considered them inefficient, vengeful, and argumentative. As a result, the financial basis for the war must not, Gage insisted, rely on American support. While Gage thought Americans should bear some of the burden of the cost of the war, he thought that Britain should organise any financial aspects and place the money collected into a single fund under the control of the Commander-in-Chief. Before taking on the role of Commander-in-Chief himself, Gage was showing his opinions to be conservative and distinctly pro-British; there was no doubt in his mind that the King in Parliament was the sovereign body of the entire empire.³²

Gage's military career during the Seven Years War was unimpressive. He led the advance guard of General Edward Braddock's force when it was almost wiped out in July 1755 by a combined French and Indian assault and, at Ticonderoga in July 1758, when the British, who were superior-in-numbers, failed to take the French garrison

³² Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 34.

under Louis-Joseph de Montcalm, Gage was second in command after the death of Lord Howe.³³ John Shy also suggests that there is evidence that Jeffrey Amherst found Gage lacking in aggression in 1759, but provides no references to support the argument.³⁴ Either way, the war ended before Gage had the chance to distinguish himself, or the reverse, in battle. While he proved to be a mediocre warrior, his real success lay in his ability to administrate the American army over the coming twenty years – at least until the outbreak of hostilities between the colonies and Britain.

When the French surrendered in Canada during September 1760, the British promised to transport French troops in the colony to France, to guarantee the property of the inhabitants and, importantly, to respect the religion of the conquered peoples. In all other aspects of governance, however, Britain had freedom of discretion. As a result, Jeffrey Amherst – the then Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces – quickly decided to split the territory into three military districts. James Murray (who would later cause Gage troubles) was the commander of Quebec, Ralph Burton was to control the Three Rivers region and Gage was given charge of Montreal and the surrounding areas.

Gage's command over Montreal was not a happy one – Montreal was viewed as a backwater, although home to approximately 25,000 civilians, and Gage was burdened with much of the day-to-day business of civil authority. For example, Gage decreed, as a form of traffic management, that wagoners, sleigh-drivers and horse-riders must not travel at high speed and must not park outside church doors. Furthermore, a 'lane system' was established on the route from Montreal to Quebec – there was a lane for

³³ After the death of Lord Howe at Ticonderoga, Gage's brother, Lord Gage, wrote to the Duke of Newcastle seeking promotion for Thomas. The Duke replied that he would 'do his best for Gage' but would give the command to his nephew, George Townshend, over Gage should he desire it. Namier, *Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, p. 27.

³⁴ Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 5.

down-river travellers and a lane for up-river travellers. Gage also had much control over the economy of Montreal; he set prices, regulated currency, banned monopolies and established standard measurements.³⁵ Gage was promoted to major-general in 1761 and the year after was given the command of the twenty-second regiment. Although he had asked for leave of absence to return to England in the middle months of 1762, when the news that France and Britain had signed a peace treaty (the Treaty of Paris) in 1763 and that Amherst was to leave for England Gage seems to have forgotten any plans to return and focused entirely on becoming – if only for a short time – the Commander-in-Chief. Receiving the news of his temporary (for it was only temporary at this point) promotion to the position of Commander-in-Chief on 20 October 1763, Gage quickly left Montreal and arrived at New York – his home for the next decade – on 16 November.³⁶

The Role and Position of the Commander-in-Chief, 1763-1775

The end of the Seven Years War marked a distinct change in British political attitude; the anti-redcoat tradition, which had forced William III, after his victory over Louis XIV in the War of the League of Augsburg, to have to appeal to Parliament to keep even a small standing army, and which had persisted into the 1750s, was gone.³⁷ In 1763, the decision was made to retain much of the army in America. Whereas, in previous years, the end of open warfare often meant the halving (or more) of the standing army, at the end of the Seven Years War the army dropped only about

³⁵ Alden, *Gage in America*, pp. 55-6.

³⁶ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 1: Gage to Egremont, New York, 17 November 1763.

³⁷ L. Schworer, *No Standing Armies! The Anticarmy Ideology in Seventeenth Century England* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974).

twenty-five per cent – from roughly one hundred to seventy-five regiments.³⁸ The greatest proportion of troops – fifteen regiments (or between six and seven thousand men) – were established as the standard operating number for the defence and administration of British North America, which now included all of Canada in the north. This vastly expanded behemoth was under the control of the Commander-in-Chief who, from his central position in New York, held correspondence with posts and provinces spread as far as Quebec and the Floridas and even to the Bahamas and the British West Indies. Discussing military options and operations, troop movements and quartering, vital trade routes, promotion of British economic interests, foreign relations, Anglo-Indian relations and Indian ‘management’, and eventually civil disturbance in the colonies, the Commander-in-Chief covered every aspect of British imperial policy and often had direct control over the outcome of events.

Throughout the period of Gage’s command, the military branch of the imperial administration became increasingly involved in the governance and management of the colonies. As a result, the Continental Congress complained to George III in 1774, that ‘the Authority of the commander-in-chief, and under him, of the brigadiers general, has in time of peace been rendered supreme in all the civil governments in America’. The war against France had proven to British officials the reluctance of the Americans to provide sufficient provisions for their own defence, or even to co-operate with the British army in times of war. This lack of support from the American colonists was the basis of the Grenville administration’s determination to maintain an army in North America and, crucially, to have the Americans pay their share.³⁹

³⁸ D. Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies and Practice, 1763 – 1789* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983), p. 29.

³⁹ C. Carter, ‘The Significance of the Military Office in America, 1763-1775’, *American Historical Review*, XXVIII No. 3 (April 1923), 475-76.

The military command in North America was supreme in two main aspects: firstly, the western Indian reservation, with no civil authority to govern it, was under the direct control of the military. The reservation included the territory south-west from Quebec to West Florida in the south – effectively, the military controlled the corridor between the western borders of the colonies and the eastern border of the Spanish settlements at the Mississippi River. Responsibility for a few French settlements, for several Indian tribes and for traders (from many different countries) lay with the military office, under the Commander-in-Chief, in New York. Secondly, relations with the Native American tribes were under the control of the military command; two Indian Superintendents (one for the Northern District and one for the Southern) operated, sometimes uncomfortably, under Gage's command and were paid as a military expense. Similarly, Gage himself suggested and promoted many different policies throughout his command regarding the Indians, as will be examined below. Likewise, relations with Spanish and French subjects (current or former) were documented and reported by the military branch. Although in some cases there was a civil authority (in the Floridas, for example), the former subjects of the Houses of Bourbon came into contact with the military branch of the British government more often than any civil power and in some cases the military was their only authority.

Therefore, although it seems that British officials had no intention of establishing any kind of military dictatorship in the Americas,⁴⁰ the growth of jurisdiction over, and responsibility for, many aspects of American life by the military command undoubtedly caused many Americans to claim that it had been 'rendered supreme in all the civil governments in America'. It is to Gage's role in this military command that we now turn.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

CHAPTER I

SECTION I

'The Savage Nations'

With the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Britain became the dominant power in North America. The Native American politicians east of the Mississippi could no longer play off British and French interests against one another to their own advantage and now had to deal solely with Britain and British traders.¹ This situation provided a problem for Britain: the French had been far more popular amongst Native American tribes, many of whom viewed the British with, at best, suspicion or, at worst, outright hatred. The result of this discontent was a widespread uprising amongst the northern Native Americans in 1763. The revolt – known as Pontiac's Rebellion – was the result of growing 'Nativist' sentiment amongst, primarily, the Delawares, Shawnees, Ottawas and the western towns of the Seneca and was also because of British abuse of trade, Amherst's orders to stop all gifts to the Indians, colonial encroachments on Indian land and, lastly, French encouragement to rise against the British.²

Anglo-Indian Relations

To understand the relations between Britain and the Native Americans, we must have an appreciation of the philosophy and outlook of the tribes. The eighteenth century

¹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I, 10: Gage to Halifax, New York, 7 January 1764; I, 167: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 24 April 1768.

² G.E. Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 35.

saw a great upheaval in tribal society – the rapid spread of European settlements and the growth in European-Indian trade caused social, political and economic change amongst the many tribes. Two very different philosophies soon came to the fore in Native American thought. On the one hand, ‘Nativism’ preached a return to Indian customs and practices, while ‘Accommodation’ advocated working, and trading, with the European settlers. It is difficult to discuss Native American thought as a whole; the differing tribes and groupings had varied backgrounds and beliefs. The terms Nativism and Accommodation must, as a result, be discussed in general terms as individual villages held slightly different versions of the beliefs.

Nativism was a reaction against Anglo-American expansion; it demanded a religious, social and cultural revival of traditional Native American values.³ Advocates of these attitudes – which were deliberately militaristic, armed and self-consciously ‘Indian’ – sought to remove European cultural and material poisons (particularly alcohol) and called upon sacred powers to defend against European encroachment. Many adherents of these views prophesied the destruction of the Native American way of life should European practices be adopted, and suggested that God had created three types of men: Europeans, Africans and Native Americans. To each of these types of men, God had given separate and distinct paths to the afterlife. As the residents of the Delaware village of Susquehanna River told a Presbyterian missionary: ‘God first made three men and three women, viz.: the Indians, the negro, and the white man’.⁴ Furthermore, ‘Nativists’ explained, any attempt to Christianise Native Americans was pointless because, as the Christian Bible was only given to Europeans, it could only apply to them. As God had given no such book ‘to the Indian or negro...it could not

³ Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, p. xx.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

be right for them to have a book, or be any way concerned with that way of worship'.⁵ Nativism justified the Native American way of life and contrasted it against the influences, cultures and societies of the European powers.

Accommodation, as the name suggests, was the belief that Native Americans had to work with – and accommodate – their European colonial neighbours. The supporters of Accommodation collaborated with the European powers – often joining sides during war – and were heavily involved in trade. Perhaps the best example of an 'accommodating tribe' were the Six Nations (also known as the Iroquois Confederacy or the Haudenosaunee), who worked and traded with Britain until the 1770s. The Six Nations were split during the American Revolutionary War as a consequence of disagreements over loyalties to either the American rebels or the British.

Pontiac's Rebellion

Begun on 9 May 1763, the rebellion was started by an attack on Fort Detroit. During May and June, most other British forts west of the Appalachian Mountains fell to Indian attacks, while Fort Detroit remained under siege for more than six months.⁶ Although most of the assaults on British positions throughout Detroit and Illinois were successful, Pontiac and his followers failed to take the key positions at Fort Detroit, Fort Niagara and Fort Pitt.⁷ Fort Pitt was saved by an early example of biological warfare: the soldiers there, following a suggestion from Amherst, handed out smallpox-infested blankets to Indians unsuccessfully seeking asylum. The

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁶ L. Sonneborn, *Chronology of American Indian History: The Trail of the Wind* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2001), p. 92.

⁷ N. Salisbury, 'Native People and European Settlers in Eastern North America, 1600-1783' in B.G. Trigger and W.E. Washburn (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), I, Part 1, 445.

ensuing pandemic amongst the Indian population killed many Delaware and Shawnee Indians and forced them to sue for peace.

Arriving in New York on 16 November, Gage immediately began his duties and his correspondence with the Secretaries of State; writing to Egremont the next day, unaware that he had died in August, Gage expressed gratitude to the King for his promotion and immediately began relaying information to London.⁸ As a temporary commander, Gage was expected to carry out the orders as left for him by Amherst and this he appears to have done with vigour. Amherst's strategy was a 'pincer movement' against the Delawares and Shawnees – Major General Bradstreet was ordered to march to Detroit and then to re-occupy Michilimackinac, St. Joseph's and a post on Green Bay. He was then to march southwards towards Muskingum to harass and distract, while Brigadier General Bouquet was to gather a force at Fort Pitt, march straight to Muskingum, and attack the Indians directly. Amherst had hoped that, once the Delawares and Shawnees had been destroyed, the other tribes would be easier to deal with.⁹

Gage's first crisis came not from any Indian attack, but from the apathy of the colonists. Amherst had demanded 3,500 men from the colonies in order to defend against Indian attack in 1763 and, for 1764, Gage 'demanded of the Province of Massachusetts Bay 700 Men, of Connecticut 500 of New Hampshire 200 of Rhode Island 200' and had asked the colonial governors 'to lay My Requisitions before their respective Councils and Assemblys as Speedily as possible'.¹⁰ The response of the Colonial Assemblies was disastrously slow. Pennsylvania did not raise any troops until late summer and the force was then crippled by the mass desertion of 200 men.

⁸ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 1: Gage to Egremont, New York, 17 November 1763.

⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 93.

¹⁰ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 4: Gage to Halifax, New York, 9 December 1763.

Virginia and Maryland refused to send any troops out of their own respective boundaries while Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire did nothing at all. New York, New Jersey and Connecticut managed a little better, as their troops were ready to march by July.¹¹

At the same time, Halifax (the new Secretary of State for the Southern Department) was writing to Gage insisting that the hostilities be concluded as soon as possible. In his first letter to Gage, after a brief message of congratulation, Halifax told Gage to put a 'Speedy End to the Hostilities of the Indians' and to restore 'the quiet Possession of the Country'.¹² After reporting to Halifax on 21 January 1764 that the Southern districts were 'in good Temper',¹³ Gage had to announce on 11 February of a worrying incident which could have led to an 'immediate War with ... [the Creek Indians]'.¹⁴ A group of Creek Indians had murdered fourteen settlers in South Carolina the previous December and a southern version of Pontiac – known to the English as The Mortar – had instigated the slayings. Further, it was found that some Creek villages were willing to attack the colonists and that the South Carolina Governor, Thomas Boone, intended to cut off all trade to the Indians and demanded the execution of the murderers. As both John Stuart – the Indian Superintendent for the Southern District – and Gage knew, Boone's actions would likely have lead to a declaration of war by the Creek Indians against Britain. This new front would have been in addition to the northern front and would have been almost impossible for Gage to manage in any effective manner – the troops were already strained in the north, and Gage could not afford to remove any of them to the south. By July,

¹¹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 94.

¹² Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 9: Halifax to Gage (Private), St James's, 14 January 1764. Halifax further requested a speedy end to hostilities in several other letters; see pp. 1-3, 3-4, 4-5, 7, 9-10, 14, 15-16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I. 13: Gage to Halifax, New York, 21 January 1764.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 15: Gage to Halifax, New York, 11 February 1764.

however, Stuart's good management of the situation allowed Gage to report that the disposition of the southern Indian Tribes was now 'as favorable towards us as could be wished'.¹⁵

The military aspect of the war against the Native Americans, while interesting, does not provide any real insight into Gage's command. Gage was unable to take any really authoritative action as a temporary Commander-in-Chief. Nevertheless, the war came to a close in the summer of 1765. Pontiac made unofficial peace with the British in August, after he had realised that British power could not be defeated, that the French were unwilling or unable to aid him and attack Britain, and that his followers were dwindling in numbers. He accepted a pension from the British government; this further alienated many of his supporters and, ultimately, played a part in the reasons for his murder by fellow tribesmen.¹⁶ The official peace treaty was signed on 23 July 1765 by Sir William Johnson – Superintendent for the Northern District – and forty Indian leaders. The treaty ended any form of organised resistance to further British settlement in the Ohio River valley.¹⁷

Indian Management

The return to peaceful relations with the Native American tribes did not end the plethora of correspondence to and from the military headquarters in New York on that subject. With an enlarged empire in the Americas, British officials turned their attentions to the economy and making money. Gage was thus tasked with three main aims: first, he had to ensure that peaceful relations with the Indians remained intact;

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 32: Gage to Halifax, New York, 13 July 1764.

¹⁶ L. Chevrete, *Pontiac*, Dictionary of Canadian National Biography Online, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/index.html> [accessed 22 April 2006]; Sonneborn, *American Indian History*, p. 94.

¹⁷ Sonneborn, *American Indian History*, p. 94.

second, he had to provide effective management of the Indian trade; and, third, he had to try to improve the revenues from traders and maintain an efficient system of collecting the revenues so derived. These three tasks occupied much of Gage's thoughts and time until the major crises in Anglo-American relations in the 1770s.

Gage had two partners in his relations with the Indians: the Superintendents for the Northern and Southern District. These positions had been created in 1755 to try to improve Britain's lukewarm relationships with the various tribes. The two Superintendents had been allowed to follow their own paths, with the full support of Gage since it was Gage's department that paid for their wages and expenses. John Stuart, the Superintendent for the Southern District, worked – without any express consent or backing from London – to try to establish recognised boundaries while the Northern Superintendent, William Johnson, worked to secure and improve the Indian trade.

Stuart intended to placate the southern Indians by involving the relevant colonial governor and Indian chief in any agreements in order to provide a more clearly understood policy than the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had done. Stuart, however, was less interested than Johnson in solving any issues of trade relations with the Indians and he actively encouraged inter-tribal warfare. Gage supported all of Stuart's plans and believed that as 'The Savage Nations...can never be a long Time at Peace...if we have not Dexterity enough to turn this Rage for war from Ourselves, and direct it to other Objects; I fear we shall often feel the ill Effects of it'.¹⁸ Interestingly, when the Earl of Shelburne became Secretary of State and informed Gage and Stuart of his intention to put a stop to any policy of Indian *divide et impera*,

¹⁸ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 13: Gage to Halifax, New York, 21 January 1764.

Stuart took the message to heart while not denying he had taken part in such a policy. Gage, however, replied to Shelburne that he had 'never known such a policy adopted as Your Lordship takes notice of, that of setting the Indians upon each other' and that 'the King's Humanity would never approve of Such a Policy, as I am, [*sic*] that in the End, it would prove greatly detrimental to His Majesty's Interest'.¹⁹

Conversely, in the north, Johnson took little interest in setting signed-and-sealed boundaries (as a major speculator in land, he was less disposed to stopping further settlement), but he became heavily involved in bettering the Indian trade. Over the winter of 1765-66, Johnson inundated Gage with requests for an increase in his staff numbers, which would be able to manage the Indian trade and prevent abuses. Gage was reluctant at first to agree to further expenses (he was under orders from the treasury to incur no expenses beyond a set budget, unless in the case of an emergency),²⁰ but he eventually agreed to the plan. Johnson's deputies ensured all trade took place at registered and monitored posts, and they made sure that the Indians were treated fairly in any transactions. Although the deputies had a good effect on the trade routes, the policy was expensive. Gage reported in 1768 that the expenses which 'Sir William Johnson judges absolutely Necessary, for conducting the Affairs of his Department' came to 'one Thousand Pounds, more than the Sum fixed by the Board of Trade'.²¹ Nevertheless, Gage continued in his support for the two Superintendents when the system came under review.

After taking office as the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Lord Shelburne sought to standardise and regulate the situation in the Americas. Writing to Gage that 'a proper system for the management of the Indians, and for the carrying on

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 120: Gage to Shelburne, 20 February 1767.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 393: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 10 December 1766.

²¹ *Ibid.*, I, 193: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 9 September 1768.

the commerce with them on the most advantageous footing' must be established, Shelburne began a reorganisation of Anglo-Indian relations, which would significantly alter the military's role in the colonies.²² In this letter, Shelburne put the following questions to Gage:

I am now to inform you that His Majesty has been pleased to refer to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations the Consideration of what regards the Establishment of New Governments on the Ohio, Mississippi [*sic*], and at Detroit; likewise how far the reduction of the Forts occupied by His Majesty's Troops may affect the Indian Trade; as also the Consequences which might attend the intrusting the Management of Indian Affairs to the respective Colonies under certain General Restrictions, with a view to lessen the present Expense, and to keep the Troops somewhat upon the Plan formerly sent to you by the Secretary at War [Viscount Barrington].²³

Gage replied telling Shelburne that:

The Chief Articles of constant Expense, are the Providing Fuel, Bedding, Utencils &c for the Troops. The supplying the Distant Forts with provisions, Stores and Other Necessarys. The Expence of Victualing the Troops, The Engineers Expences for Repairing Barracks, Posts, Forts, &c and the Charges attending the two Indian Departments in the Northern and Southern District...²⁴

To rectify the situation, Gage gave a few suggestions: firstly, he briefly suggested a policy similar to the earlier French one of selling monopolies of trade. Asking whether 'the Plan pursued by the French [could] be adopted by us' as 'a great Saving might be made in the Number of Indian Officers now kept up, beside the Receipt of a large Revenue from the letting of the Ports'. Later in the same letter, Gage suggests that the French, when 'Masters of that Country [Canada]', yielded between 'five and Six Thousand Sterling Pr Annum' and he suggested that, with a few British adjustments, even more revenue could be made from the system.²⁵ In an earlier letter, however, Gage stated that while such a policy 'answered very well to the Nature of

²² Lord Fitzmaurice, *Life of William Earl of Shelburne, Afterwards First Marquess of Lansdowne, with Extracts from his Papers and Correspondence* (London: Macmillan, 1912), p. 305. A different version of this letter can be found in Carter's edition, see Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 53: Shelburne to Gage, Whitehall, 14 November 1767.

²³ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 54: Shelburne to Gage, Whitehall, 14 November 1767.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 129: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 4 April 1767.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

their [the French] Government, perhaps in Ours, Such Monopolys would occasion Clamor that Trade was not open to all Adventurers'.²⁶

To solve the problem of colonial encroachment upon Indian lands, Gage suggested that the power of granting land be reserved solely to the Crown. He also proposed 'an exact Chart of each Province made out with the Patented Lands marked upon it' in order to discover the precise ownership of all lands surrounding the colonies.²⁷ Gage suggested that the government could buy land cheaply from the Indians, and then allow white settlement upon adjacent territory. When the settlements began to grow and the settlers wished to expand, the crown could then have sold the land at a much higher price and make substantial profit.

Gage continued in his support for the Indian Superintendents. He told Shelburne that, though very expensive, 'the making up of old Quarrells, the taking Possession of New Countrys, where it was Necessary to conciliate the Affection of Strange Indians, who had great Suspensions of our Intentions, and Jealousy of our Power, would Naturally occasion them to be so'. The Indian Superintendents were to be favoured over Gage's earlier suggestion of granting monopolies as the system was impractical for the British government to attempt to carry out. To save the treasury some of the costs of the Superintendents, therefore, Gage suggested that, as it was the 'Provinces who benefit by Indian Trade', they should 'pay their Proportions, and lighten a heavy Burthen bore by the Mother Country'. Gage realised that many of his suggestions would be 'more likely to prove Beneficial to his Majesty's successors than to himself'

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 114: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 11 November 1766.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 130: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 4 April 1767.

but that he 'knew of no Method by which the Lands in America can be turned, so as to produce any considerable immediate Benefit'.²⁸

The position of the Indian Superintendents vis-à-vis the Commander-in-Chief provided some friction; both of the Superintendents were unhappy to have their office subsumed in the military command and to be accountable to Gage. Johnson lodged a series of complaints against the Commander-in-Chief's position, though he seems to have become reconciled to his situation by Gage's time. Nevertheless in 1764, Johnson heavily influenced the Board of Trade's decision to establish the two Superintendents as supreme in issues of trade and economy between Britain and the Indians.²⁹ After this was announced Johnson seems to have become more comfortable in his role. Stuart, however, continued to chafe under the restrictions. His unease forced Shelburne to attempt to standardise relations and, in 1766 (eleven years after the position of Superintendent had been created), Shelburne wrote

As to what you propose of Instructions to be given to the Government to correspond with the Superintendents, His Majesty thinks it will answer sufficiently that your regular and fixed correspondence be with the Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces, the System of Indian Affairs are managed by the Superintendents [but] must ultimately be under his Direction. The different Governors can scarcely be supposed to coincide in opinion, nor is it possible for so many to act in Concert. You are therefore to take the Orders of the Commander in Chief on all *interesting* Occasions, who being settled in the Centre of the Colonies will carry on the Correspondence with the Governors on all such Points...and as he will be very particularly instructed by Administration, you are to look upon him as a proper Medium of material Intelligence either to or from England or the Colonies.³⁰

Although Shelburne clearly put the Superintendents as subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief, it remained unclear as to what 'interesting occasions' involved. Nevertheless, the letter seems to have settled the relationship once and for all. It is, further, a good testament to Gage's effective command and communication that

²⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 130; Gage to Shelburne, New York, 4 April 1767.

²⁹ C.E. Carter, 'Observations of Superintendent John Stuart and Governor James Grant of East Florida on the Proposed Plan of 1764 for the Future Management of Indian Affairs', *American Historical Review*, XX (July 1915), 815.

³⁰ Carter, 'The Significance of the Military Office in America', p. 480, my italics.

Johnson and Stuart never found cause for complaint with Gage directly, only with the subordination of their offices.

The issue of Britain's relations with the Native Americans fell rather into the background during the great crises in Anglo-American relations of the 1770s; all British attention was focused on the colonies and, in particular, on punishing Bostonians. Gage's last mention of anything Indian-related comes in a desperately-worded letter to Barrington, written 12 June 1775, from Boston. In this letter, he says that, although Barrington is hesitant about using Indian soldiers against the rebels, the Americans have 'shewn us the Example, and brought all they could down upon us here' and that 'Things are now come to that Crisis, that we must avail ourselves of every resource'.³¹ The issue of Indian management must have seemed somehow irrelevant and insignificant when faced with the rebellion of the established colonies.

Conclusion

Gage's personal impact on the outcome of Pontiac's Rebellion is negligible; he carried out orders put in place by his predecessor and the ultimate victory of the British over the Indians (so long as they lacked official and determined French support) was almost certain from the beginning. Gage remained an army man and, although his role did constitute a significant amount of Indian management, for the most part he simply reported events to London and awaited orders.

Although never directly involved in Indian management, Gage did have a large impact on official British policy during his command. He met with the great Cherokee chiefs Attakullakulla and Ouchonostotah in New York. Gage's relationship

³¹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II, 684: Gage to Barrington (Private), Boston, 12 June 1775.

with the Secretaries of State could often mean he had considerable influence; Lord Shelburne, in his desire for as much knowledge about American issues as possible, seems particularly to have desired and trusted Gage's opinions on the Native Americans (and, as will be discussed later, on any issue relating to the American colonies).

Where Gage did have considerable influence was on post-Pontiac Indian management and trade relations. Gage was the central focus for the two Superintendents and they communicated regularly with him on all 'interesting' occasions. He also had a significant impact on the development and powers of the Superintendents and was, thus, responsible for a large part of British official policy towards the Indians. Lastly and interestingly, although he was typical in his outlook on the 'Savages', Gage did not show the usual American colonist contempt for the Indians: the massacre of some harmless Christian Indians from the Conestoga tribe by colonists certainly upset Gage. He ordered troops to protect the helpless Indians and his actions in using the army so wisely were even praised by Benjamin Franklin.³²

³² Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 102.; Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 8: Gage to Halifax, New York, 7 January 1764.

CHAPTER I

SECTION II

'Keep a Watchful Eye upon Them': Gage and the Houses of Bourbon

As has been previously mentioned, the close of the Seven Years War created an entirely new political scene in the Americas: Britain was the dominant power at sea and in North America; France was all but removed from the American mainland; and Spain became the only real rival to the British colonies. The major changes in the political make-up of the Americas involved the British conquest of Canada and the transfer of Louisiana from French to Spanish control. While the conquest of Canada removed any threat from an imperial power to the British colonies in the north, the transfer of power from France to Spain in Louisiana meant that the French 'buffer province' separating New Spain from British America was removed.

Britain and Spain had several points of contact in the New World. The two countries shared the right to navigate the Mississippi; the cession of West Florida to Britain meant that Britain was able to have a constant, powerful presence in the Gulf of Mexico; and, in Southern-Central America (and outside the scope of Gage's command), Spain was forced to recognise the legality of British logwood cutters in Honduras Bay.³³ France, on the other hand, was demoted to a second-rate power in the Americas. Canada was secured from any real French threats and the Union Flag now flew over former French settlements east of the Mississippi River.

³³ For details of the agreement, see the Treaty of Paris (1763) at Historical Documents and Speeches, The Treaty of Paris (1763): <http://www.historicaldocuments.com/TreatyofParis1763.htm> [accessed 17 July 2006].

As Commander-in-Chief, Gage was charged with ensuring the safety of the American colonies and, as a result, had to keep a watchful eye upon the movements of the French and Spanish. Gage's other major concern was over improving trade while trying to diminish the amount of gold going to the coffers of the Bourbon Kings. The transfer of power in Louisiana proved an interesting point in international relations, and Gage kept a running commentary on the events between France and Spain in that province. Lastly, the Falkland Islands crisis between Spain and Britain at the start of the 1770s caused some disquiet in the Americas and Gage was ordered to prepare for a declaration of war over the issue.

The French in the Americas

The first real issue Gage faced concerning any foreign power on the assumption of his command was the belief amongst the Native Americans that France would return to retake Canada. It was widely believed amongst the Indian tribes, Gage reported, that 'a Fleet and Army would come to Quebec from France to retake the Country' should they rebel against the British.³⁴ It was also found that the French were actively supporting the Indians in their rebellion against Britain and Gage made personal complaint to French officials on this matter.³⁵ To prove to the Indians that the French were unwilling and, indeed, unable to return and fight for Canada, Gage decided to use French-Canadian troops in the war. Writing to Halifax, Gage stated that:

Nothing can certainly So soon convince the Savages of their Error in Expecting Assistance from the French, or so soon give them an Idea of the Addition of Strength, acquired by Great Britain, by her late Acquisition than to see a Body of Canadians in Arms, and ready to act Hostilely against them, in Conjunction with His Majesty's other Troops.³⁶

³⁴ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 10: Gage to Halifax, New York, 7 January 1764.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 47: Gage to Halifax, New York, 13 December 1764.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 17: Gage to Halifax, New York, 13 February 1764.

Nevertheless, over four years later, Gage was still reporting that:

Tho' the French may not be desirous of promoting immediate Hostilities, People from Canada and the Mississippi, do certainly endeavour to keep up an Interest of the French, amongst all the Indian Nations, to make use of on a good Occasion. They desire them to hold fast the old Chain of Friendship, assure them that their Father will return, and request they keep the Axe bright, and ready to strike, as soon as a proper Opportunity shall offer.³⁷

By the early 1770s, however, Gage was able to report that the French influence over many of the Indian tribes had diminished and that there was now not 'the least vestige of a French Party' within the Indian tribes.³⁸

While Gage may have had some success in harming Franco-Indian relations, controlling trade with French and Spanish ports was more difficult. Although the British did not subscribe to the same level of monopolistic trade arrangements as the Spanish,³⁹ British officials did try to control as much of the trade in the colonies as possible. Gage reported that traders were selling furs in New Orleans for a price similar to that in London, and that 'Nothing...but force, can oblige our own Traders to bring the Produce of their Trade in those Parts into our Provinces to be exported to Great Britain, or prevent foreign Traders from intruding upon the Territorys [*sic*], ceded to His Majesty'.⁴⁰ Later in the same letter, Gage proposes licenses to control the traders, a set-price market for goods, and that traders should return to the province of their origin in order to gain maximum revenue from the system of trade.⁴¹ Furthermore, to manage the French settlers now under the control of Britain, Gage's only solution was to maintain forts near them: as the French could not be trusted,⁴² they must have a military system of government that requires comparatively little

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 185: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 17 August 1768.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 326: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 3 June 1772.

³⁹ V. L. Brown, 'Chapter II. Anglo-Spanish Relations in America, 1763-1770', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, V, No. 3 (August 1922), 375.

⁴⁰ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 117: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 23 December 1766.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I. 122: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 22 February 1767. For a full account of Gage's suggestions, see Appendix I.

⁴² *Ibid.*, I. 211: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 6 January 1769.

expenditure but provides 'a check upon his Majesty's New Subjects... whom I apprehend will not be the most faithful Subjects'.⁴³

Most Christian or Most Catholic Majesty? The Transfer of Louisianan Sovereignty

Perhaps the most interesting event in respect to Gage's remit in foreign affairs was the transfer of the sovereignty of Louisiana from France to Spain. Gage was informed of the intent on the French part to transfer power in November 1763. In this letter, Halifax states that 'His Most Christian Majesty [the King of France] has given Louisiana to the King of Spain [His Catholic Majesty], and that One of the chief Motives for doing so was to avoid fresh Matter of Dispute with England'.⁴⁴ Thus began an almost decade-long dispute between the Spanish, the French in France and the French in Louisiana over who exactly controlled the province.

Spanish policy towards the New World at the close of the Seven Years War was to rebuild and fortify their position. Mexico, for example, was put under the control of a new Commander-in-Chief, with four major-generals, four brigadiers, four colonels and two thousand men under his command.⁴⁵ Louisiana was the last province in New Spain to be brought under the new system of governance. The Spanish government viewed the 'gift' from the French with suspicion; they believed it was a scheme on the part of the French to rid themselves of a heavy burden and thought the best policy was to 'make a desert of it, and by doing so place a no-man's land between the British and Spanish settlements'.⁴⁶ By the spring of 1764, the French were making plans to hand-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, I. 122: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 22 February 1767; *Ibid.*, II. 502: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 4 March 1769.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, II. 6: Halifax to Amherst (Received by Gage), St James's, 11 November 1763.

⁴⁵ V. L. Brown, 'Chapter I. Spain in America, 1763-1770', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, V, No. 3 (August 1922), 338.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

over power officially to the Spanish (although, interestingly, they seem to have forgotten to inform the residents of Louisiana and the commanders in that province refused to accept reports of such news as truth).⁴⁷ The French expected their officials to be back in Paris by September of that year and were dumbfounded to find that, over a year later, the Spanish had taken no action whatsoever. The French were thus forced to write a letter to their ambassador in Madrid ordering him to inform the Spanish of their perplexity with regard to the situation and of the embarrassment their delay in taking control of Louisiana was causing.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, in America, Gage continually reported to officials the events as he saw them unfolding. Writing in August 1765 that it 'does not look like they [the French are] ceding the Country to the Spaniards', Gage seemed as perplexed by the situation as the ministers at the Court of Versailles were.⁴⁹ It was not until June of 1766 that Gage was able to report that:

The new Spanish Governor, Don Antonio de Ulloa, brought about one Hundred Men with him to New-Orleans from the Havana, chiefly French and Germans. All the French Troops in the Province of Louisiana have entered into the service of Spain; and the French Inhabitants in general seem so well Satisfied at the Conditions of becoming Spanish Subjects, that they are all inclined to remain in the Country.⁵⁰

Gage further reported that the 'One Condition [for the French submission to Spanish rule] I am told is, that they shall have free Liberty to Trade with France, and it is publicly [*sic*] reported, that New Orleans would be declared a free-Port' and that Don Ulloa had sent a letter to Gage assuring of his intention to promote 'Concord and Harmony and to establish a Union between the two Nations'.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 346; Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 42: Gage to Halifax, New York, 9 November 1764.

⁴⁸ Brown, 'Spain in America', p. 345.

⁴⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 64: Gage to Halifax, New York, 10 August 1765.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 93: Gage to Conway, New York, 24 June 1766.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The news of the happiness of the French to become His Most Catholic Majesty's subjects, however, was unfounded. The Louisianans were worried about the prospect of trade in New Spain as they could not see any prospects for Louisianan goods (the Spanish had little need for warm furs, and tobacco – except that of Cuban growth – was banned, for example) and they finally protested when Don Ulloa informed the French troops that they were now under the command of Spain.⁵² Gage reported in January 1767 that Don Ulloa had removed from New Orleans believing himself to be in danger and was waiting for support from Spanish troops before entering the city again.⁵³ Five months later, Gage was still reporting that

Don Ulloa the Spanish Governor of Louisiana, has built a House at the Balize, and Seemed determined to remain there, till the Troops which he has demanded arrive; and Monsr. Aubry, the late French Governor, continues to command in the Colony, Brigadier Haldimand observes, that the French are greatly displeased at the Change of their King, and thinks it might be easy to draw many of them over to our Settlements.⁵⁴

It was not until 1769 that Don Ulloa received his Spanish troops. Writing to Hillsborough in October of that year, Gage reported that 'Accounts have been received lately from Pensacola and New-Orleans, of the Arrival of a considerable Body of Spanish Troops in Louisiana under Count O'Reilly; to take a Second time the Possession of that Province in the Name of the King of Spain'.⁵⁵

The Irish mercenary, Alejandro (or Alexander) O'Reilly came to Louisiana, under the Spanish flag, with a significant body of troops to quell any resistance, install a Spanish system of government in the colony and punish the leading members of the earlier French resistance.⁵⁶ The stationing of such numbers of troops (roughly 3000)⁵⁷

⁵² Brown, 'Spain in America', p. 347.

⁵³ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 119: Gage to Shelburne, New York 17 January 1767.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 143: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 13 June 1767.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 238: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 7 October 1769.

⁵⁶ Brown, 'Spain in America', p. 350.

⁵⁷ 'La tropa se componia de un batallon de Lisboa: otro del Fixo de la Havana; 150 artilleros, 40 dragones, 150 soldados de las milicias de caballeria del monte de la Havana; con 150 fusileros

caused significant alarm amongst British officials close to Louisiana – from Pensacola, Governor Browne asked Gage for more troops and others complained to Gage of the stationing of the Spanish troops.⁵⁸

Gage, however, did not seem to be threatened by the arrival of the Spanish troops, stating that ‘the People in West-Florida have no Cause to apprehend any immediate Danger to themselves’.⁵⁹ Although Gage was cool-headed concerning the growth in the Spanish forces in Louisiana, the British government was not quite so calm about the affair. Hillsborough wrote in reply to Gage that

The Advices received through various Channels of the Arrival at New Orleans of a force so greatly exceeding what the Object seems to require...the naval preparations at that Port [Havana], and the Augmentation of their Troops there, greatly beyond the usual Peace Establishment, are Circumstances which, when combined with other Intelligence, make it necessary to give a particular Attention to the Security of those parts of His Majesty’s Possessions which are most exposed to Insult or Attack.⁶⁰

Gage dutifully replied that the sixteenth Regiment had been ordered to Pensacola under Brigadier General Haldimand and that the fort was to be repaired and improved and batteries were to be built to protect the harbour.⁶¹ Any worry in Britain about Spanish intentions in *North America*, however, were dispelled by Gage’s reports in late 1770 that ‘the Spanish Troops continue to desert from New-Orleans, and report, that there are not four hundred soldiers left in the Province of Louisiana’.⁶²

catalanes; 80 hombres de una compania de granaderos de cada uno de los tres cuerpos de milicias de la Havana’ in Brown, ‘Spain in America’, p. 350 footnote no. 38; Brown ‘Anglo-Spanish Relations in America’ p. 369.

⁵⁸ Brown, ‘Anglo-Spanish Relations in America’, p. 369; Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I, 238: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 7 October 1769.

⁵⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I, 239: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 7 October 1769.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 94: Hillsborough to Gage, Whitehall, 9 December 1769.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, I, 257: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 14 May 1770.

⁶² *Ibid.*, I, 267: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 18 August 1770.

'A Morsel of Rock at the Bottom of America': The Falkland Islands Crisis

Although Anglo-Spanish relations in North America were stable, at the other end of the Americas in the South Atlantic, trouble was brewing between Spanish-controlled Buenos Aires and the British-controlled Falkland Islands.⁶³ Having received Port Louis on the western coast of the Falkland Islands from the French in 1767, the Spanish renamed it Port Solidad and began reinforcing the settlement.⁶⁴ By June 1770, the Spanish had 'sixteen hundred men, five frigates, and a formidable train of artillery' compared to a wooden blockhouse and one ship flying under the Union Flag.⁶⁵ The British were thus forced to leave the Falkland Islands and return to Britain to give reports of the situation.

Meanwhile, in New York, Gage received word of the Falkland Islands dispute from Hillsborough in September 1770. Hillsborough wrote:

The King having received Advices that the Spanish Governor of Buenos Ayres hath thought fit to dispossess His Majesty's Subjects of their Settlement at Port Egmont in the Falkland Islands; so violent a proceeding in time of profound Peace will, unless disavowed by the Court of Spain and proper Restitution made, be considered an open Act of Hostility; and therefore the King hath thought fit with the advice of His Servants to Command a considerable Naval Armament to be prepared in order to Act as the Honor and Dignity of His Crown shall under future Events require.⁶⁶

Gage replied in December that 'no Attention shall be wanting towards the Security of the Colonies within the Limits of my Command' and that he would take immediate action to ensure the safety of the colonies. Furthermore, letters were sent to the forts and posts in close contact to Spanish possession to prepare for an attack.⁶⁷ In

⁶³ Walpole used the term 'a morsel of rock that lies somewhere at the very bottom of America' in his correspondence with Sir Horace Mann. See, W. Lewis (ed.), *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), VII, 239.

⁶⁴ V. L. Brown, 'Chapter III. 'The Falkland Islands'', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, V, No. 3 (August 1922), 403.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

⁶⁶ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II, 117: Hillsborough to Gage (Most Secret and Confidential), Whitehall, 28 September 1770.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 288: Gage to Hillsborough, 7 December 1770.

subsequent letters, Gage reports of the 'very defensible state' of the posts and forts upon the Lakes and that the only want is 'a few Stores' which 'will be supplied without Delay'.⁶⁸

The Falkland Islands crisis was the first time, since the rebellion of Pontiac, that Gage had been forced to deal with a significant outside threat. Alden suggests that Gage was as preoccupied with the Falkland Islands crisis as he was with the growing disquiet amongst the American colonists.⁶⁹ This seems to be unfounded, however, as Gage mentions the Falkland Island crisis in only a few letters, and often in direct reply to questions or orders from Hillsborough or Barrington. The growth in American discontent, however, covers many letters (both private and public). Starting with the occasional mention of some concern over American behaviour in the early 1760s, to desperate pleas for support (and troops) from the government in the 1770s, it cannot be doubted that Gage worried significantly more about the Anglo-American crises than any clash between Spain and Britain. That said, however, a potential clash between Britain and Spain would have had serious repercussions for Gage's command – any war would have undoubtedly been won or lost to a large extent in the American theatre where, naturally, Gage would have been in charge.

Conclusion

Gage's role in foreign affairs was, from his position, very limited. He only had contact with the French and Spanish in North America and had no direct control over British policy either. Even so, as Conway pointed out to Gage in 1765, Gage was the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1. 292: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 2 April 1771.

⁶⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 127.

perfect candidate to 'keep a watchful Eye upon them' and to report anything suspicious to the government.⁷⁰ Gage was further told in 1766 that:

His Majesty approves extremely of Your Attention to the Steps taken by the by the Spaniards upon their first Settlement at New Orleans. Every Account You can procure of what passes there, as well as what regards the Navigation of the Mississippi, the Settlements on both sides the River, up to the Illinois Country, & the Course of the Indian Trade in those & other parts of America, will be very acceptable to His Majesty, as well as any proposal or plan, that may occur to You for the rendering of that Country most amenable to His Majesty's Government & beneficial in point of trade.⁷¹

In such duties, Gage was effective and dutiful. Serving as a point of contact between the far-flung corners of the Americas, he was able to collect and collate information from Nova Scotia and Louisiana and from the Great Lakes and the Bahamas, and to transmit them in an effective and coherent fashion to the policy makers in London. Gage's selection, therefore, of what information to pass on was crucial.

Gage's lack of understanding of the larger picture in great power politics of the time meant on occasion he had to change his orders after hearing from London. One such example was, on the arrival of O'Reilly in Louisiana, after Gage had reported that there was no need to worry of Spanish intentions, he was informed from London to make the Floridas, the Great Lakes and Nova Scotia defensible to the greatest degree possible and to send extra troops as reinforcements. Overall, however, Gage was effective and efficient at transferring notes of interest to the Secretary of State on issues of foreign policy.

⁷⁰ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 28: Conway to Gage, St James's, 24 October 1765.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, II. 46: Shelburne to Gage, Whitehall, 13 September 1766.

CHAPTER II

SECTION I

'Stubborn and Factious Spirits': The Stamp Act Crisis

Having secured, at the close of the Seven Years War, an empire larger than even the Roman Empire, British politicians naturally sought to standardise governance of, and capitalise revenue from, the colonies. The Prime Minister in 1763, George Grenville, worried about the precarious financial position of Great Britain after the war; the country was £130,000,000 in debt with an annual interest of over £4,000,000.¹ Grenville knew that the British people were already taxed at an extraordinarily high rate (for example, land tax was at four shillings in the pound) and it would be unfair, Grenville thought, for Britons to pay any further in taxation.

The logical and constitutional choice left for Grenville, then, was to tax the American colonies; as the tax was to pay for the defence and administration of America, Americans would have, Grenville supposed, no legal leg to stand on.² The process of finding the best way to tax America was started in 1763 when, on 4 October, the Commissioners reported that 'the Revenue arising therefrom [the American colonies and the West Indies] is very small and inconsiderable having in no degree increased with the commerce of those Countries, and is not yet sufficient to defray a Fourth Part of the Expence Necessary for collecting it'.³ Accordingly, after having warned the Americans of his intention to implement a duty on stamped paper and given them the

¹ C.R. Ritcheson, *British Politics and the American Revolution* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p.15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ BL, Add. MSS 21697, fo. 14: A Memorial from the Right Honourable The Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, date the 4th Instant [October].

option to propose alternatives a year before, on 6 February 1765, Grenville introduced his Bill. The Bill received limited opposition in the Commons and the House divided 245 in favour and 49 against – no further divisions were forced after that point.⁴ The Bill passed Parliament on 22 March and was to come into force in America on 1 November 1765.

Gage was a supporter of American taxation before he came to the supreme command in the Americas; once in that command, he almost immediately began to tell his superiors of the need for a tax on Americans to pay for the costs of the army. Writing to Halifax in January 1764, just a few months into his command, Gage explained how, while the colonies had agreed to pay for provisions in the Seven Years War on the proviso that they would be reimbursed, 'they must be Sensible that the Supplies demanded [in the war against Pontiac], are intended for their own Defence, and I hope they will be contented to defray the Expences which such a Service must occasion'.⁵ Furthermore, in a letter to Amherst, Gage said that the taxation 'will create much debate & murmuring, notwithstanding the propriety & even necessity of it'.⁶

Although news of the Stamp Act reached the Americas in April, it is not until August that Gage refers to any change in the mood of the colonists. Writing to Halifax that Lieutenant-Governor Cadwallader Colden of New York had 'strongly represented' to Gage 'the Necessity of a Military Force to garrison Fort-George in this City, that he might be enabled to quell Tumults against the Populace, or Insurrections of the Negroes [who had rebelled years before]'. To protect New York against any rebellion,

⁴ Thomas, *Revolution in America*, p. 17. For a detailed account of the politics behind the Stamp Act, see Thomas, *Revolution in America*; Thomas, *British Politics and the Stamp Act Crisis: The First Phase of the American Revolution, 1763-1767* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Ritcheson, *British Politics and the American Revolution*; and Morgan and Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1995).

⁵ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, 1. 7: Gage to Halifax, New York, 7 January 1764.

⁶ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 111.

Gage thus ordered 'a Company of the second Battalion of the Royal American Regiment to march here from Crown-Point'.⁷

'The Clamor Be So General'

By the end of August, after further conversations with Colden, Gage began to believe that there could be serious trouble in New York. Writing to Colden, who was staying briefly in the countryside outside New York, Gage attacked the treasonous reports in American newspapers and – after apologising for his brief outburst in civil affairs – urged Colden to request any additional troops as soon as possible. Furthermore, he reminded Colden that the Commander-in-Chief had no authority to order the troops to take any action against the civilians (except in the case of open rebellion) and that a civil magistrate would be needed for that purpose.⁸

Gage similarly wrote to Governor Francis Bernard of Massachusetts, but his council refused to support Gage stating that the one-hundred and twenty provincial troops in Castle Island and the ship-of-war *Coventry* were sufficient to keep the peace. Nevertheless, Gage ordered a further one-hundred infantry and thirty artillerists from Halifax to Castle Island. To the Governor of Maryland, Horatio Sharpe, Gage wrote offering him the use of one-hundred regulars from Fort Pitt and to William Franklin, the Governor of New Jersey, Gage offered one-hundred troops, which were denied by the council as unnecessary.⁹ Although trying his best to offer support throughout the colonies, Gage was unable to provide any concrete support; his offers were being refused by the assemblies throughout the colonies and the troops were stationed at the

⁷ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 64; Gage to Halifax, New York, 10 August 1765.

⁸ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 114; *Ibid.*, I. 68; Gage to Conway, New York, 23 September 1765.

⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 116.

far reaches of British America and would require months to be available to the colonial governors. Gage would later tell Barrington of his disappointment in the reaction of the colonial governors and assemblies during the crisis, saying: 'no requisition has been made of Me for assistance, which I, must acknowledge I have been sorry for, as the disturbances which have happened, have been so much beyond riots, and so like the forerunners to open Rebellion'.¹⁰

The Stamp Act Congress, which had been called to discuss a united American reply to the Stamp Act, was held on 7 October. By 25 October, the Congress concluded its deliberations. During that time, Gage reported that:

They are of various Characters and opinions, but it's to be feared in general, that the Spirit of Democracy is strong amongst them. The Question is not of the inexpediency of the Stamp Act, or the inability of the Colonys to pay the Tax, but that it is unconstitutional, and contrary to their Rights, supporting the Independency of the Provinces, and not Subject to the Legislative Power of Great Britain. There are some moderate Men amongst the Commissioners, from whence well Meaning People hope, that the Meeting will end in the drawing up a Modest, decent, and proper Address; tho' there wants not those, who would Spirit them up, to the most violent, insolent, and haughty Remonstrance.¹¹

Gage, further, met the Congress representatives of Massachusetts, Timothy Ruggles, Oliver Partridge and James Otis, as well as his wife's cousin, William Bayard, who was the representative for New York. Gage's impact on any of these men cannot be determined, but Ruggles, who was a conservative, fought against any extreme measures and eventually refused to sign the American Declaration of Rights, the Petition to the King and the Memorial to both Houses of Parliament.¹² In mid-October, Gage was relatively confident about the Stamp Act being put into effect. Writing to Conway that 'it is impossible to say, whether the Execution of the Stamp-Act will meet with further Opposition; but from present Appearances there is Reason

¹⁰ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 334: Gage to Barrington, New York, 16 January 1766

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I. 69: Gage to Conway, New York, 21 October 1765.

¹² Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 117.

to Judge, that it may be introduced without much Difficulty, in several of the Colonys, and if it is began in some, that it will soon spread over the rest'.¹³

By the last day of October, Colden – as he was required to by law – had taken an oath to enforce the Stamp Act and soon found that popular opinion was highly charged against him.¹⁴ The following day, when the Act was due to go into effect, posters and placards appeared throughout New York threatening anyone who used the stamps with punishment.¹⁵ By that night, an angry mob appeared, approached the walls of Fort George, and knocked on the front gates. The rioters built a bonfire close to the fort walls and burnt effigies of Colden. Although a few rioters had clubs and threw stones into the fort, the claim that they had artillery was unfounded and the troops inside the fort remained calm, although ready to defend themselves. It seems that, during these troubles, Gage was in his house and thus avoided any 'charge of tyranny against him and the army'.¹⁶

The following day there followed a series of almost farcical events in which Gage was heavily involved. Gage reported that 'the Fort would not Fire as no Civil Magistrate was with them' and that 'the council also advised him [Colden] to put them [the stamps] onboard a Man of War to take away all pretence to offer any insult as

¹³ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 70; Gage to Conway, New York, 21 October 1765.

¹⁴ The oath was 'You Swear that you shall do your utmost that all and every the Clauses contained in an Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed in the fifth Year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord King George the Third...be punctually and bona fide observed according to the true intent and meaning thereof, so far as appertains to you. So help you God.' F. L. Engleman, 'Cadwallader Colden and the New York Stamp Act Riots', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, X, No. 4 (October, 1953), pp. 561 and 569.

¹⁵ The placards read as follows: 'Pro Patria. The first Man that either distributes or makes use of Stamp Paper; let him take Care of his House, Person and Effects. We are. Vox Populi.' Engleman, 'Cadwallader Colden and the New York Stamp Act Riots', p. 568.

¹⁶ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 120; Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 70; Gage to Conway, New York, 4 November 1765.

violence upon the Fort which would probably occasion the Destruction of the City'.¹⁷ Governor Colden admitted that he had no power or control outside the confines of the fort and decided to ask for the papers to be removed to the ship.¹⁸ The senior naval official, Archibald Kennedy, who was the captain of the ship *Coventry*, at first refused to receive the stamps as he worried for his own properties in New York. After being pressed to take the stamps, Kennedy agreed but found that Colden had now changed his mind and would not send the stamps. It was at this point that Gage intervened; he worried that Kennedy and Colden's arguments were forcing the stamps to remain in the fort, which, while capable of defending itself, could be called into action against the civilians at any moment and the destruction of the city would then follow.¹⁹ Gage believed that as Colden:

Could not distribute the Stamps, it seemed to Me equal, whether they were in the Government Fort, or in board a Ship lying off it; and it was better to do what he had agreed to [send them to the *Coventry*], if it would prevent further Extremitys. For as matters are situated, shou'd the populace come to the forts with threats of storming it, The Lieut Governor wou'd at length, it's supposed, order them to fire, tho' he has no Magistrate, which would serve only to disperse them from about the Fort, but not to quell them...²⁰

Gage shared this opinion with Colden, who promptly changed his mind and ordered the stamps to be placed onboard the *Coventry*. By this point, however, Kennedy had changed *his* mind and refused to accept the stamps onboard his ship. By 5 November, Kennedy 'at length *absolutely determined to refuse receiving the Stamp papers on board*' and the stamps were left in the care of Colden.²¹

The news of Kennedy's refusal to accept the stamps caused a public outcry and certain men of property – fearful of any continued mob violence in New York –

¹⁷ BL, Stowe Mss 264, fo. 335: copy of a Letter from Major General Gage to Mr Secretary Conway, New York 4 November 1765.

¹⁸ Morgan and Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis*, p. 206.

¹⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 70: Gage to Conway, New York, 4 November 1765.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, I. 72: Gage to Conway, New York, 8 November 1765, his italics.

decided to call upon the city council and mayor to offer to take the stamps. Colden hesitated so long that the mayor and city councillors eventually visited Gage and pleaded with him 'in the greatest confusion and terror, telling me they came in the name of the Citizens, to implore my intercession, and good Offices to save their families from Ruin, and their City from Destruction' by persuading Colden to hand the stamps over.²² Colden then decided that he would make no decision on sending the stamps to the city council until he heard Gage's opinion. Gage replied that he would not speculate about civil government matters, unless asked a direct question by the Lieutenant-Governor. Gage received a further reply 'pretty late...during which time the frights and fears increased on one side, and threats on the Other' informing him that Colden had agreed to put the stamps in the custody of the city officials if – and only if – Gage publicly concurred with the course of action. This Gage quickly agreed to, and the stamps were placed under the control of New York city council.²³

With the stamps under the protection of the city, American attention turned to avoiding using them in business and legal transactions. Sir Henry Moore, the Governor of New York, landed on 13 November and, in public defiance of Colden's fears over civil unrest, opened the fort gates. His conciliatory approach, however, did little to gain American support. When the New York Assembly was asked to furnish some supplies and funds for the troops stationed at Albany, even after being told they could amend any part of the Quartering Act to avoid constitutional issues, the Assembly refused to reply.²⁴ There were further riots and New Yorkers boarded a ship carrying fresh stamps from England and burnt them in public view in the town.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, II. 329: Gage to Barrington, New York, 21 December 1765.

Moore was shocked and asked Gage to try to collect as much military support as possible around Manhattan.²⁵

By the start of 1766, Gage was desperately trying to bring reinforcements to the settled colonies, and particularly to New York. Writing to Conway in the middle of January, Gage said:

I understand that the Force I could immediately assemble, is judged too weak; and that more could not be got under a Considerable Time. It is certain that I could not collect a respectable Body of Troops under three Month's Time, and that too by weakening some parts, which I should not perhaps venture to do, but in Cases of Extremity. But as my situation is such, as not to be able to give Assistance in Cases of Sudden Emergency at present, the Sooner I should have it in my Power to do it, Should seem the better for the service. And I confess, that I should be glad of a legal Pretence to collect all the Force I could, into one Body; which might Check in some Measure the Audacious Threats of taking Arms, and in Case of extremity enable the King's Servants, and Such as are Friends to Government, to make a respectable Opposition.²⁶

Gage hoped to have, by late May, roughly 1,500 men in the general area of New York by draining the small forts and posts around the nearby provinces and by removing a regiment from Quebec.²⁷ Gage's fears over further American uprisings, however, were not realised; news of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached America by 6 May and was received 'with great joy'. Gage further reported that if the provinces were left in the state they were in, and the Stamp Act had not been repealed, 'the Inhabitants wou'd rise and attack each other'.²⁸ Gage was ordered to cancel his plans for moving the body of troops into New York, but, at the same time, another regiment was secretly added to the American army.²⁹

²⁵ See Appendix III.

²⁶ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 81: Gage to Conway, New York, 16 January 1766.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 87: Gage to Conway, New York, 28 March 1766; I. 90: Gage to Conway (Copy), 6 May 1766.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 91: Gage to Conway, New York, 6 May 1766.

²⁹ Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 21: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 9 May 1766.

'Some Account of What Has Passed'

During the Stamp Act crisis, Gage sent regular updates to the British Government on what was happening in the Americas. Setting out in his first letter on the crisis, Gage says that as the several governors of the colonies are not military generals and will naturally focus on their own colonies, his reports will be a worthwhile effort.³⁰ Gage was able to transmit a more widespread and encompassing report of the growing crisis in the American colonies than any of the governors would have been able to do.

Further, he was able to provide an insight into the military options available to the ministry; whether the ministry was willing to use the military to force the Stamp Act upon the Americans, however, is open to debate.³¹ Certainly, Gage believed that the governors had not called on any assistance because 'the Clamor is too general, and the Force judged not Sufficient to answer the End' and it seems unlikely that Gage himself would have supported any direct military action against the Americans.³² Indeed, Gage went out of his way to remind the British government and Colden that any attack from Fort George upon the people of New York would undoubtedly have ended in the destruction of the city, and that he simply did not – and could not – have the forces available to defend anything more than the fort and the 'Spot it stands on'.³³ On the other hand, Gage's letters from Conway speak of a 'timely Exertion of Force, as may be necessary, to repell Acts of Violence & Outrage, & to provide for the

³⁰ See Appendix II.

³¹ For the discussion on whether or not the British government would have used the military to force the Stamp Act on the colonies, see J.L. Bullion, 'British Ministers and American Resistance to the Stamp Act, October-December 1765', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, XLIX, No. 1 (January 1992), pp. 89-107.

³² Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 77: Gage to Conway, New York, 21 December 1765.

³³ Engleman, 'Cadwallader Colden and the New York Stamp Act Riots', p. 576.

Maintenance of Peace, & good Order in The Provinces'.³⁴ When Conway discovered the nature of the riots in New York, however, he was quick to congratulate Gage on his diffusing of the situation, but gave him a reprimand for allowing the stamped papers to be handed over to city officials, informing Gage that the correct course of action would have been to keep them in the fort or, at worse, place them onboard a ship of war.³⁵ Gage received very little support from the home government during the crisis. So devoid of instructions were Conway's letters that he apologised in March 1766 saying 'I am very sorry not to be able, as yet, to give you any Instruction for the Rule of your Conduct in the perplext Situation of Things in the Colonies; But The Parliament, to whose Wisdom His Majesty has been pleased to refer those Affairs, not having come to any ultimate Decision thereon, I may not presume to give any positive Direction'.³⁶

Conclusion

The Stamp Act undoubtedly proved to be Gage's most difficult task in the 1760s: faced with a rebellion on his own doorstep; a Lieutenant-Governor who relied on Gage's political support (where, perhaps, Gage should not have become involved) and an attack upon a principal Gage held dear (that of taxation of the Americans for the support of the army), he performed exceptionally well. Carefully treading the line between a military commander and a political agent, Gage was able to control the situation through good management of his troops and effectively politicking with important members of the colony's administration. Although Conway chastised Gage for handing the stamps over to New York city officials, both Gage and Colden had

³⁴ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 29: Conway to Gage, St James's, 24 October 1765.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II. 30: Conway to Gage, St James's, 15 December 1765.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II. 33: Conway to Gage, St James's, 1 March 1766.

very few alternative choices in their situation and did what they thought to be in the best interests of the city.

Interestingly, throughout all the troubles, Gage never changed his opinions on the role of Westminster in legislating for the American colonies. In March 1766, Gage wrote:

After the many Proofs His Majesty has given of his Paternal Tenderness to all his People, particularly in the Manner in which he has now referred the Consideration of the Disturbances in the Colonies to the Wisdom of his Parliament; And the Temper and Moderation shewn in the Addresses of both Houses on that Occasion, in which they express so much Care for the honor of His Majesty's Government, and at the same Time profess so much Regard for the Welfare of all his People; None but the most stubborn and factious Spirits can refuse to submit the Decision of their Constitutional Rights, to the Wisdom of the British Legislature. And I most sincerely hope that the People of the Colonies will rely on it's Decision with that Duty and Submission which they owe to the Legislative Acts of the Mother Country.³⁷

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 85: Gage to Conway, New York, 28 March 1776.

CHAPTER II

SECTION II

'Quash This Spirit at a Blow': The Townshend Duties and the Aftermath

Although the Stamp Act had been repealed, British politicians continued to seek a method of taxing the American colonies. In their arguments over the unconstitutional nature of the Stamp Act, the Americans had complained of an *internal* tax being laid. As a result, Charles Townshend (who was, according to Edmund Burke, the 'delight and ornament of the house [of Commons]') the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1767, decided to lay an external tax on the American colonists.³⁸ Townshend pointed out to the House of Commons in February 1767 that the external tax would be laid upon the Americans because of their distinction between internal and external taxation, even though he thought the concept to be nonsense.

The Act laid a tax on everyday products such as paper, paint, glass, lead and, importantly, tea. Unlike the Stamp Act, the duties were designed not to pay for maintaining the army in America but were, rather, to remove the colonial governments in America from their dependence upon the American assemblies. The revenue from the duties would pay for the salaries of the various governors, judges and other officials.³⁹ Townshend's motives were thus more politically than economically motivated. The repeal of the Stamp Act had caused upset in British political circles and there was a popular demand for 'revenge and revenue'.⁴⁰

³⁸ For details of the political reasoning behind the Townshend Duties, see: R.J. Chaffin, 'The Townshend Acts of 1767', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, XXVII, No. 1 (January 1970), pp. 90-121.

³⁹ For the full text of the Townshend Duties Act, see: The Founder's Library, 'The Townshend Act, British Parliament, 1767' <http://www.founding.com/library/lbody.cfm?id=90> [Accessed 2 July 2006].

⁴⁰ Thomas, *Revolution in America*, p. 25.

Although Townshend died suddenly on 4 September 1767, his taxes were to have a lasting legacy on Anglo-American relations.

'Licentious and Daring Menaces'

The resistance to the Townshend Duties did not follow the same path as the opposition to the Stamp Act; the news of the duties and, importantly, of the intention to make the judiciary and executive branches of government independent of the assemblies caused the numerous pamphleteers and newspaper writers to spring into action.⁴¹ The resulting riots, particularly in Boston, were reported back to England – although Gage himself seems to have taken some time to report any events to Hillsborough (who was now in the office of the newly created Colonial Secretary). Gage's first report to Hillsborough on any issues of riots came on 17 June 1768, in which he reports of 'the Faction at Boston' and how, in his opinion, they will not go to any extreme measures until they are sure of the support of the other colonies.⁴²

Further riots in Boston and reports that the civil officers there were either unable or unwilling to protect the Commissioners – who had already asked for support from Commodore Samuel Hood,⁴³ in the form of HMS *Romney* – caused alarm in London.⁴⁴ As a result, Hillsborough wrote a secret and confidential letter to Gage in June 1768. Hillsborough wrote of:

How necessary it is become that such Measures should be taken as will strengthen the Hands of Government in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, enforce a due Obedience to the laws, and protect and support the Civil Magistrates, and the Officers to the Crown, in the Execution of their Duty.

⁴¹ On this note, see B. Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967).

⁴² Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 180: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 17 June 1768.

⁴³ BL, Add MS 38340, fo 309: Copy of a Letter from the Commissioner of the Customs at Boston to His Excellency General Gage at New York and to Colonel Dalrymple at Halifax, 11 July 1768.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, fo 285, 15 June 1768.

For these purposes I am to signify to you His Majesty's Pleasure that you do forthwith Order, one Regiment, or such Force as you shall think necessary, to Boston, to be Quartered in that Town, and to give every legal assistance to the Civil Magistrate in the Preservation of the Public Peace; and to the Officers of the Revenue in the Execution of the Laws of Trade and Revenue. And, as this appears to be a Service of delicate Nature, and possibly leading to Consequences not easily foreseen, I am directed by The King to recommend to you to make choice of an Officer for the Command of these Troops, upon whose Prudence, Resolution, and Integrity, you can entirely rely.

The necessary Measures for quartering and providing for these Troops, must be entirely left to your Discretion, but I would submit to you whether, as Troops will probably continue in that Town, and a place of some Strength may in case of Emergency be of great Service, it would not be advisable to take Possession of, and Repair, if Repairs be wanting, the little Castle, or Fort, of William and Mary, which belongs to the Crown.⁴⁵

Gage replied that 'no time has been lost in taking Measures for the moving a Body of Troops to Boston' and that he had sent an aide de camp to have secret and private discussions with the Governor of Massachusetts, Francis Bernard, on the size of force he thought should be sent to Boston. The discussions also involved the stationing of the troops in Boston; whether troops were barracked in Castle William, being roughly five miles from Boston itself, or whether they were to be closer at hand (in Boston itself) was to be at Bernard's discretion. Gage further insisted that all discussions with Governor Bernard would 'be kept Secret, at least on this Side of the Atlantick'.⁴⁶

Gage undoubtedly agreed with the British government's decision to send troops to Boston; he told Barrington in a private letter in June, just twenty days after receiving Hillsborough's letter, of the need to 'Quash this Spirit at a Blow, without too much regard for the Expence' and 'If the Principles of Moderation and Forbearance are again Adopted...There will be an End to these Provinces as British Colonies; give them then what other Name you please'.⁴⁷ Gage's usual caution and restraint had

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II. 68: Hillsborough to Gage (Secret and Confidential), Whitehall, 8 June 1768.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 191: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 7 September 1768.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II. 480: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 28 June 1768. See Appendix IV for a full copy of this extraordinary letter.

vanished; in its place was an aggressive military commander intent on showing the Bostonians – and all of America – that the British lion in North America was not about to submit to some rebellious colonists with absurd dreams of independence. Similarly, Commodore Hood thought fit to send reinforcements to Boston:

I have ordered the Beaver to return [to Boston] immediately as well as the Ft Lawrence Schooner, and if you think further Naval force essentially necessary for carrying on the King's Business, I shall be happy in sending it to the utmost of my power on the first application on the first application: at present I have only a Sentry gunship wholly unrigged & under repair, but I am in daily expectation of three or four more.⁴⁸

Governor Bernard, fearing a shocked response from Bostonians on the arrival of British troops, let it be known in private conversations that the redcoats were on their way. Bernard's plans were not entirely successful: there was a public outcry and the Sons of Liberty openly preached of the need to overthrow the British tyranny.⁴⁹ Gage became increasingly worried of the prospect of a battle at Boston on the arrival of his troops, and so he sent an engineer to chart Boston's major strategic points and make a military map of the city. Furthermore, Gage intended to visit Boston himself to take charge of the situation and he ordered his chosen commander in Boston, Colonel William Dalrymple, to take command of Castle William, regardless of any sentiments in Massachusetts.⁵⁰ Gage wrote to Hillsborough in an unusually unguarded fashion telling of 'the Treasonable and desperate Resolves they [the Bostonians] have lately taken. They have now delivered their Sentiments in a Manner not to be Misunderstood, and in the Stile of a ruling and Sovereign Nation, who acknowledges no Dependence'. Gage further informed Hillsborough:

Whatever opinion I may form of the Firmness of these Desperadoes, when the Day of Tryal comes, that the two Regiments ordered from Halifax, shall arrive at Boston; I am taking Measures to defeat any Treasonable Designs, and to support the Constitutional Rights of the King and Kingdom of Great Britain, as far as I am able.

⁴⁸ BL, Add MSS 38340: Copy of a Letter from Commodore Hood to the Commissioners of the Customs at Boston, 11 July 1768.

⁴⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 160.

⁵⁰ BL, Add MSS 35912, fo 118-125: Gage to Hillsborough, Boston, 31 October 1768.

Whilst Laws are in force, I shall pay the obedience that is due to them, and in my Military Capacity confine Myself Solely to the granting Such Aids to the Civil Power, as shall be required by me; but if open and declared Rebellion makes it's Appearance, I mean to use all the Powers lodged in my Hands, to make Head Against it.⁵¹

Later in the same letter, Gage told Hillsborough of the need for a 'Speedy, vigorous and unanimous' measure in England to suppress any riotous or rebellious inclinations from the Americans. Interestingly, in this same letter, Gage tells of how the British decision to punish Boston – which was later abandoned, at least until the Coercive Acts of 1774 – had caused the Americans to fall into line and he appears to very strongly approve of this measure.⁵²

All of Gage's preparations seem to have been well-founded; open rebellion was a real possibility in Boston at this time and was only stopped by the lack of support from the surrounding towns and provinces. Minor worries aside, however, there was no serious trouble on the arrival of the troops. Gage's major problem at this time concerned the stationing of the troops. As Hillsborough and Bernard had suggested, Castle William was not the best place to barrack the troops and, as a result, Colonel Dalrymple sought to place troops in Boston itself. Furthermore, two more regiments were ordered from Britain and Dalrymple decided that they should be stationed in Castle William. When Gage himself arrived in Boston, he worked with Bernard to secure the use of the Manufactory Building – which was owned by the province of Massachusetts. When the troops tried to enter the building, however, they were stopped by both physical and legal resistance. Gage appears to have had enough of

⁵¹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 196: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 26 September 1768. See Appendix V for a fuller account of the letter.

⁵² *Ibid.* See Appendix V. Also, see *Ibid.*, II. 499: Gage to Barrington (Private), 4 February 1769. In this letter, Gage tells of his hope that 'the Resolutions of the Parliament will...give the Americans no Hopes, that Great Britain is to be frightened out of her Rights'.

the troubles and decided to barrack the troops at the expense of the British government.⁵³

When it was found in America that the British government did not intend to punish Boston or Massachusetts, Gage was upset and annoyed. He believed that only swift and decisive punishment of the insubordinate and defiant Americans would bring the Americans to bear. Writing to Barrington in a private letter, Gage complained of the lack of backbone in Westminster:

The Resolutions of both the Houses concerning America with the Address, arrived here some weeks before I had the Honor to receive your Lordship's Letter of 12th February; many People were surprised at the Address, as they expected for certain, that all those who signed the Letters for convening the Deputies of the Province at Boston would have been impeached and ordered to England to take their Trial. What better Information can Governor Bernard give? What Evidence can he procure to authentick or so strong as their own Publication? The Opposition that has been made to the seditious Spirit so prevalent in this Country has certainly been of Use, and if those who have been so instrumental in leading People astray, had met with the Punishment they deserve, others would be more cautious hereafter. The Impeachment of those who signed the Letters of Convention, the Appointment of the Council by the King, and the Abolition of the Town Meetings of Boston, and to establish a Corporation in lieu thereof, as in other Citys, are three Points which I sincerely hoped would have been carried into Execution. The People here are greatly encouraged and supported by too many in England, and their News Papers are stuffed with every licentious Article they can cull out of the English Papers, so that a stranger wou'd imagine you were on the Eve of a Civil War. We read of nothing but Wilkes, Liberty and America, Addresses, Instructions, Counter-Addresses and disavowed Instructions.⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, Gage was hoping for something along the lines of what the Coercive Acts of 1774 would be. Gage's influence, however, on Lord North's eventual decision to punish Boston -- and Boston alone -- cannot be determined at this time. Nevertheless, Gage did continue to attack Boston and Bostonians in official and private letters to England and his opinions must have informed and shaped the eventual decision to punish Massachusetts.⁵⁵

⁵³ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 164.

⁵⁴ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 509: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 14 May 1769.

⁵⁵ See below, Chapter IV

Conclusion

The troops were to remain in Boston without serious incident (although there were numerous small incidents of arguments, scuffles, and brawls between Bostonians and redcoats) until March 1770. The American reaction to the Townshend Duties fortified Gage's opinion regarding any attempted American rebellion: the Americans must be shown to be subordinate to George III's crown, by force if necessary, and their attacks upon Great Britain must be stopped. The official British reaction to the American situation lagged behind Gage's somewhat: it was not until 1774 that British political opinion galvanised against the Americans.

The period between the arrival of troops in Boston and the 'Boston Massacre' in March 1770 was uncomfortable and challenging for Gage personally. His troops were under constant pressure from the Bostonians, many of whom treated them with contempt and disgust. Furthermore, the troops were stationed in close quarters in Castle William and within Boston; they were attacked verbally and physically; and they were under stern orders not to start any fights with the citizens of the city. Similarly, in New York, right in front of Gage, mobs attacked men who would not take part in the non-importation agreement amongst American trading towns. Gage could do nothing to prevent the growing nature of these attacks and complained bitterly to Barrington that he could not have 'as an Englishman and a Servant, of the Publick' such things 'go on without being hurt'.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II, 527: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 7 October 1769.

CHAPTER III

'Ladies Engaged in a Country Dance'

Although Gage was primarily a military man, his position as Commander-in-Chief meant that his most important professional relationships were with leading politicians in the Americas and in the United Kingdom. In the Americas, Gage's working relationship with the colonial governors was of utmost importance; he had to work closely with these men on a daily basis and was, during times of crisis, subject to their (and the colonial assemblies) decisions regarding his troops. Gage's role was, thus, highly politically charged; he reported directly to, and received orders from, one of the highest members of the British cabinet and was the central political focal point for the American colonies.

Gage's political predominance caused friction with some colonial governors. James Murray, the military Governor of Quebec from 1760 to 1764 and civil Governor of Quebec (which now included the rest of the conquered territories in Canada) from 1764 to 1766,¹ caused Gage significant problems, mostly due to Murray's jealousy and desire for the supreme military command in America. Senior in rank to Gage in 1758, he was determined to be promoted ahead of, or at the very least at the same time as, Gage. When Gage was promoted to the colonelcy of the eighteenth Regiment, Murray tried to resign from the service. When it became public knowledge that Amherst was to return to England, and the scramble for his position was opened to the highest ranking officers in the Americas, both Murray and Gage were seen as

¹ J. Dreaper, 'Murray, James (1722-1794)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19619>, accessed 9 July 2006].

prime candidates. There was also a rumour that Murray had threatened (again) to resign his post (as Governor of Quebec) unless he was promoted to the rank of Commander-in-Chief.² Murray and his Lieutenant-General in Quebec, Ralph Burton (who was a good friend of Gage and had direct command of the troops stationed in the province), bickered incessantly over which of the men should command the troops and which should command more respect, in what seems to have been a rehearsal for Murray's arguments with a future Lieutenant-General, in Minorca, in the early 1780s.³ Furthermore, Murray demanded that the troops in his province be removed from Gage's – and Burton's – command and placed under his own authority. Murray believed, as he was a military general and had controlled the troops during the military governance of Quebec, that his powers – and his prestige – were severely damaged by having Burton, who was his subordinate, control the troops in his province. Murray's point-of-view was viewed dimly in London, and Gage's position as supreme Commander – and thus his power to be able to appoint his own regional commanders – was not challenged. Murray and Ralph Burton were both recalled to new positions in 1766 to prevent further unproductive arguments.⁴

It is a testament to Gage's good character that, even after all the unpleasantness between the two, Gage was still willing to suggest Murray as a possible source of information and help to Barrington. Writing to Barrington in August 1767, Gage suggests Amherst and Murray as sources of information to 'ascertain the Truth' on a Memorial passed to Gage of which he had no, or limited, knowledge.⁵ Similarly, in a private letter to Barrington over a year later, in September 1768, Gage again suggests

² Alden, *Gage in America*, pp. 62, 79.

³ Drexler, *James Murray*, DNB.

⁴ *Ibid.*; Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 79.

⁵ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 427: Gage to Barrington, New York, 22 August 1767.

Murray as a possible source of information about an officer travelling back to England.⁶

Another Scot to cause Gage considerable bother was the Governor of West Florida, George Johnstone.⁷ Johnstone, 'an ill-balanced, quarrelsome man',⁸ was one of the four Scots to receive the Governorship of the newly created colonies in the aftermath of the Seven Years War from the Earl of Bute in 1763. Johnstone, Murray's nephew, arrived in Pensacola, the capital of West Florida, with enthusiasm and energy in October 1764 and almost immediately began his quarrels with the army stationed there. By February 1765, Gage was reporting of 'Complaints from the Officers in garrison at Mobile [of] his cruel Treatment of them, and for his violent and Tyrannical Behavior towards them'.⁹ The tyrannical behaviour Gage describes in the letter was Johnstone's belief that his Commission, as Governor of West Florida, rightfully gave him the control of any troops stationed in the province. There thus began a running conflict between Gage's chosen commanders in West Florida and Johnstone. At one point, Johnstone's correspondence with Gage became so aggressive and derogatory in tone that Gage refused to have any further contact with him.

The issue came to a head in March 1766. Gage reported to Barrington in a private letter of his annoyance with Johnstone. Writing that 'disunion amongst his Servants must be very disagreeable to the King, and his Ministers... the Military Affairs in West Florida, have given me very great trouble and perplexity from the moment Governor Johnstone arrived', Gage was obviously troubled by Johnstone's claims of

⁶ *Ibid.*, II. 487: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 10 September 1768.

⁷ Why Scots in particular in America seemed to have such a dislike for Gage is unclear. The Scottish clique, however, would have a serious impact on Gage in 1775; they were to be amongst the loudest voices clamouring for his recall. See, Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 281; H. Walpole, *Journal of the Reign of King George the Third from the Year 1771 to 1783* (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), I. 497.

⁸ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 86.

⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 51: Gage to Halifax, New York, 23 February 1765.

military supremacy.¹⁰ Similarly, Gage wrote to the Board of Ordinance in March of his troubles with Johnstone:

I am certain it could never be the Intention or design of the Board of Ordinance, that a General Officer Commanding, Supreme and Absolute over every Military Department in his District, Subject to no Person in North America, but the Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces there, Should be restricted from ordering a Single Cartridge of Powder and Ball to the Troops under his Command...¹¹

The problem was still bothering Gage in September, when he wrote to Barrington in a private letter of the 'violent disputes' between Johnstone and Gage's chosen commander, Colonel Walsh. Gage further commented on the arrival of his new commander in West Florida, Brigadier-General Haldimand who, Gage thought, 'will [have to] be cautious in His Conduct towards the Governor, and avoid as much as possible having any Disputes with him'. Gage also pointed out that Johnstone had had five separate regiments stationed in his province and had 'disagreed with all'.¹² Gage's problems with Johnstone were removed when Johnstone left for England in January 1767. Shelburne, on his appointment as Southern Secretary, had been shocked and dismayed by Johnstone's war mongering amongst the Creek Indians, and his determination to start, single-handedly, a war with that tribe. Johnstone thus left Pensacola, although technically still the Governor of West Florida, and was relieved of his position on his return to England.¹³

The third governor to attack Gage's position and authority was Sir Henry Moore, the Governor of New York from 1765 until his death in 1769. The disagreement between Gage and Moore began over social precedence; Mrs Gage and Mrs Moore had several

¹⁰ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 343: Gage to Barrington, New York, 28 March 1766.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II. 364: Gage to the Board of Ordinance, New York, 17 August 1766.

¹² *Ibid.*, II. 372: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 12 September 1766.

¹³ R. Fabel, 'Johnstone, George (1730-1787)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14960>, accessed 9 July 2006].

public disagreements over which husband (the civil or the military power) should have preference in social situations. The matter, however, quickly turned into an important political issue when Moore decided to attempt to take military command of the troops stationed in New York and demanded that his own position be raised above that of Gage's.¹⁴

Gage was obviously troubled by the situation with Moore – he wrote to Barrington, Amherst and, eventually, Hillsborough on the subject. Although he started by saying that it was ‘a trifling Dispute between Women’ and it came about because ‘a proper distinction was not made between a number of Ladies engaged in a Country Dance’, Gage undoubtedly thought the situation very serious.¹⁵ In both letters, he asked Amherst to give his assistance and to ‘interfere’ in the Matter on Gage’s behalf in London, and, to Barrington, he asks ‘to request the Favor of your Lordship’s Protection’.

Moore had decided that the position of Commander-in-Chief interfered with his own authority, power and prestige. Much like Murray and Johnstone before him, he decided that *he* must have control of the troops in New York in order to maintain any kind of sensible authority in the colony. Moore sent a note to Gage demanding the rank and position of commander of the troops in New York. Gage replied by showing Moore his own Commission as Commander-in-Chief, which described the extent of the powers and authority therein. Further, Gage recounted how the relationships between the various Governors and Commanders-in-Chief had worked prior to Moore’s arrival. Moore found Gage’s reply to be unsatisfactory and demanded that his council meet to discuss the situation and elaborate on the position of the Governor

¹⁴ See Appendix VI.

¹⁵ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 457: Gage to Barrington, New York, 28 March 1768; II. 456: Gage to Amherst, New York, 19 March 1768.

vis-à-vis the Commander-in-Chief. The council ultimately agreed with Gage's earlier reports, but suggested that Moore write to the Secretary of State for the Colonies – Lord Hillsborough – to establish his position, and to try to alter the status quo in New York.

Moore's letter caused some controversy in Britain when it arrived. Hillsborough wrote a private letter to Gage explaining the position of the government on the issue:

I am commanded by the King to write your Excellency a private Letter in regard to the Contest that has subsisted between the Governor of New York and the Commander in Chief in relation to Precedency...This foolish Matter made a good deal of Noise last Session of Parliament in the House of Commons...I think I can now confidently assure you, that the right Principles and Purposes with regard to America, are adopted by all the King's confidential Servants; and I make no Doubt that the Measures which will be pursued at the opening of the next Session of Parliament will warrant me in this Information.¹⁶

Gage's reply, at the start of October, shows him to be shocked at the level of attention the situation had occasioned, but glad of the resolves. He expresses his belief that the situation could be settled 'in half an Hour' between 'two prudent and reasonable People' and that he 'always avoided bringing Precedency to a decisive point'.¹⁷ When Moore died on 11 September 1769,¹⁸ although the debate over precedence continued, Gage's major problems died too. In a cold-hearted response to Moore's death, Barrington showed his annoyance at Moore's conduct in a single sentence: 'Considering how Sir Harry Moore acted at New York I think his death fortunate for this country'.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II. 111-113: Hillsborough to Gage (Private), Hanover Square, 4 August 1770. For details of the discussion in the Commons, see T.C. Hansard, *Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803* (London, 1813), Vol. XVI.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 273: Gage to Hillsborough (Private), New York, 6 October 1770.

¹⁸ J. Tiedemann, 'Moore, Sir Henry, first baronet (1713-1769)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19116>, accessed 10 July 2006].

¹⁹ Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 63: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 1 November 1769.

Yet another attack on Gage's position as Commander-in-Chief came in the late 1760s and early 1770s from the former Governor of Massachusetts Bay, Thomas Pownall. Pownall, the 'political busybody of his time', was a prolific writer on issues of American governance and the growing clash between Britain and the American colonies.²⁰ Pownall wrote of the need to remove the command of His Majesty's troops from a single Commander-in-Chief and place them under the command of the separate colonial governors. Gage obviously found further attacks on his position irksome. He wrote to Barrington in a private letter that:

According to Governor Pownall's Interpretation of Law, no Army in America can be under the Command of one Chief, unless brought together in one Province; and a Day's March carries them under a second Commander: so that an Army in less than a Month, might be under the Direction of three or four different Commanders; for if every Governor has a Right to command by Law, I know of no Power that can limit or controll his Command, whether he is a King's Governor a Proprietary, or Charter Governor, and if he commands in the highest Instance, he must also in all others. To draw Lines, and make nice Distinctions, between the Powers of Civil and Military Officers over Troops, may tend to create Disputes, but will never serve any good Purpose. Troops may be stationed in different Places, under so many Chiefs, but they cannot be moved from their Stations, or assembled on any Emergency, unless there is one Chief Commander, who acts as superior to, & independent of all others. We are told that most Laws are founded upon Sense and Reason, but I can't say so much of Mr. Pownall's.²¹

Ultimately, Pownall's thesis received very little attention or credit in London, and Gage's position as Commander-in-Chief remained secure – at least until late 1774.

Conclusion

The position of the Commander-in-Chief remained blurry throughout Gage's tenure. From almost the very start of his command, Gage's supremacy and authority were challenged by various colonial governors. The arguments began as early as 1764 and,

²⁰ E. Gould, 'Pownall, Thomas (1722–1805)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22676>, accessed 9 July 2006].

²¹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 545: Gage to Barrington (Private) 6 July 1770.

in 1765, Halifax wrote to Gage explaining of his surprise displeasure over the rupture between Gage and Governor Johnstone and, as a result, he sent to Gage 'His Majesty's...Intentions with respect to the command of the Troops Stationed in the Colonies' and that the explanation of the position of the Commander-in-Chief (being the supreme military commander in the Americas) being now much clearer, Halifax hoped there would not be 'any farther Dispute upon that Point between the Civil Governors and Military Commanders'.²²

The issues raised by these governors were part of a wider belief, both in America and in England, that the military power in North America was superseding that of the civil. Indeed, the American Declaration of Independence complained of this fact, stating that King George III attempted to 'render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power'. Whether this was in fact true – Gage certainly did not believe it to be so – is outwith this discussion; there were, however, obviously numerous people, on both sides of the Atlantic, who believed that the military command in America was growing outwith its original sphere of influence and that it had control, at least in part, of the civil government of the thirteen colonies.

²² *Ibid.*, II, 25: Halifax to Gage, St James's, 13 April 1765.

CHAPTER IV

SECTION I

'Your Lordships Most Obedient and Most Humble Servant': Gage and the Secretaries of State

The sources, which much of this thesis is based on, comes from Gage's correspondence with the Secretaries of State for the Southern Department (until 1768) and the Secretaries of State for the Colonies (from 1768). During Gage's tenure as Commander-in-Chief, there were four Secretaries of State for the Southern Department with responsibility for the American colonies. In 1768, the responsibility was handed to a new Secretary of State for the Colonies, of which there were two during Gage's command. The Southern Secretaries were: George Montague-Dunk, the Earl of Halifax (from September 1763 to July 1765); Henry Seymour Conway (from July 1765 to May 1766); Charles Lennox, the Duke of Richmond and Lennox (from May 1766 to July 1766); and William Petty, the Earl of Shelburne (from July 1766 to October 1768). The two Secretaries of State for the Colonies were Wills Hill, the Earl of Hillsborough (from February 1768 to August 1772) and William Legge, the Earl of Dartmouth (from August 1772 to November 1775). The Secretary at War from 1765 to 1778, Viscount Barrington, will be the focus of the following section.

As much of the details of the correspondence have been covered already, this section will concentrate on three major points: firstly, Gage's role in the decision to create any new colonies and where to station the troops; secondly, Gage's reports of the growth of the American Revolutionary sentiment and his official thoughts and feelings on that aspects; and, lastly, Gage's reports of Bostonian outrages. The choice of these three aspects of Gage correspondence is important because they explain Gage's influence

and impact on British policy of the time; the decision of whether to expand the colonies or not was divisive in cabinet and Gage's strong opinions on the matter will likely have altered events in the cabinet meetings. Furthermore, Gage's reports about the nature of the Americans' revolts and rebellions, and in particular his focus on Boston as the hotbed of dissent in the colonies certainly influenced the decision of the British government to punish Boston, and Boston alone, in 1774.

'They Don't Deserve So Much Attention'

While the issue of where to station the troops throughout the colonies was to a large degree the domain of Gage and the Secretary at War, Gage also corresponded on the issue with Hillsborough rather frequently. In an unusually long letter (seven pages in Carter's edition) in November 1770, Gage laid out to Hillsborough the reasons against further expansion and why the troops were not required in large tracts of land to the west. Gage stated that:

If the Forts were Marts of Trade, as first intended they should be, and the Traders confined to trade there only, it might be truley [*sic*] said, that they protect the Trade: But Experience evinced the impracticability of confining the Trade to the Forts. The Number of Posts requisite to take in all the Trade would be more than could with any propriety be Supported...

Similarly, with regards to maintaining good relations with the Indians, Gage suggests that the policy of giving gifts to the Indians 'might be as well effected by skillfull Indian Officers posted Judiciously amongst the Nations'. Regarding the military defence of the Americas, Gage points out that the numerous forts and posts 'did not protect Pensylvania [*sic*] and Virginia in the late Indian War' and that, should France attack in Canada again, 'it is much to be doubted whether the Forts would not in that Case be more detrimental than useful to use'. Gage explained:

We might be Necessitated to Send part of our Force to support the Forts, that could be employed to more Advantage below; and diverted from the Main Object, protect the Shadow, when we should employ all our Force, to defend the Substance; for your Lordship may be assured of the truth of this Maxim, whoever Commands the Country below, will always rule the Country above. From thence the Trade flows, and the Indians cannot do without it.

One situation where Gage agreed that forts should be maintained, however, was in the areas surrounding French settlement. His Majesty's new subjects, Gage explained, needed to be kept in subjection and that, if the French could not be removed to some other part of America with a civil government or no civil government was established over them, that the 'Forts may be said to be of use to ensure their Obedience'. Gage's opinions were thus clear on the stationing of the troops throughout the colonies: the forts and posts, to a large degree, provided no benefit and cost the British treasury a large amount.

On the creation of any new colonies in the west, Gage was similarly negative. Gage believed that further colonisation to be 'inconsistent with sound Policy' due to, primarily, the distance between where the colony would be settled and the Atlantic Ocean. Gage's first concerns were over the economies of the new settlements: 'they can give no Encouragement to the Fishery... they could not Supply the Sugar-Islands with Lumber and Provision [and] as for the raising of wine, Silk or other Commodities...their very long Transportation must probably make them too dear for any Market'. The second concern was over establishing law and order amongst the newly settled colonists: 'they [the colonists] are already, almost out of the Reach of Law and Government; Neither the Endeavours of Government, or Fear of Indians has kept them properly within Bounds'. Lastly, Gage worried that further settlements would cause more troubles with the Indians. Further expansion to the west would have to mean the settlement of more Indian lands and, as Gage commented, there was

'nothing to liable to bring in a Serious Quarrell with Indians [than] an Invasion of their Property'.¹ Gage's position on further colonisation, like that of the stationing of troops, was evidently clear and Hillsborough must have paid attention to these words when making his own decisions about whether to expand British America.

Gage's position respecting Britain and America's respective positions within the empire was less politically controversial; Gage completely supported the subordination of the colonies -- and their various assemblies and legislatures -- to the British Parliament. 'For inferior Legislatures', Gage wrote to Shelburne in October 1767 'to presume to intermeddle with Laws, which the Parliament of Great Britain have thought fit to take under their immediate Care...I conceive to be the most Manifest Invasion of the King's prerogative; and of the Rights of Parliament'.² These rights, Gage believed, should be supported by force, if necessary. Similarly, in 1772, Gage tells of how 'the Right of enacting Laws for Such Countrys [the American colonies], must be vested in the Parliament [in Britain]'.³

The rights of Parliament, Gage believed, must be supported at all costs. Britain's prestige, thought Gage, should not be forced to suffer further insults from the American colonies. Telling Hillsborough in July 1770 of the Boston Massacre earlier in that year, Gage said that he 'knew Nothing could resist Force, but Force'. Furthermore, Gage tells that he would be prepared to 'give him [Hutchinson, the commander of the troops in Boston] every Aid and Assistance he should require from me'.⁴ Gage also believed that British politicians should do more to ensure Britain remained dominant on the American side of the Atlantic. Although much of his

¹ *Ibid.*, I. 247-281: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 10 November 1770. Further explanations of Gage's position can be found on pp. 310 and 318.

² *Ibid.*, I. 154: Gage to Shelburne, New York, 19 October 1767.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 328: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 1 July 1772.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 263: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 7 July 1770.

criticism was in his private correspondence, and is the focus of the following section, on occasion Gage did pass judgment on the conduct of politicians in his public letters. Writing to Hillsborough in 1768, Gage tells of how nothing but 'Speedy, vigorous, and unanimous Measures taken in England' can 'quell the Spirit of Sedition...and bring the People back to a Sense of their Duty'.⁵

Boston, Bloody Boston!

Gage's most vociferous attacks, however, came on Boston city. The 'faction' in Boston, Gage believed, went further than any of the other colonies in their insults to British authority. The 'Outrageous Behavior, the licentious and daring Menaces, and Seditious Spirit of the People of all Degrees in Boston' alarmed Gage and he frequently reported abuses against British officials, the Parliament and even himself.⁶ Gage received the news that troops were being stationed in Boston in late 1768 and immediately began planning with some enthusiasm the movement of the troops into the city from throughout the Americas.

When the British government decided to remove some of the troops from Boston – after numerous troubles trying to quarter such large numbers of men in the city and the cost of keeping them there – Gage at first hesitated. The Massachusetts Assembly had caused some more trouble in the summer of 1769, and Gage was informed by the Governor of Boston, Sir Francis Bernard, one of his field commanders, Major General Mackay and Commodore Hood that the 'passionate Resolves' necessitated the delay in the departure of the sixty-fourth regiment. Furthermore, Gage assured Hillsborough that the people would likely become 'better disposed and less turbulent'

⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 197: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 26 September 1768.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 182: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 28 June 1768.

if the troops were removed from Boston, although he was quick to point out that such a consideration should have 'No Weight, where the publick Service alone is to be considered'.⁷ The sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth were eventually removed from Boston, and Gage reluctantly left the fourteenth and twenty-ninth regiments in Boston city after pleas from Governor Bernard.

After reports of the Boston Massacre on 5 March 1770 reached New York and the rest of colonial America, Gage decided to send a letter to Hillsborough in an attempt to exonerate the British army's name. The 'unhappy Quarrell', although already reported to Britain from Boston, needed an official military side to the story, and this Gage set out to do in April 1770. Gage reported of the 'critical Situation of the Troops, and the hatred of the People towards them' and that as the soldiers were Britons 'it was Natural for them, without examining into the Merits of a political Dispute, to take the part of their Country; which probably they have often done with more Zeal than Discretion, considering the Circumstances of the Place they were in'. Indeed, Gage believed that 'Government is at End in Boston, and in the hands of the People' and that 'No Person dares to oppose them, or call them to Account'. To absolve the troops, Gage told of how the people, who were prejudiced against the troops, 'laid every Snare to entrap and distress them' and that 'the Soldiers were daily insulted, and the People encouraged to insult them even by Magistrates'. Finally, Gage said that although the 'accident' happened, the troops – restrained by their discipline – prevented matters from 'going to Extremitys'. Naturally wanting to clear the name of those under his command, Gage sought to create a picture of the plight the troops in Boston were placed under by the constant attacks and insults from the citizens of Boston.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 229: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 22 July 1769.

Numerous of Gage's letters at this time refer to the publications of Bostonians,⁸ and Gage tells of how the indictments at Boston against him and other British officials seem only to be to 'Seize any Opportunity of insulting'.⁹ In addition, the papers and pamphlets published in Boston, Gage informed, were notorious for being 'daring and seditious' and he commented that 'principles repugnant to the British Constitution' were widespread, with a 'Republican Spirit [which] will appear upon every Opportunity favorable to it'.¹⁰ Clearly, Gage thought that Boston in particular deserved punishment and his letters (official and private) as well as his meetings with ministers while in England in 1773 must have had some influence on the eventual decision of the North Ministry in 1774 to enact the Coercive Acts.¹¹

On hearing the news in 1770 that the ministry was considering taking measures against the American colonists for their transgressions, Gage showed obvious relief that the British government was willing to support its authority. In a private letter to Hillsborough, Gage tells of his pleasure that 'the Spirit of the Bostonians is greatly sunk' due to 'the Measures taking [sic] by Administration'. Almost jokingly, Gage finishes the discussion on the problems in Boston saying: 'And thus ends, the truly patriotick Resolutions of the virtuous Americans against the Importation of British

⁸ For discussion of the pamphlets from the period see B. Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967) and B. Bailyn, *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776. Vol. 1, 1750-1765* (Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1965).

⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 261: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 6 July 1770.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 321: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 13 April 1772.

¹¹ For discussion on the politics behind the Coercive Acts (1774) see B. Donoghue *British Politics and the American Revolution: The Path to War, 1773-1775* (London: Macmillan, 1964); J. Derry *English Politics and the American Revolution* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd, 1976); P. Whiteley, *Lord North: The Prime Minister Who Lost America* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996); A.D. Brown, *English Sons or English Bastards? British Politics and the Coercive Acts, 1773-1774* (Unpublished MA (Hons) Dissertation, The University of Glasgow, 2004).

Goods'.¹² On hearing that the government had decided not to punish America in any way, Gage despaired and wrote privately to Barrington complaining of the insults to Britain that were now to go unpunished.¹³

Conclusion

Gage's correspondence with the Secretaries of State (and in particular Shelburne and Hillsborough) provides a clear picture of the political stance he took on important issues. Although he was always wary of overstepping his boundaries as a military commander, by the late 1760s, Gage was increasingly willing to show his personal opinions – often justifying any piece of advice or information by telling of his years of dutiful service in, and extensive knowledge of, the Americas. The intention of this section has been to show that, far from simply reporting events and facts, Gage showed an understanding of, and appreciation for, American politics of the time.

In addition, this chapter – as has much of the thesis – has sought to suggest that Gage influenced official imperial policy in London; the issue of the stationing of troops throughout the Americas was highly controversial and Gage's opinions were of pivotal importance in the decision making process. Similarly, Gage was able to influence the ultimate decision to punish Boston in 1774. The undefined political position of the Commander-in-Chief at the time allowed Gage perhaps to overstep his official boundaries as a military chief and advise on entirely political issues. Furthermore, Gage's personal relationships with important members of the government allowed him greater freedoms and access than would otherwise have been the case.

¹² Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 274; Gage to Hillsborough (Private), New York, 6 October 1770.

¹³ See p. 58 above for an extract of this letter.

CHAPTER IV

SECTION II

Confidence and Friendship: The Gage-Barrington Correspondence

Although most of Gage's personal correspondence has been lost to history, there remains a fascinating collection of the Gage-Barrington private correspondence. These letters, dating from Barrington's assumption of the position of Secretary at War for the second time in 1765 until Gage's recall ten years later, provide a unique and interesting view into the relationship between the two men and, importantly for the historian, give an insight into the personal and political character of the men. Reading the letters, we see a growing trust and friendship between them, which ultimately develops into a strong and lasting bond. The private correspondence of these two crucial figures in the descent to war with the American colonies provides an invaluable source for historians of the American Revolution and for the eighteenth century British army in general. Largely ignored since their discovery, the private letters were edited and printed by John Shy in 1978, with a very brief introduction and the piece appears to have been designed with the general reader in mind, as opposed to being a work of deep historical analysis.¹⁴ Furthermore, the study of Barrington by Tony Hayter purposefully omits any reference to his correspondence with Gage, as it had been covered by Carter and Shy previously.¹⁵ The Carter editions, meanwhile, print much of the correspondence from Gage to Barrington (with some omissions)

¹⁴ W. Joyce, 'Review of Sources of American Independence: Selected Manuscripts from the Collections of the William L. Clements Library', *The New England Quarterly*, LII, No. 4 (December 1979), 577-79; I. Christie, 'Review of Sources of American Independence: Selected Manuscripts from the Collections of the William L. Clements Library', *The English Historical Review*, XCV, No. 377 (October 1984), 428-29; R. Starr, 'Review of Sources of American Independence: Selected Manuscripts from the Collections of the William L. Clements Library', *The Journal of Southern History*, XLV, No. 3 (August 1979), 428-29.

¹⁵ T. Hayter, *An Eighteenth-Century Secretary at War: The Papers of William, Viscount Barrington* (London: The Bodley Head, 1988).

but, for some reason, Carter did not put Barrington's reply into his works. For the purposes of this chapter, reference will be made to Shy's edition over that of Carter to provide an easier-to-follow referencing system; rather than having Gage's letters referenced to Carter's edition and Barrington's letters to Shy's, all references (where appropriate) will be to Shy's work.

The correspondence starts in October 1765 (Barrington became Secretary at War in July of that year) with Barrington writing to Gage asking him to communicate his sentiments and thoughts freely and, similarly, in a letter in December Barrington talks of their 'confidence and friendship' and asks for Gage's opinion '*privately* on the best method of disposing of the troops in North America'.¹⁶ Gage's reply, on 18 December, is guarded and official in character. Gage happily suggests two different methods of the best places to locate the troops throughout the colonies, but does not say which he prefers or views as the wiser choice.¹⁷ When Barrington received the letter, although thankful, he was forced to remind Gage of the confidence with which his letters will be treated. Furthermore, he asked for a more personal approach from Gage, saying:

I wish that amiable modesty which makes a most respectable part of your character, would have allow'd you to add more decisive opinions to the clear states [of the troops] which you have sent me. Do I ask too much when I beg you will entrust me with your opinion which of the two plans you have stated to me, you conceive to be on whole, to be the most useful and proper for Great Britain?¹⁸

Similarly, in September 1766, Barrington again wrote to Gage begging him to 'tell me what is your opinion'.¹⁹ After this point, it appears that Gage finally became

¹⁶ Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 10: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 12 December 1765, his italics.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 18 December 1765.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 7 February 1766.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 12 September 1766.

comfortable and relaxed in his private correspondence with Barrington. Gage began to volunteer information, opinions, and ideas in his letters.

Although willing to volunteer his opinions and thoughts to Barrington, Gage still felt it necessary to ensure that Barrington did not think of him as overbearing, and in October 1769, Gage wrote:

It is not my business to relate these matters [on civil government] in my publick letters, and become a spy upon government, and I avoided it particularly for certain reasons during the life of our late governor [Governor Henry Moore], but I can not see such tame proceedings on the part of government without feeling very sensibly... I write in a hurry, and your lordship will pardon my incoherence, for I put things down just as they occur...²⁰

Barrington's reply reassured Gage that his letters were welcomed and, importantly, secure. Barrington told of how he was 'not surprised' that Gage did not 'write freely in your publick letters on subjects not immediately within your department' and that 'the intelligence which comes to me in your private letters I communicate where it will do good, & only there'.²¹ When, in 1773, Gage made plans to return to England for the first time in almost twenty years, Barrington wrote of 'being very impatient to embrace you' while Gage commented on receiving 'no small pleasure in the prospect before me of being able in a few months to pay my respects to your lordship in person'.²² By 1770, Barrington was referring to Gage as his 'old friend and acquaintance'; the two men had unquestionably become good and trusted friends and, interestingly, their political stances were moulded and influenced by the other.²³

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 7 October 1769.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 28 November 1769.

²² *Ibid.*, Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 4 April 1773; Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 7 April 1773.

²³ BL, Unbound Barrington Papers Vol. XII, fo 99-100: A Note to General Thomas Gage, Cavendish Square, 2 August 1770.

Ironically, Gage and Barrington disagreed over the aspect of policy in which they were *officially* supposed to correspond: the army. Gage's preferred plan was to fortify the troops along the east coast, in the major towns and cities in the colonies:

I wou'd quarter them in the great towns upon the coast; if upon the last plan, chiefly in this city [New York] and Philadelphia. They wou'd be at hand if wanted, for the support of Canada, or in case of Indian quarrells to move either to the northward or westward; and enable me in New York to protect the King's magazines which lye exposed, and during the tumults were threatened to be seized. If the first plan of abandoning the forts entirely was to be adopted, more regiments wou'd be at liberty and some might be quartered at Boston, which I wish could be never without two battalions on the present establishments. The troops would every where be ready for an embarkation, and a support to the civil government. And I am certain the company of neither officer or soldier will ever hurt the loyalty of the Americans, diminish the submission which they owe to the legislative Acts of the mother country, or lessen their dependence upon her government. The troops too, would in general be kept in much better order, and discipline than they can be, divided in a number of forts, and so far from inspection...²⁴

Gage's plan was less extreme than Barrington's; he did not propose abandoning all posts and forts west of the settled colonies but, merely, to scale down the numbers deployed there. Barrington, however, proposed the complete abandonment of any western posts and proposed deploying the entire force of the army in British North America in Canada and the Floridas. Gage tried to persuade Barrington to maintain some of force in the west, explaining to him that:

Niagara may be called the key of the upper Lakes on the side of the Lake Ontario, securing a pass which can't be avoided. It's great use is, that being situated on a carrying place between Lakes Ontario and Erie, it serves as a post of communication, with the upper lakes. There is a settlement of French at the Detroit, and to keep these under some sort of government, it may be said that troops are of service there...With respect to Michillimakinak, it has long been the most considerable mart of Indian trade. The Indians...flock thither every summer in very great numbers...A detachment of troops therefore appears to be usefull at Michillimakinak, during the time of the trade.²⁵

Interestingly, on hearing of some of the Board of Trade's plans to leave the people in the western territories under the government of military officers, Gage informed Barrington of how he 'could form such a one [a government], as the people would

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 7 May 1766.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 4 March 1769.

like much better, than that designed for them by the Board of Trade' by proposing a 'kind of military civil government, to be carried on by militia instead of regular troops'. He further tells Barrington, in a seemingly joking fashion, that Hillsborough, on hearing his plans for the army and government in the west, will think he is 'turning legislator'.²⁶ The issue was never resolved and the shock of American actions during the late 1760s and early 1770s caused more troops to be moved into the colonies – and, in particular, into Boston.

One of the most politically sensitive issues in American politics was of where and how to quarter the British army throughout the colonies. Whether the crown or the colony should pay for the quartering, find appropriate shelter, and make proper restitution to the troops provided significant debate in the colonial assemblies and in the Houses of Parliament. Naturally, for two administrators of the army, this issue occasioned significant debate between Gage and Barrington. The major issue came with applying the Mutiny Act to America.²⁷ Americans (and many subsequent 'patriot historians')²⁸ believed the Mutiny Act to be illiberal and an attack upon privacy and numerous colonial assemblies protested throughout the period at the billeting of troops in the provinces. It was Gage's role, as Commander-in-Chief, to ensure that the troops under his command were quartered adequately and he, thus, had to deal with the colonists on this issue.

The passage of the Mutiny Act in 1769 brought debate between Barrington and Thomas Pownall; Barrington wanted to insert a clause that would force the Americans to quarter troops in private houses. Writing that he was:

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 40: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 17 June 1768.

²⁷ The Mutiny Act had been passed by Parliament every year since 1765 and was 'an Act for punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters'. See, D. Gerlach, 'A Note on the Quartering Act of 1774', *The New England Quarterly*, XXXIX, No. 1 (March 1966), 84.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

As little desirous as any man that troops should be quartered in private house; nor was that the intention of my clause, but to engage the Americans to quarter them according to the Act, by shewing that if they did not, worse inconveniences would happen to themselves, than hiring empty houses & furnishing bedding &c.²⁹

Thomas Pownall, however, was ultimately successful in his inclusion of an amendment which allowed each of the colonies the option of quartering the troops under provincial law, and thus any issue of parliamentary sovereignty was – temporarily – avoided. This amendment annoyed Gage and he wrote to Barrington explaining of the ‘very great difficulties which occur, in putting the Mutiny Act in execution’. Gage went on to explain how, as the provincial assemblies alone could grant the money necessary for supplies, they alone would be able to control the quartering and billeting of the troops in any given province. The assemblies, Gage believed, would do nothing – or, at the most, very little – to support and pay for the troops from their own expenses and he stated that Barrington’s extra clause would likely have rendered ‘the disobedience of the Act highly inconvenient to the inhabitants’.³⁰

By October of 1769, Gage believed he might have found a way to get round the problems of quartering troops in America. Telling Barrington of the great difficulty arising from any attempts to quarter troops, he suggests that Barrington’s earlier proposed amendment be carried out. To provide constitutional support for the amendment, Gage points out that the ‘method of quartering it’s said is practiced in Scotland, so there is precedent to quote’.³¹ Barrington, however, did not believe Gage’s plan to be an option available to the British government. Telling Gage in November of that year that there ‘is no chance of persuading the ministers that any

²⁹ Shy, ‘Confronting Rebellion’, p. 53: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 21 March 1769.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 10 June 1769.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 7 October 1769.

private houses in America should have soldiers quartered on them, when the same species of house is not liable to the like burden here'. Furthermore, Barrington told Gage that 'troops are quartered in Scotland according to the ancient practice of that Kingdom before the Union', which therefore meant that the precedent could not be used for England or America.³²

The Americans managed to keep both Gage and Barrington guessing in early 1772. After complaining for years of the stationing of troops within the province boundary, the assembly of New York agreed to pay to quarter the troops. Similarly, in New Jersey there were complaints of the army being *withdrawn* from the province. Gage was obviously perplexed by the situation, telling – in an almost joking manner – of how Barrington must 'think it no easy matter to please them [the Americans]'.³³ By 1774, the Houses of Parliament, with a growing dislike towards the American colonists, decided to allow Barrington his clause and troops were allowed to be billeted in uninhabited houses in order to prevent 'the bad effect of those quibbles & delays which were so inconvenient to your excellency & the troops under your command when you were at Boston in the year 1768'.³⁴

Throughout the Gage-Barrington personal correspondence, there is a running commentary, from Barrington, on the political issues affecting British policy towards the Americas. Barrington, a central figure in British politics of the time, informed Gage of many of the important political events and often showed his own opinions regarding the situations. Through Barrington, Gage was able to be up-to-date concerning British politics. At first, Barrington merely describes the situation in

³² *Ibid.*, p. 67: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 28 November 1769.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 102: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 4 February 1772.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 4 May 1774. For discussion on the 1774 Quartering Act, see Gerlach, 'A Note on the Quartering Act of 1774', pp 80-88.

Britain when he, for example, tells Gage of the Prime Minister, Lord Chatham being 'unable to assist at Councils' due to his ill health and that 'the ministers decide nothing without him'. Later in the same letter, Barrington tells Gage of his renowned dislike for the ways of patronage and promotion in the eighteenth century British army and implies that Gage should write to the Commander-in-Chief in Britain, Lord Granby rather than him on issues of patronage and favours.³⁵

On the appointment of Lord Hillsborough to the position of Secretary of State for the Colonies, Gage's official influence seems to have increased due to Barrington's relationship with both men. In January 1768, Barrington tells Gage of the creation of the Colonial Secretary and that, as Gage already knew him well, he need not 'make his [Hillsborough's] panegyrick'.³⁶ Later in 1768, Barrington explained to Gage how a cabinet meeting, which was to discuss the placement of the troops across the Americas and whether or not to create new colonies in the west, produced no good effects (Barrington tells of expecting 'nothing from them'), but that Hillsborough had many 'right opinions' and 'the most real esteem for your excellency'. Among the 'right opinions' held by Hillsborough was his opposition to westward expansion and his desire to move the army to the eastern seaboard and away from the Native Americans. Hillsborough would eventually be driven to resign from office due to disagreement over these issues.³⁷ On hearing of Hillsborough's resignation, Gage felt it necessary to write to express his sympathy and congratulate Hillsborough's decision. Writing that he wished to express his 'Concern at the News brought to this

³⁵ Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 29; Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 14 June 1767.

³⁶ A panegyric is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'elaborate praise; eulogy; laudation'. *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, 2005 [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50170270?query_type=misspelling&queryword=panegyrick&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=dLyy-i2vofT-8672&control_no=null&result_place=1, accessed 21 February 2007].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33; Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 8 January 1768; p. 35; Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 12 March 1768.

Country by the September Mail; and be assured that your Loss is regretted', Gage told Hillsborough of his 'sincere Thanks for the favourable attention you always shewed to the Business of my Department' and that 'the Firmness with which your Lordship opposed a Project you judged pernicious to your Country, and the noble part you acted afterwards, rather than be an Instrument towards the carrying it into Execution, has raised your Lordship in the esteem of the World'.³⁸ By 1772, Gage was willing, therefore, to show his personal political stance in a public letter on a controversial issue in British politics. The earlier caution with which Gage had conducted his correspondence seems to have disappeared by this point and soon Gage would be writing desperate letters to Dartmouth (Hillsborough's successor) begging – or demanding – reinforcements and support from Britain.

While it is difficult to ascertain Gage's direct impact on any of the British policies towards the American colonies during his command, he certainly did have the ears of leading politicians through his correspondence with the Secretaries of State and, importantly, his private correspondence with Barrington. Although Barrington assures Gage that their correspondence always had, and always would, remain confidential, at times this confidence is broken (although Gage does not seem to have been troubled by it). In September 1769, for example, Barrington tells Gage that the King sees most of Gage's private letters and that he, George III, was pleased with Gage's conduct.³⁹ Similarly, in September 1772, Barrington tells Gage of giving his personal correspondence to the leading ministers of state:

Your sentiments on such a subject [on further American colonisation] are of such weight and importance, that I thought Lord North, Lord Dartmouth & the President of the [Privy] Council ought to know them *immediately*. I therefore ventured to give those Lords extracts from that part of your letter which relates to the interior

³⁸ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 339: Gage to Hillsborough, New York, 5 November 1772.

³⁹ Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 62: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 20 September 1769.

settlements; apprising them that being contained in our *private* correspondence no improper use should be made of them. I beg pardon for this liberty, which I would not have taken without your consent if there had been time to ask it. If you disapprove my having gone so far, tell me freely, & I will be more cautious for the future.⁴⁰

The personal correspondence of Barrington and Gage thus takes a more important role in the politics of the period; Gage was willing to transmit his personal thoughts and feelings on sensitive and politically charged issues to Barrington who, when he thought it prudent, would share Gage's information and ideas with the leading politicians. The following paragraphs, on Gage's growing concerns over the status of British power in the American colonies, must be viewed as a result in this light and with this fact in mind.

Throughout Gage's correspondence, and in particular in his private correspondence, there are numerous references to the growth of the spirit of American independence. It is doubtful that Gage expected the complete loss of the thirteen colonies, at least within his own lifetime, but he was increasingly aware of the growing nature of the American demand for, at the very least 'home rule', and even independence. The idea of any form of American independence or outright resistance to British rule does not seem to enter Gage's correspondence until 1767. Gage appears to have been shocked by the lengths the Americans went to in late 1766 and early 1767 with regards to the Quartering Act. Gage tells Barrington that 'the colonists are taking large strides towards independency' and that 'it concerns Great Britain by a speedy and spirited conduct to shew them that these provinces are British colonies, dependent upon her, and that they are not independent States'.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 28 September 1772, his italics.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 17 January 1767.

This opinion – that the Americans must be dealt with harshly and quickly – runs through Gage's private correspondence until his last few weeks as Commander-in-Chief (where he suddenly changes to blaming the British government for being unwilling to support him).⁴² By March of 1768, Gage was again telling Barrington that the Americans would 'struggle for independency' and that 'if the good folks at home are not already convinced of it [American demands for independence or self-rule], they soon will be convinced'. Furthermore, Gage effectively laid out the future events in Anglo-American relations telling Barrington that:

From the denying the right of internal taxations, they next deny the right of duties on imports, and thus they mean to go on step by step, till they throw off all subjections to your laws. They will acknowledge the king of Great Britain to be their king, but soon deny the prerogatives of the Crown, and acknowledge their king no longer than it shall be convenient for them to do so. It is very easy to gather all I have said, as well from the writings, as the frequent conversations, of the popular leaders. The disposition the Americans have shown, I think shou'd teach our managers to have one instructive lesson, which is to keep them weak as long as they can, and avoid every thing that can contribute to make them powerfull. It would be well, if the emigrations from Great Britain, Ireland and Holland, where the Germans embark for America, were prevented; and our new settlements [in the west, should they be created] should be peopled from the old ones, which would be a means to thin them, and put it less in their power to do mischief.⁴³

Only a few months later, in June 1768, Gage again demanded that the British government take 'warm and spirited resolves with speedy execution thereof' to 'put a stop to the seditious spirit, and daring threats of rebellion so prevalent in this country' and that 'the moderation and forbearance hitherto shewn by Great Britain, has been construed into timidity, and served only to raise sedition and mutiny, to a higher pitch'.⁴⁴

Gage similarly attacked the 'Friends of America' – the politicians in Britain, such as Lord Chatham, who had supported the American cause during the Stamp Act Crisis – believing that the Americans 'rely much on finding firm and powerfull friends

⁴² See appendix VII

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 37: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 10 March 1768.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 28 June 1768.

amongst you' and he again asks for a 'vigorous, speedy, and above all unanimous' resolution in Britain to punish the Americans for their rebellious actions. Again, in July 1769, Gage attacks the American supporters telling Barrington that:

The maxims propagated now in this country to get the better of Great Britain, are to raise tumults, and to refuse all trade with her. They assure themselves of having the merchants, & the manufacturers on their side on all occasions, if they stop the trade with them, and are as certain of being backed by the opposers of government, whatever sett of people hold the reins.⁴⁵

Gage's scorn on British politicians did not stop, however, at the outright supporters of America in Parliament. Later in 1769, Gage condemned the repeal of the taxes on America (except that on tea) saying that 'unless all laws are supported, and enforced, it's needless to make any' and that by 'repealing some laws, and altering others because the Americans will not obey them, is a sure way to engage the Americans to disobey every law that is inconvenient to them, and to regard the Legislature in a light, I shall not venture to name'.⁴⁶

Gage's opinion on the growing American crisis, and how the British government should deal with it, is strongly expressed in several private letters. It is obvious that Gage thought that the rebellious Americans needed to be punished for their transgressions and that Britain should act swiftly, severely and with gusto to crush the American sedition. In particular, Gage thought that Boston should be punished. Boston, which was 'govern'd by a mad and wicked faction', had consistently gone to extremities in their fight against British rule and Gage's letters are scattered with references to Boston going 'beyond their neighbors' and of how it would 'not surprise your lordship to hear of disturbances at Boston' and that 'Massachusetts's Bay stands

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 22 July 1769.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 7 October 1769.

alone in the predicament, of a flat refusal to the Act of Parliament'.⁴⁷ As a result, Gage demands that 'if any measures are to be taken with Boston, they must be such as to convince them you absolutely will be obeyed' and that the government must make a decision to 'either lop them off as a rotten limb from the empire, and leave them to themselves, or take effectual means to reduce them to lawfull authority' to see whether 'they will be wholly English, or wholly aliens'.⁴⁸

Interestingly, as early as 1770, Gage was laying out suggested plans for what would later become the Coercive Acts of 1774. The letter at first criticises the way in which the government had 'yielded by bitts' and in doing so 'it appeared that everything was constrained, and extorted from you' which meant the Americans 'commit every extravagance to gain their ends, and one demand has risen upon another'. As a result of their extravagance, Gage wrote:

I hope Boston will be called to a strict account, and I think it must be plain to every man, that no peace will ever be established in that province, till the king nominates his council, and appoints the magistrates, and that all town-meetings are absolutely abolished; whilst those meetings exist, the people will be kept in a perpetual heat.⁴⁹

Similarly, in April 1772, Gage warns of the extreme measures the Bostonians were taking against the British legislature. Gage again warned Barrington that 'democracy is too prevalent in America, and claims the greatest attention to prevent it's encrease, and fatal effects'. As before, Gage demanded that action be taken by Parliament to ensure the dependence of the colonies on Great Britain, stating:

It is necessary too that Great Britain should not only assert, but also support that supremacy which she claims over the members of the empire, or she will soon only be supreme in words, and we shall become a vast empire composed of many parts, disjointed and independent of each other, without any head...⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 68-69: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York 2 December 1769; New York, 16 December 1769.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 24 April 1770; p. 76: Barrington to Gage (Private), Cavendish Square, 5 June 1770.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 8 September 1770.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104: Gage to Barrington (Private), New York, 13 April 1772.

Gage's message in the letters mentioned above, and many more of a similar vein, is quite simple and obvious. Gage believed that the American colonies had gone too far and that Britain must show either a determination to maintain America as a British colony or, if not, to chop off the American colonies from the Empire and allow them to handle their own affairs. Gage obviously did not view the latter option as the path which Britain should follow, but he nevertheless demanded that the British government decide whether 'they are your subjects or not' and made it clear to Barrington – and to whomever Barrington subsequently gave copies to – that something, and something steadfast, should be done as soon as possible.⁵¹

Conclusion

The Gage-Barrington correspondence provides perhaps the most interesting account of the growing crisis in America from top-ranking British officials. Certainly, the most interesting point to the historian of the American Revolution is Gage's insistence early on of the need for troops and support from the government. In addition, Gage's willingness to criticise government policy in these private letters is interesting and provides a real insight into his political thinking -- an insight that is somewhat lacking in his official correspondence. Gage understood, perhaps better than most high-ranking British officials, the course of action the Americans would take and the disastrous consequences of British policy of the time.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121: Gage to Barrington (Private), Boston, 2 November 1774.

CHAPTER V

'I Wish This Cursed Place Was Burned': Gage in Boston, 1774-1775

By a letter, received in London at eleven o'clock at night on 11 April 1774, Gage was ordered back to the Americas. He was to remain Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces in North America but was, crucially and controversially, also to become Governor of the colony of Massachusetts. Gage's primary task was to ensure the Coercive Acts (1774) were enforced in Boston and to reduce the provinces in America to subordination:

The King having thought fit that you should return immediately to your Command in North America, and that you should proceed directly to Boston on board His Majesty's Ship *Lively*, now lying at Plymouth ready to set sail with the first fair wind, I send you herewith by His Majesty's Command a Commission under the Great Seal, appointing you Captain General and Governor in Chief of His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay...¹

Gage had spent the previous few months enjoying a respite in England after almost twenty years of continuous service in the American colonies. During his time in Britain, Gage was received in audience by George III; had several meetings with ministers; visited his predecessor and old friend, Sir Jeffrey Amherst; and attended several plays, concerts, and operas. Perhaps of most significance to Gage (aside from the birth of his daughter, Charlotte Margaret, in August 1773) was his attendance at a session of the Privy Council on 29 January 1774.² It was at this meeting that the Council decided to begin a campaign to assert its authority and sovereignty over the unruly American colonies after having heard of the riotous events of the Boston Tea

¹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 159: Dartmouth to Gage, Whitehall, 9 April 1774; NA, PC1.3143: Additional Instructions from the Council to Gage, 1 June 1774.

² Gage had first been summoned by George III in November 1773, not long after his arrival from New York. BL, Unbound Barrington Papers, Volume XIII, fo 31-33: Letter from Waldegrave to unknown recipient, Whitehall, 6 November 1773.

Party the previous December.³ On hearing further official reports of the Tea Party, Gage was again invited to meet George III less than a week later on 4 February.⁴

George III seems to have been impressed with Gage's character and determination. Writing to Lord North on the evening of the 4 February, the King wrote that Gage 'came to express his readiness though so lately come from America to return at a day's notice if the conduct of the Colonies should induce the directing coercive measures'.⁵ Further, George III believed Gage to be an 'honest determined Man' and told Lord North of Gage's belief that 'they [the Americans] will be Lyons, whilst we are Lambs but if we take the resolute part they will undoubtedly prove very meek'.⁶ While it is impossible to determine whether Gage did actually say this to the King, it seems that he did remark that 'four Regiments...if sent to Boston are sufficient to prevent any disturbance'.⁷ George III asked Lord North to 'see him [Gage] and hear his ideas as to the mode of compelling Boston to submit', but there is no proof that Lord North and Gage ever had any discussion on the crises in America.⁸ Certainly, Gage later suggested that he had had no part in the creation of the Coercive Acts of 1774 in letters to Viscount Barrington and General Haldimand.⁹ Just over a month after his meeting with King George, Gage set sail for the Americas. Leaving Plymouth on 16 April aboard HMS *Lively*, Gage arrived in Boston Harbour on 13

³ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 196.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁵ Sir J. Fortescue, *The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783* (London: Macmillan Ltd., 1928), III. 59: No. 1379, the King to Lord North, Queens House, 4 February 1774.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50: No. 1379, the King to Lord North, Queens House, 4 February 1774.

⁷ *Ibid.*, For proof of Gage's report of being able to control Boston, see General James Paterson's account of Gage's conversation with the King in Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 200.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 654: Gage to Barrington (Private), Boston, 25 September 1774; Alden, *Gage in America*, 201.

May to find the senior royal officials scattered throughout the countryside or residing in Castle William, all of them 'not daring to reside in Boston'.¹⁰

The news of the Boston Port Bill had reached the colonies before Gage's arrival and a town meeting was held in Boston on 18 May to discuss any Bostonian – or American – response to the Act. Although there was some debate at the meeting regarding the payment of any losses incurred from the Boston Tea Party, the meeting concluded with a decision 'to Invite the other Colonies, to stop all Exports and Imports to and from Great Britain, and Ireland, and every part of the West Indics, till the Act be repealed'.¹¹ Looking ahead, the Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia on 5 September, unanimously voted for a ban on British imports to start on 1 December 1774. The export ban, however, was delayed until the following autumn as the tobacco-growing colonies insisted on being able to sell the coming summer's crops.¹²

Gage had tried to prevent the meeting of the Continental Congress. According to his orders from Britain, Gage called the Massachusetts Legislature into session at Salem on 7 June. The body, however, refused to be brow-beaten by Britain and would not even consider the issue of payment for the destroyed tea. When Gage discovered, on 17 June, that the Legislature was planning to call for the Continental Congress to meet in September, he hastily sent the secretary of the province, Thomas Flucker, to dissolve it. The members, however, had ensured the door was locked and would not allow Flucker to enter; instead, Flucker had to 'do it [dissolve the Assembly] by Proclamation on the outside of the Door'.¹³ Once the Assembly had finished its business, it allowed Mr Flucker to carry out his orders and perform the dissolution.

¹⁰ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 355: Gage to Dartmouth, Boston, 19 May 1774.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I. 355: Gage to Dartmouth, Boston, 19 May 1774.

¹² Thomas, *Revolution in America*, p. 46.

¹³ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 357: Gage to Dartmouth, Salem, 26 June 1774.

Gage further reported to Dartmouth that he could not 'get a worse Council or a worse Assembly, who with the Exceptions, for there is in both some sensible and well affected Gentlemen, appeared little more than Echos to the Contrivers of all the Mischief in the Town of Boston'.¹⁴

With tensions growing, Gage started to make military preparations. Gage knew there were to be further acts punishing Massachusetts and he knew of the problems they would cause. Gage had five regiments in Boston at the start of July and, by the middle of the month, he had ordered two more regiments – one from Halifax and another from New York -- to Boston.¹⁵ While the First Continental Congress was meeting, Gage decided to use the growing number of troops at his disposal. Almost 250 regulars set out for Cambridge where 125 barrels of provincial powder were stored. The mission was a success, and the barrels were stored safely in Boston under Gage's command. As the Governor of Massachusetts, Gage had every legal right to remove property belonging to the colony, but the large movement of British troops sent shockwaves through the Massachusetts countryside and men mobilised their arms against His Majesty's supposed invasion. By the next day, thousands of men had gathered around Boston ready to attack the regulars should they move out of the town. Gage wisely chose to keep the troops inside Boston and ordered fortifications to be built along Boston Neck.¹⁶ Gage, further, reported of the actions of the people in the countryside:

The country People are exercising in Arms in this Province, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and getting Magazines of Arms and Ammunition in the Country, and such Artillery, as they can procure good and bad. They threaten to attack the Troops in Boston, and are very angry at a Work throwing up at the Entrance of the Town; on

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 357: Gage to Dartmouth, Salem, 26 June 1774.

¹⁵ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 209.

¹⁶ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 374: Gage to Dartmouth, Boston, 12 September 1774 and Alden, *Gage in America*, 214.

which Account I have had two Messages from the Select-Men and a third from the County of Suffolk.

People are daily resorting to this Town for Protection, for there is no Security to any Person deemed a Friend to Government in any Part of the Country; even Places always esteemed well affected have caught the Infection, and Sedition flows copiously from the Pulpits. The Commissioners of the Customs have thought it no longer safe or prudent to remain at Salem, and are amongst others come into the Town, where I am obliged likewise now to reside on many Accounts.¹⁷

Within a few days of writing this letter, Gage had ordered General Haldimand to bring *all* his troops from New York and had sent a call to Colonel Valentine Jones in Quebec to bring the tenth and fifty-second regiments to Boston – unless the troops were absolutely required in the defence of Canada.¹⁸ Gage also became worried about the security of his letters to London, referring to the dangerous passage they must take to New York in several letters to Barrington. In two separate letters (one being private) to Barrington on 25 September, Gage describes the ‘somewhat precarious’ route from Boston to New York and observed how the ‘Post to New York which must convey my Letters from hence for the Packet [is] not quite so safe...for there seems no Respect for any Thing’.¹⁹ Gage certainly had reason to feel unsafe in his city fortress; a statement made by John Adams in 1777 claimed that the Continental Congress had received, but rejected, a petition from Boston asking permission to attack and destroy Gage’s forces.²⁰

Aside from a few skirmishes and clashes between the – generally well-behaved – troops and the Americans, the months between October 1774 and April 1775 were quieter for Anglo-American affairs. Certainly, there was a growing hatred towards Britain among many Americans; but, as long as Gage remained behind his fortified line, they were unwilling to attack him directly; indeed, they were unable to do so

¹⁷ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 374; Gage to Dartmouth, Boston, 12 September 1774.

¹⁸ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 214.

¹⁹ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 654; Gage to Barrington, Boston, 25 September 1774.

²⁰ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 217.

successfully without heavy artillery. The Continental Congress had preferred a war of words and propaganda over any direct military assault as they believed the support of the southern and middle colonies would be limited and conditional. During this pause in open hostilities, Gage sent numerous letters to Dartmouth and Barrington. Asking repeatedly for orders and a plan of action, Gage received nothing concrete until April. Gage warned of the fragile nature of British control over the colonies, telling Dartmouth:

I am concerned that Affairs are gone to so great a Length that Great Britain cannot yield without giving up all her Authority over this Country, unless some Submission is Shewn on the part of the Colonies which I have tryed at here tho' hitherto without Effect. And Affairs are at such a Pitch thro' a general union of the whole, that I am obliged to use more caution than could otherwise be necessary, least all the Continent should unite in hostile Proceedings against us, which would bring on a Crisis which I apprehend His Majesty would by all means wish to avoid, unless drove to it by their own Conduct.

Earlier in this same letter, Gage had said how he was 'not a little pleased' to hear that George III was happy with Gage's conduct, although the King was unhappy with the general situation, and describes how nobody could have suspected that the Coercive Acts would have lead to such widespread discontent. Gage also told Dartmouth that 'if Force is to be used at length, it must be a considerable one, and Foreign Troops must be hired; for to begin with Small Numbers will encourage resistance'.²¹

Such demands for troops – and troops in large numbers – are scattered throughout Gage's official and private letters to Dartmouth and Barrington at this time. In a similarly depressed tone, Gage told his friend Barrington:

If you think ten Thousand Men sufficient, send Twenty, if one Million is thought enough, give two; you will save both Blood and Treasure in the End. A large Force will terrify, and engage many to join you, a middling one will encourage Resistance, and gain no Friends...²²

²¹ *Ibid.*, I. 381: Gage to Dartmouth (Private), Boston, 30 October 1774.

²² *Ibid.*, II. 658: Gage to Barrington (Private), Boston, 2 November 1774. This plea for help is repeated throughout much of Gage's correspondence of the time. He states that the army is unable to do its undertaking during this time, hoping that reinforcements would be sent. NA, PRO 30.23.3.2, fos 465-472.

Although Gage was predicting that, without large-scale reinforcement, British North America would be destroyed, the politicians in Britain were inclined to believe Gage's reports to be overstated. Dartmouth's reply to Gage's request for 20,000 troops was discouraging and patronising; Dartmouth wrote:

I am persuaded, Sir, that you must be aware that such a Force cannot be collected without augmenting our Army in general to a War-Establishment; and tho' I do not mention this as an objection, because I think that the preservation, to Great Britain, of her Colonies demands the exertion of every effort this Country can make, yet I am unwilling to believe that matters are as yet come to that Issue.²³

That is to say, just a few months before the start of the American War for Independence, Dartmouth was unwilling to accept that the American crises would come to any serious issue of warfare. Ironically, it was this letter, which arrived in the Americas on 16 April, that spurred Gage into direct military action against the colonists: three days later, Americans would clash with British regulars at Concord and Lexington. Even after the outbreak of war between Britain and the American colonies had begun, British officials were unwilling to send large-scale reinforcement to support the British establishment; George III told Dartmouth as late as July 1775 that he had said to Lord North no troops 'except Highlanders and Marines...could be prepared till Spring'.²⁴ Gage was thus forced to start fighting a continental war against up to two million Americans with as few as 3,500 troops trapped inside Boston. In August 1775, however, Dartmouth reported that the government had decided to increase the army in America to 'at least 20,000 men inclusive of Canadians and Indians' and sent some 'material Plans of Operation for the employment and preservation of the Army'.²⁵

²³ *Ibid.*, II. 181: Dartmouth to Gage (Secret), Whitehall, 27 January 1775.

²⁴ Fortescue, *George III Corr.*, III, 235: No. 1683, the King to Lord North, Kew, 26 July 1775.

²⁵ NA, PRO 30.29.3.2, fos 475-477.

In his secret letter of 27 January 1775, Dartmouth – while informing Gage he cannot have as many troops as he requested – told Gage that ‘a vigorous Exertion of...Force’ would prevent any further insults to British power and prestige. Further, Dartmouth stated:

It is hoped however that this large Reinforcement [a further 700 marines, three infantry regiments and one light dragoon regiment] to your Army will enable you to take a more active & determined part, & that you will have Strength enough, not only to keep Possession of Boston, but to give Protection to Salem, & the friends of Government at that Place, & that you may without Hazard of Insult return thither [sic] if you think fit, & exercise Your functions there, conformable to His Majesty’s Instructions.

Gage was further ordered to ‘arrest and imprison the principal actors & abettors in the Provincial Congress’ and that, should the people resist by force, it would ‘surely be better that the Conflict should be brought on, upon such a ground, than in a riper state of Rebellion’.²⁶

When Gage received this letter from Dartmouth in April, he immediately began planning a move against the Provincial Congress; he knew that several of the leaders of the American movement were in Concord hiding various supplies and arms. Gage was familiar with the route to Concord; two of his officers had escaped from there, through Lexington, escorting a loyalist lawyer on 20 March and had highly recommended the northern route as the best approach.²⁷ How Gage knew of the supplies at Concord has provided much historical debate, but it is certain that he was receiving intelligence – whatever the source – from a well-placed and well-connected member of the American movement.²⁸ The military events of the 19 April are outwith

²⁶ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 180: Dartmouth to Gage (Secret), Whitehall, 27 January 1775.

²⁷ D.H. Fischer, *Paul Revere’s Ride* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 84.

²⁸ For a detailed discussion of the reasons for Gage’s move against Concord, see A. French, *General Gage’s Informers: New Material Upon Lexington and Concord. Benjamin Thompson as Loyalist and the Treachery of Benjamin Church, Jr.* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1932), A. French ‘The British Expedition to Concord, Massachusetts, in 1775’, *The Journal of the American Military History Foundation*, I, No. 1 (Spring 1937), 1-17 and J.R. Alden, ‘Why the March to Concord?’, *American Historical Review*, XLIX, No. 3 (April 1944), 446-454.

the scope of this discussion and are well documented. Nevertheless, after the battles, Gage found himself in a perilous situation as thousands of men moved from American towns, villages, and farms towards Boston.

Being trapped in Boston forced Gage to consider several alternative plans of action. Admiral Graves urged Gage to hold Bunker Hill and to burn down Roxbury and Charlestown. He further suggested that Bunker Hill and the Roxbury hills be heavily fortified in order to control any position capable of bombarding Boston or the shipping in the bay. Graves also offered all his marines for these tasks and suggested that seamen be camped in Castle William to allow Gage to exploit his full force. Gage, however, vetoed the plan, probably because he felt Graves had underestimated the size and strength of the American forces.²⁹ In August 1775, Gage reported that George III's subjects were acting 'hostily' against him and those loyal to the British; he also considered sending forces to the adjacent provinces to prevent them from falling into rebel hands.³⁰ So worrying had the situation become that Gage sent his wife to England, although an American herself.³¹

Gage also seriously considered using Native Americans and African-American slaves to fight the rebellious colonists. He worried about the atrocities that would be carried out by Indian soldiers but realised that their employment was a logical – and necessary – choice. Native Americans were not the friends of American frontiersmen; the 1760s and 1770s had witnessed arguments between Britain and America over the

²⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 253.

³⁰ NA, CO. 23.23, fo 48: Gage to Montford-Browne [Governor of the Bahamas], Boston, 29 August 1775.

³¹ CKS, U1350 c8511: Admiral Keppel to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, 6 September 1775. There has been some debate on whether Gage's wife, Margaret (nee Kemble) was a traitor and American patriot. Although outside the focus of this thesis, it is an interesting historical discussion. It seems, however, that Gage and his wife remained on good terms until Gage's death; Gage left almost all his wealth (a not too small amount) to his wife and children. ESRO, SAS/RF19/210.

extent to which Americans could further invade Indian lands, with Britain consistently coming to the defence of the Native Americans. Similarly, in a private letter to Barrington, Gage suggested the use of African-American slaves to defend the British cause.³² It was obvious that Gage was becoming more desperate, and he was sensitive to growing criticisms over his command. He told Barrington bluntly that, while many had suggested that he should have taken to the field in 1774, he would have been destroyed if he had done so.³³ Edmund Burke wrote in May 1775 that the Americans had been 'much disposed to an immediate attack on Genl. Gage' but that they were unwilling to 'expose the people of Boston to the Carnage which might ensue; and Gage, looking upon that People as hostages in his hands, will not suffer one of them to go out'.³⁴

The criticism of Gage's command grew during the late summer and autumn of 1775. The heavy losses incurred taking control of Bunker Hill, where Americans had tried to raise artillery against Boston town, finally led to the decision in London to remove Gage from his command. In his letters to Dartmouth and Barrington, Gage described the gallantry of his officers and men; the ferociousness of the American attacks; and how the King's troops were vastly outnumbered. In a private letter to Barrington, however, Gage is more forthcoming as he tells Barrington he will receive a 'long list of killed and Wounded on our side' and that:

The loss we have Sustained is greater than we can bear, Small Army's cant [sic] afford such losses, especially when the Advantage gained tends to little more than the gaining of a Post. A Material one indeed, as our own Security depended on it.³⁵

³² Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 684: Gage to Barrington (Private), Boston, 12 June 1775.

³³ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 263.

³⁴ G. Guttridge (ed.), *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), III, 161.

³⁵ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 687: Gage to Barrington (Private), Boston, 26 June 1775.

Gage reported 226 killed and 828 wounded. This, as Gage pointed out, was unsustainable – one battle had reduced Gage's force by up to 40 per cent.³⁶ When the news reached London, Burke reported that 'two such Victories...would ruin Genl. Gage. He has lost in killed and wounded, a thousand men; and got nothing in the world, but a security from some Batteries which those he calls rebels were erecting against him'.³⁷ With such dismal news, it is likely that Gage expected an order for his recall once officials in London had read his reports.

Recall and Judgement

The recall, however, was not as swift in appearing as Gage may have anticipated; four months passed after the battle at Bunker Hill before Gage was dismissed. During those four months, Gage continually wrote to Barrington and Dartmouth asking for reinforcements and telling of his plight in Boston; he realised that his forces could not defeat the invigorated American army now under the control of 'Mr Washington' (in the correspondence between General Gage and George Washington, Gage would only refer to a 'Mr Washington'). Meanwhile, back in England, Lord George Germain – a man with a serious dislike for Gage since their days at Westminster Public School – was lobbying for Gage's removal. In letters to the Earl of Suffolk, Germain stated that the American problem was too large for Gage to handle. He said that the Commander-in-Chief must be willing to execute orders and act upon his own initiative, rather than just following month-old orders from London and that the troops had lost all faith in Gage, whom they called 'Tommy, the old woman'. After the news of Bunker Hill and the lack of any major successes in America, opinion in Britain rapidly swung round against Gage; as people looked for a scapegoat, the Commander-

³⁶ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 269.

³⁷ Guttridge, *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, III, 182.

in-Chief became the easy option. On 26 September, Gage discovered his fate and promptly prepared for his departure. The letter of dismissal was blunt, to the point and abrupt:

It being necessary, to the Plan of Operations in North America, that the Command of His Majesty's Armies there should be placed in the hands of two Officers, having the Rank of Generals in America, and each having a separate and independent Authority as Commander in Chief; The King has signified His Majesty's Pleasure that the Generals Carleton and Howe should be entrusted with that Command, and Commissions are preparing to pass the Great Seal giving them the Powers & Authorities of Commander in Chief.

By these Commissions your Authority as Military Commander in Chief in North America will be revoked, of which I am commanded by the King to acquaint you; and, at the same time, that it is not His Majesty's Intention to make any Alteration for the present with regard to the Government of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.³⁸

Gage set sail for England on the transport ship *Pallas* on 11 October and was never to return to the Americas or to be involved in active duty again. Arriving in London on 14 November, Gage had several meetings with British ministers and with George III.

Public opinion regarding General Gage remained split in England after his recall; while some commentators condemned him, others were talking of him as a 'good and wise man...surrounded by difficulties'.³⁹ Certainly, it seems that Gage was in an impossible situation by 1774. The American people were unwilling to be coerced into submission and all shows of force were perceived as British tyranny. On the other hand, British officials were similarly unwilling to back down but, crucially, they were also reluctant to send Gage the men and arms he would have required to force the colonies into submission. Gage lost favour in London because of his caution, his unwillingness to start an armed conflict on his own initiative and his insistence that any war waged between Britain and America would be hard-fought, costly, long and devastating.⁴⁰

³⁸ Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II, 206; Lord George Germain to Gage, Whitehall 18 April 1776. Note that the date, as published in Carter's edition, is the official date of transfer of command.

³⁹ Alden, *Gage in America*, p. 284.

⁴⁰ See Appendix VII for Gage's perception of the reasons for the American Revolution.

CONCLUSION

The above piece has shown the career of Major-General Thomas Gage from his assumption of the highest military command in North America in 1763 to his recall in 1775. On assuming the command, Gage was pensive, controlled and rather in the shadow of Amherst (who, after all, was still technically the Commander-in-Chief); he was not willing to overstep any of what he perceived to be his official boundaries. The growth in his confidence and, to an extent, the increasing trust placed in him by the Secretaries of State allowed Gage's role to grow beyond the military bounds. Indeed, the Americans themselves necessitated the rise in Gage's influence: as British officials became increasingly shocked by the actions of the Americans and their opinions galvanised against the rebellious colonists, their support for the punishment – through military means, if necessary – grew. Furthermore, Gage was able to provide a continent-wide perspective on the American troubles while also providing military support to the civil government.

More than that, however, Gage's personal relationships with principle figures in the British government allowed him to have a sympathetic and understanding ear. His relationship with Barrington, Shelburne and Hillsborough in particular allowed for Gage to put forward his own views, opinions and ideas more frequently and in more concrete terms. His private correspondence (which was only really private in as much as it was not open to Parliamentary scrutiny) provides an excellent example of the growing confidence Gage felt in dealing with civil matters.

Nevertheless, we must not overstate Gage's official role and impact; he remained, until 1774, simply a military commander. Although British officials did certainly pay

heed to Gage's opinions, they were equally as willing to disregard them. Dartmouth, for example, was unwilling to believe Gage's claims for the need of twenty thousand men after Gage's return to Boston. Only after the disastrous events of early 1775 did the government become willing to listen to Gage's pleas for troops. Gage was able to ride a fine line between the military and the civil power and was able to do so because of the undefined position and nature of the office of the Commander-in-Chief. That Gage's position was controversial was obvious; as Chapter III discussed, there were numerous challenges to Gage's authority from other British officials. Nonetheless, Gage's good nature and considerate manner meant that many of the potential points of conflict (for example, with the Indian Superintendents) did not come to any head.

Gage's role in the American crises of the 1760s and 1770s has also been covered in depth. This was, of course, a natural part of any thesis on Gage (and indeed the reason for my own historical interest). Gage's position during the 'tumults' of the 1760s was an uncomfortable one; he was limited in what he could legally do without direct and vocal consent from the civil powers. If anything, the above work has sought to prove that Gage understood well the causes and reasons for the American problems, but had little sympathy for their objectives and beliefs. A loyal Briton and child of the Glorious Revolution, Gage found the idea of any kind of federal empire impossible and distasteful. A man of military thinking over that of a politician, Gage consistently preferred punishing the Americas with an overt and bold show of military force to 'quash their spirit at a blow'. Ironically, when Gage was actually tasked with such aims, he became rather timid and unwilling to move against the rebels in any meaningful sense.

Discussion

Thomas Gage has been an understudied figure in the history of the American Revolution. Although one of the central figures in the period, most studies mention him in passing and only with reference to his Governorship of Massachusetts in the 1770s.¹ The reason until the early twentieth century was a lack of knowledge of the sources available to the historian. The discovery of Gage's correspondence, however, has occasioned very little scholarly interest: the works of Carter and Alden are now over sixty years old and Shy's essay is subsumed into a wide-ranging collection of essays with very little detail about Gage himself. Nevertheless, there has been some significant advancements in our understanding of the general ideas of the imperial crisis of the mid-eighteenth century and of the rise of the fiscal-military state and this work has therefore attempted to shed light on Gage with regards to these new ideas.

As a result, herein lies an attempt to show the role of the Commander-in-Chief (from dealing with Spaniards and Indians to attempting to support the civil power) in the period of the American Revolution. Naturally, in a work of this scope, certain aspects have been omitted or condensed and the final chapter is one of the victims to this. The decision for allowing the final chapter to become shorter was made for the simple reason of the topic having already been studied in some depth. The events from the Boston Tea Party, through the battles at Concord, Lexington and Bunker Hill are well known and documented. In addition, the military role of Gage at this time was not the focus of this piece. On the other hand, Gage's conduct concerning Indian management and foreign relations received rather more attention. This was because,

¹ For example, J. Steven Watson's *The Reign of George III, 1760-1815* mentions Gage only a few times and, on the first mentioning of his name, actually explains who Gage was: 'Thomas Gage (1721-87), a soldier who had served under Amherst in the conquest of Canada; commander-in-chief in America 1763-72; governor of Massachusetts 1774-75; superseded by Howe', J.S. Watson, *The Reign of George III, 1760-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 195.

unlike in Boston in 1774, those aspects of foreign and Indian policy have not been substantially covered before. The primary aim in this thesis, however, was to establish Gage's relationship with the Secretaries of State. This was covered in all the chapters (as the basis for all chapters was Gage's correspondence with the Secretaries of State) but was focused on in Chapter IV, in which Gage's political influence in particular was discussed. These issues can be subsumed into general concepts in the imperial crisis (including the growth of the military power in North America), the relationship between the military and civil government in the Americas, the relationship between the North American army and British officialdom, the rise of a form of British nationalism, and the growth of the fiscal-military state.

Alden's biography of Gage provides a picture of a man with a greater talent for politics than the military and with great patience; he presents Gage as a popular figure in American and British politics (at least until 1774) with an insight into the disagreements the colonists and Britain. In a review of Alden's work by Carter, Carter states that Alden's work would hopefully lift Gage 'out of the obscurity to which he has long been consigned'.² Certainly, it seems not to have been Alden's work which lifted Gage out of obscurity, but a more general interest in the reasons behind the American Revolution and, in particular, an interest in the nature of government in the pre-Revolutionary American colonies through studies of British nationalism, an 'Atlantic Empire', the idea of an imperial crisis, and the growth of a modernising and commercial fiscal state.

Therefore, as our understanding of the eighteenth century has grown, so must our understanding of Gage's role; as a result, we must now consider Gage's position in

² C. Carter, 'Review of General Gage in America: Being Principally a History of His Role in the American Revolution', *The American Historical Review*, LIV No. 2 (January 1949), 370.

the fiscal-military state, his sentiments towards Britain or, even, 'Greater Britain', and his role in the imperial crisis the mid-eighteenth century. With these new understandings and conceptions at our disposal, we are able to comprehend more fully Gage's actions and his reasoning. That is to say, we are now in a position to add to the current historical works on this period, be it the fiscal-military state or the growth of British nationalism, from our understanding of Gage's functions and beliefs as Commander-in-Chief.

The Very Model of an Early Modern Major-General?

From the discussion above, then, to what extent can we determine Gage's interaction with the key themes in current historiography regarding the American Revolution and the British Army in North America?³ It is worthwhile to note that neither Gage nor his contemporaries would have described themselves as furthering the fiscal-military state or of being involved in a general imperial crisis – rather, these terms and concepts have, as has been discussed, only arisen in the past few decades and are entirely modern and current conceptions.

With regards to the idea of a fiscal-military state, the above work has shown Gage to be an excellent example of Brewer's analysis. Gage was a reasonably effective bureaucrat, controlling a vast army throughout the Americas, with equally vast amounts of paperwork and administrative tasks. Moreover, Gage undoubtedly believed that George III's subjects in the American colonies *should* be taxed to pay for their administration and – vitally – their defence by British redcoats. Such opinions are scattered throughout Gage's official and private correspondence, where he shows an appreciation for the need to tax the colonists to pay for the soldiers

³ For discussion on these key themes, see p. 10 above.

stationed in the Americas. In addition, as the first chapter has shown, Gage was consistently obsessed with maximising trade, and the benefits thereof, with the various Native American populations. Here we find Gage (sometimes almost desperately) trying to improve efficiency and create a more commercial basis for trade throughout the Americas; Gage suggests plans and trade-routes, controls and limitations, practices and procedures to maximise the amount of profit gained by this system of trade. Although occasionally perhaps a little over-ambitious (when suggesting, for example, that Britain adopt a French policy of monopolisation towards Indian trade) Gage showed a reasonable and realistic grasp of trade relations and of commerce.

Concerning the imperial crisis and the growth of antagonism between the military and civil branches of the American colonial governments, we find Gage to be a central character. This would naturally be the case: Gage was the highest military figure in the colonies and his position challenged the prestige and power of various colonial governors. His numerous disagreements with colonial governors and colonial assemblies are typical of the clash between the military branch and the civilian governments. Gage, however, certainly did not feel his own powers to supersede that of any governor relating to *civilian* affairs: events such as the Stamp Act Crisis show that Gage was definitely unwilling to overstep his boundaries as a military commander without the express consent of civil magistrates and governors, even though governors such as Bernard feared unilateral military action by Gage once his troops were allowed into riotous cities.⁴

⁴ Nicolson, *The Infamous Governor*, p. 124.

On the other hand, Gage was unwilling to have his own powers checked or controlled by ambitious civilian administrators and actively ensured his commissions were protected by British officials. The relationship between the military and the civil authorities at this time was unquestionably difficult, and Reid has covered the almost impossible task the administrators had in the aftermath of the Seven Years War of controlling, with law, rebellious colonists who effectively had the support of that same law.⁵ Gage certainly agreed that laws, and even constitutions, had to be changed if peace and tranquillity were to be maintained in the colonies: he proposed, for example, the changing of the charter of Massachusetts long before the North Ministry did in 1774.⁶ In this way, he saw that some of the reasons behind the problem in Massachusetts were to do with legalities – however, his proposed plan of simply changing the constitution was perhaps a little naïve and short-sighted.

Finally, can ideas of British, or English, nationalism in Gage's actions and reports be found to mean that he associated himself with the rise of Britishness? This is perhaps the most difficult to ascertain from the above work. However, with the help of analysis from historians such as Colley, Frey and Brumwell, we can find that Gage was indeed a fully-fledged member of an increasingly British establishment. As Colley established, British nationalism was influenced by the sense of the 'Other' and, again, Gage can be found to be supporting this conclusion: his position put him in close contact with 'Others' from the principle Catholic power (France) against which he contrasted himself, his country and his Empire. Moreover, as has already been discussed, Gage was amongst the first of his family to fully and properly convert to

⁵ Reid, *In a Defiant Stance*.

⁶ This action was viewed very dimly by Thomas Hutchinson, who was shocked when it was declared that Massachusetts was in a state of rebellion: 'Had *Scotland*, Hutchinson asked, been declared to be in rebellion in '45? No, it was then only said that there was a rebellion in Scotland; "and the most that can be said now, is that there is a rebellion in Massachusetts Bay". Was It just to proscribe a whole people, the innocent together with the guilty?', Bailyn, *Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*, p. 311.

Protestantism which, Colley believes, was a crucial part of forming a sense of British nationalism.⁷ Similarly, Colley notes (and Brumwell agrees), that war saw the creation of a sense of British nationalism: 'war — recurrent, protracted, and increasingly demanding war — [was] the making of Great Britain'.⁸ Gage certainly was the typical example of a British military officer, devoted to protecting his Protestant nation from the Catholic 'Other'.

More than that, however, we can find in Gage an example of a member of the Atlantic Empire; as Gould, Armitage and Breen have very recently pointed out, the pre-Revolutionary Empire was one of shared culture, trade, language and tradition. The colonies were, then, an extension of the metropolitan centre of Britishness, where *Britons* forged a new England, built on the same traditions of commerce, liberty and 'toleration' of religion found in Britain. Certainly, the colonists themselves viewed this to be the case during their argument with the British ministry in the 1760s: colonists consistently claimed they simply wanted to be treated the same as their English brethren in Lancashire or Sussex. More than that, however, there was a sense of one nation, spread across the Atlantic, working together under George III and his Parliament (at least before the crises of the 1760s).⁹ In this respect, Gage's marriage to an American, his not inconsiderable property in the Americas, his length of stay in America, and his various American connections suggests he is the prime example of this 'pan-Atlantic Greater British' nation. Although he never considered himself to be a 'proper' American (that is, one of the colonists), Gage's connections to America were arguably stronger than his connection to England. As more research is

⁷ According to Colley, 'Protestantism was the foundation that made the invention of Great Britain possible', Colley, *Britons*, p. 54.

⁸ Colley, *Britons*, p. 322.

⁹ For some discussion on this point, see Armitage, 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?' and Breen, 'Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution'.

conducted in this new field, a clearer conception of the idea of pan-Atlanticism will be ascertained, and Gage will need to be re-evaluated and questioned yet again.

To conclude, then, this work finds the conclusions of Alden to be somewhat lacking in their widespread interpretations. As has been shown, Gage epitomised many aspects of what has now become historical consensus on ideas such as the fiscal-military state and the ideas of Britishness. More than that, however, Gage suggests a less strictly nation-based approach to the study of history as, in Gage, we find a member of an Atlantic community of shared ideas and beliefs. This shared Atlantic Empire, however, was to come to an abrupt and painful end under Gage's watch: the events of 5 March 1770 and 6 December 1773 forever changed the nature of the Atlantic community and radically altered the course of Gage's life.

APPENDIX I

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 122:

General Gage to Secretary of State Lord Shelburne,

New York, 22 February 1767.

'It may be difficult to fix the exact Boundaries of Trade to each Province respectively, or to prevent the Traders from one Province, when in the Deserts, from rambling into the Precincts allotted to others. But it's certainly very Necessary that the whole should be Subject to some general Rules and Restrictions. I am of Opinion, That the Price of all Goods should be fixed, for every part of the Country, that no Trader should trade without a License, in which the Prices of his Goods should be inserted, and a very small Fee taken for such License: that the Traders should give Security for their good Behavior and observation of all Rules and Restrictions, That Tho' Licensed in one Province they may be brought to Punishment in all, for any Frauds or Misdemeanors, or in any Shape breaking the Condition of their Bonds by which they obtain their licenses. That every Trader should be obliged to return with his Peltry to that Province from whence he received his License, and make Returns of the Quantity and Nature of the Peltry he brings with him. This method may in some Measure prevent their going down the Mississippi; Returns should also be made of the Quantity and Nature of the Goods they carry out. That the Indian Commissarys should be so stations, that every Nation may be able to lay their Complaints before some of these Commissarys, who should be impowered to do them Justice in Case of Misusage or fraudulent Dealings on the part of the Traders, transmitting the Names of such People to the respective Governors that they may meet with proper Punishment. The Indians should be made acquainted with all the Rules and Restrictions particularly with the Prices fixed for Goods, and warned to trade with none but the

Licensed Traders. This I conceive will give them a high Notion of His Majesty's
Regard for them, by the Care they will see that is taken to prevent their being abused
or defrauded.'

APPENDIX II

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, 1. 67:

General Gage to Secretary of State Conway,

New York, 23 September 1765.

'Tho' you will have received Accounts from the Governors of the Several Provinces, of the Clamor Tumults and Plots that the Stamp Act has occasioned in Colonys; yet as the Clamor has been so general¹⁰, it may be expected Sir, that I should likewise transmit you some Account of what has passed. The Resolves of the Assembly of Virginia, which you will have seen, gave the Signal for a general outcry over the Continent and tho' I don't find that the Assembly of any other Province, has yet come to Resolutions of the same Tendency, they have been applauded as the Protectors and Assertors of American Liberty, and all Person excited and encouraged by writings in the Publick Papers, and Speeches without any Reserve, to oppose the Execution of the Act. The general Scheme, concerted throughout, seems to have been, first by Menace or Force to oblige the Stamp Officers to resign their Employments, in which they have generally succeeded, and next to destroy the Stamp Papers upon their Arrival; that having no Stamps, Necessity might be an Escape for the Dispatch of Business without them; and that before they could be replaced, the Clamor and outcry of the People, with Addresses and Remonstrances from the Assemblys might procure a Repeal of the Act. The populace of Boston took the Lead in the Riots, and by an assault upon the House of the Stamp Officer, forced him to a Resignation. The little turbulent Colony of Rhode Island raised their Mob likewise, who not content only to

¹⁰ Note that an alternative of this letter is in BL, Stowe MSS 264, fo. 238: extract of a letter from Major General Gage to Mr Secretary Conway, New York, 23 September 1765. The alternative reads: 'Tho' you will have received accounts from the Governors of the Several Provinces of the Clamor Tumults and riots that the Stamp Act has occasioned in the colonys, yet as the Governors be no general, it may be Expected Sir, that I should likewise transmit you some Account of what has passed.'

force a Promise from the Person appointed to distribute the Stamps, that he would not Act in that Employment, by also assaulted and destroyed the Houses and Furniture of Messrs. Howard and Moffat, and obliged them to fly for safety, on Board a ship of War. The first, a Lawyer of Reputation had wrote in Defence of the Rights of the Parliament of Great Britain, to lay Taxes upon the Colonys; the other, a Physician, who had supposed the same, in his Conversations. The Neighbouring Provinces seem inclined to follow these Examples, but were prevented by the almost general Resignation of the Stamp Officers. The Boston Mob, raised first by the Instigation of Many of the Principal Inhabitants, Allured by Plunder, rose shortly after of their own Accord, attacked, robbed, and destroyed, several houses, and amongst others, that of the Lieutenant Governor; and only spared the Governor's, because his Effects had been removed. People then began to be terrified by the Spirit they had raised, to perceive that popular Fury was not to be guided, and each Individual feared he might be the next Victim to their Rapacity. The same Fears spread thro' the other Provinces, and there has been as much Pains taken since, to prevent Insurrection, of the People, as before to excite them.'

APPENDIX III

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 78:

General Gage to Secretary of State Conway,

New York, 21 December 1765.

'Since that Time [the riots on the arrival of the stamps] they [the Americans] have been employed to devise Means to carry on their Business in Trade and Law Proceedings without the Stamp Papers. Various Seditious and Treasonable papers have been Stuck up, and appeared in their Gazettes encouraging the People to every violence, and appointing Meetings of the Citizens to resolve upon violent Measures. The Inferior Sort, ready for any Mischief, were for obliging the Provincial Assembly to pass an Act to annul the Stamp Act, and afterwards to force the Governor and Council to confirm it. They also proposed to force the Lawyers to do Business in Contempt of the Stamp Act. This was going too far for the better Sort to join them, who fearing the Consequence of such Extracams, by their Numbers and Influence quashed these Attempts of the inferior Burgers [sic], who seeing themselves deserted by those who had raised them, were obliged to desist. No Law proceedings have been carried on, and the Genius of the Lawyers put to the Rack to find out Pretences and means to evade or Set the Act aside.

They obliged the Collector to give Clearances for the Vessels, certifying that no Stamps were issued in the Province, but the Men of War after some consideration, thought it their Duty to stop the Shipping unless they were provided with a Let-Pass signed by the Governor, The Governor refused to give any Let-Pass, and the Trade has been Stopped for Some Days. To get out of this Dilemma, the lower Class of People assembled a few Nights ago to burn the Stamp Papers, imagining if there were None

in the Province, there could be no Pretence to Stop the Ships. The City being Bound to make good the Loss of the Stamp Papers, became interested in the Affair, and the Magistrates got Assistance and prevented their Designs. This is the only exertion of Magistracy that has yet appeared from the Beginning of the Tumults. It is expected that the men of War must soon come to the Docks, on Account of the Ice, and that Merchants will then take the Opportunity to send out their Ships, if no readier expedient can be found.

The Plan of the People of Property has been to raise the lower Class to prevent the Execution of the Law, and as far as Riots and Tumults went against Stamp-Masters and other Obstructions to the Issuing of the Stamps, they encouraged, and many perhaps joined them. But when they tended towards Proceedings which might be deemed Treasonable or Rebellious, Persons and Propertys being then in Danger, they have endeavored to restrain them. They have wrote many Letters to the Correspondents in England, in which they throw the Blame upon the unruly Populace, Magnifying the Force and Determined Resolution of the People to oppose the Execution of the law by every Means, with the View to terrify and frighten the People of England into a Repeal of the Act. And the Merchants having Countermanded the Goods they had Wrote for unless it was repealed, they make no Doubt that many Trading Towns and principal Merchants in London will assist them to accomplish their Ends.

The Lawyers are the Source from whence the Clamors have flowed in every Province. In this Province Nothing Publick is transacted without them, and it is to be wished that even the Bench was free from Blame. The whole Body of Merchants in general, Assembly Men, Magistrates &c. have been united in this Plan of Riots, and without

the Influence and Instigation of these the inferior People would have been quiet. Very great Pains was taken to rouse them before they Stirred. The Sailors who are the only People who may be properly Stiled Mob, are entirely at the Command of the Merchants who employ them.

It would be endless to Send you the Seditious Papers which appear, but to give you a Specimen of the Nature and Spirit of their Writings, I have the honor to transmit you one of the New York Gazettes entire, and Extracts of two others.'

APPENDIX IV

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 479:

General Gage to Secretary at War Viscount Barrington (Private),

New York, 28 June 1768.

'The Ship by which I write will bring you Accounts of fresh Commotions in Boston, from whence the Commissioners of the Customs have been forced to fly, and have taken Refuge in Castle William under the protection of His Majestys Ship Romney. How this News will be received in England, we are in time to be informed of, Whether the Noble Spirit of New-Englanders will meet with applause and powerfull Protection, as on a former Occasion? or raise a General Indignation in the People of Great Britain. If the first, no more is to be said, But if a Contrary Temper prevails, and a determined Resolution is taken, to inforce at all Events, a due Submission to that Dependence on the Parent State to which all Colonies have ever been Subjected, you can not Act with too much Vigour: Warm and Spirited Resolves with Speedy Exccution in Consequence thereof, will be the only Effectual means to put a Stop to the Seditious Spirit, and daring Threats of Rebellion so prevalent in this Country. The Moderation and Forbearance hitherto shewn by Great Britain, has been Construed into Timidity, and served only to raise Sedition and Mutiny, to a higher Pitch. They Threaten without Reserve, an open Revolt, not only of the City of Boston, but of the whole Province of Massachusetts Bay, whether with design only to terrify, or that the People are actually so ripe for Rebellion, can be discovered only by Experience. But if Measures are taken to subdue them, it is to be hoped they will be taken Effectually, and nothing done by halves. Quash this Spirit at a Blow, without too much regard to the Expence, and it will prove oeconomy in the End. Such Resolute and determined

Conduct, will Astonish the rest of the Provinces, and damp the Spirit of Insurrection, that may lurk amongst them, and prevents its appearance. The Friends too of Governmt. Will then dare openly to avow their Principles.

None of the rest of the Provinces have yet shewn such Inclination to come to an open Rupture with the Mother Country, as this of the Massachusetts Bay, but look on such an Event, with dread and Terror, as the Certain means of their Destruction. The People of the Province who on other occasions have not been backward in Sedition, do now, as far as I have yet been able to Learn, in General condemn these last Proceedings, and Commotions, that have happened to Boston.

If the Principles of Moderation and Forbearance are again Adopted, or that these Transactions shall find favour and Protection with any Powerfull and popular Leaders amongst you There will be an End to these Provinces as British Colonies; give them then what other Name you please.

You will think perhaps my Lord that I speak too freely, You have asked my Sentiments, and I therefore give them to you, with the same Freedom as Sincerity, and hope you will receive them as favourably on this, as you have done me the Honor to do on other Occasions.'

APPENDIX V

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, I. 196:

General Gage to Secretary of State Lord Hillsborough,

New York, 26 September 1768.

'I have the honor to transmit herewith, a Copy of a Letter from Governor Bernard to me, a Copy of the Declaration of a Person of Note, and two printed News-Papers: which will inform your Lordship, of the Mutinous Behavior of the People of Boston, and of the Treasonable and desperate Resolves they have lately taken. They have not delivered their Sentiments in a Manner not to be Misunderstood, and in the Stile of a rule and Sovereign nation, who acknowledges no Dependence.

Whatever opinion I may form of the Firmness of these Desperadoes, when the Day of Tryal comes, that the two Regiments ordered from Halifax, shall arrive at Boston; I am taking Measures to defeat any Treasonable Designs, and to support the Constitutional Rights of the King and Kingdom of Great Britain, as far as I am able. Whilst Laws are in force, I shall pay the obedience that is due to them, and in my Military Capacity confine Myself Solely to the granting Such Aids to the Civil Power, as shall be required of me; but if open and declared Rebellion makes it's Appearance, I mean to use all the Powers lodged in my Hands, to make Head against it.

Whatever may happen on the Arrival of the Troops, I assure myself, with the Assistance of His Majesty's Ships, they will be able to take Possession of Castle-William: and the better to Secure it, I have ordered an Engineer there to put it in Repair, and given Powers to Lieutenant Colonel Dalrymple, who will command the Troops, to Send for a Detachment of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, with such

Military Stores, as he will have occasion for, from Halifax, being the nearest Place from whence he can draw supplies, for his immediate wants.

As there is Reason to Judge, the Troops from West-Florida may be arrived at St Augustine, from the time since the Orders were transmitted to Pensacola to that End, I have taken up Transports here to receive two Regiments under the Command of Brigadier General Haldimand, whom I shall order to proceed without Delay to Boston. But I am obliged to keep the Destination of those Troops a Secret here, as Some of the Owners of the Transports have refused to engage in the service, if the Troops they are to take on Board at St Augustine, are to be transported to Boston. I am unwilling to lose any time in bringing those Troops from the Southward, for if I wait Events and their Assistance should be wanted in the winter, it will then be more difficult and hazardous to bring them to the Northward. And St Augustine is very inconvenient for embarking or disembarking Troops, especially in bad Seasons...

I shall act the best I can, with such Force as I shall be able to collect, for His Majesty's Service, as Events shall happen, or according to the Orders His Majesty shall please to Send me.

People's Eyes here are now turned upon Boston, and it's feared too many rejoice at the Proceedings there, and encourage those People to proceed to every Extremity, tho' they might not choose to venture so far themselves. The Arrival of a Ship from England with the News, that Measures were taking at home, to bring the Bostoners to Reason, has however lowered their Presumption; and Governor Bernard takes Notice, that the Same News had been received at Boston, and had produced the Same Effects there. The Chief Dependence of the Americas, is upon those in Great Britain, who either thro' an opposition to all Measures of Government, or for their private Interests,

they flatter themselves will betray the Interests of Great Britain, to serve the Purposes and Designs of America. They rely greatly upon the Influence of the Merchants trading to America, and very much upon the Manufacturers, whom they even hope will commit Riots and Tumults in their Favor. Those views gave Birth to the Project not to import Goods, and they have their Emmissarys in England, who put various Paragraphs in the News Papers, concerning the People of Birmingham and other Manufacturing Towns, that they are starving for want of Employment, thro' the Resolutions taken in America not to import their Manufactures; with many other Puffs, which are copied into the American Gazettes, and Serve to keep up the Spirits of the Factions; in the several Provinces.

People who Should have Knowledge in those Matters averr, that there are now more Manufacturers commissioned from this Place and Boston than for many years past. It is certain large Quantities have lately been imported, and considerable Quantities more, daily expected. The scheme not to import Goods is idle and weak, and must fall of itself, if the People at home are not duped by it, on that Account alone, it deserves any Consideration, for the Americans, must either import Manufactures to Cloath themselves, wear Skins, or go naked...

I have given your Lordship a Sketch of the Situation of Affairs on this side of the Atlantick, and I know of nothing that can so effectually quell the Spirit of Sedition, which has so long and so greatly prevailed here, and bring this People back to a Sense of their Duty, as Speed, vigorous, and unanimous Measures taken in England to suppress it. Whereby the Americans shall plainly perceive, that it is the general and determined Sense of the British Nation, resolutely to support and Maintain their

Rights, and to reduce them to their Constitutional Dependence, on the Mother Country.'

APPENDIX VI

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 457:

General Gage to Secretary at War Viscount Barrington,

New York, 28 March 1768.

'Since the Sailing of the Packet on the 13th Instant; I have discovered that His Majesty's Ministers have been troubled by that opportunity, with an Affair which has took its Rise from the most trifling Cause, but which it seems has produced a Serious Remonstrance.

The cause was no more than a trifling Dispute between Women, in which your Lordship will believe I had little concern, but to my great Surprize, it occasioned my receiving a Message from Sir Henry Moore, sent by a Lieut. Colonel of the King's Troops, to claim Command, Rank &c. A Conversation afterwards passed between Us upon all these Matters, but the King's Orders and Instructions, or the Nature of the Commander in Chief's Commission, or the Information of everything that passed here before Sir Henry Moore's Arrival, were not Satisfactory: And the Business was to be laid before his Council in Form. To the Astonishment of many People a Council was actually assembled, where Sir Henry Moore received the same information he had before received from me, but tho' the Gentlemen of the Council knew the Cause which occasioned them to be assembled, they might notwithstanding have given their Opinions, that Sir Henry Moore might write to England for his further Satisfaction. From hence I am informed, that Sir Henry Moore has formed a Letter to the Secretary of State, by and with the Advice of Council, to Set forth that he has so little Power in his hands it is necessary to keep up Appearances of Authority as much as possible, and if there was any Person superior to himself, it would take away the Respect due to

the King's Governor; and alledging many Reasons, why the Commander in Chief's Commission should be lowered, and his own raised.

Sir Henry Moore's Predecessors gained the Love and Esteem of the People and obtained Respect from Men of all Degrees, tho in the same situation as himself, the Commanders in Chief of the Forces, residing in the Province with them. And those Gentlemen never complained of the want of Power and Authority to procure them a proper Respect. Superior Powers will avail little in those Points; but I am satisfied, Sir Henry Moore, like those Gentlemen whom he has Succeeded in this Government, will by his Conduct alone, acquire the Respect and Esteem due to him, from those he is appointed to Govern.

My Predecessors commanded His Majesty's Forces in this Country from the year 1756, with the Same Commissions Orders and Instructions, under which I have acted between four and five years: And during this Period of near thirteen years, there has been no Pretence to make Complaint that any Inconvenience to the King's Service has arisen from them. Should it appear, that I had on any Occasion misapplied, or improperly exerted the Powers given me by the King, there might be reasons for Consideration, whether the Nature of my Commission would admit of any Diminution of Authority; but should I be so happy as to have obtained His Majesty's gracious approbation of my Conduct, since I have had the honor to command his Forces in North America, I hope and trust from His Majesty's known Goodness, that no Alteration whatever will be made in my Commission, Orders, or Instructions; And that I shall not Suffer the Mortification of being degraded in any Shape, thro' the Means of Specious Pretences, which have no real existence but devised from imagination only, for the sole Purpose of gratifying the Caprice of a single Person.

I have never interfered with Sir Henry Moore in his Government, nor have Our commissions any Connection, further than to assist each other when the King's Service shall require it. The Nature of mine obliges me occasionally to correspond with every Governor on the Continent, sometimes to make Requisitions, at other times to remonstrate on the Situation of the Service, and to require their Assistance, which I often find it necessary to act with Caution, notwithstanding the Authoritys given me, as well as to use management, in order to conciliate many different Tempers and Opinions. Was I now to be Subjected to fifteen Governors (for the Orders respecting one must extend to the whole) your Lordship will judge if the King's Service could be carried on.

Considering the Spring from whence the Subject of this Letter first took it's Rise, I really know not how to write upon it to the Secretary of State, and I presume upon your Lordship's long Friendship to me, to trouble you with it. However, as Sir Henry Moore has wrote, I am to request the Favor of your Lordship's Protection, and to beg you will lay this Letter before His Majesty's Ministers.'

APPENDIX VII

Carter, *Gage Corr.*, II. 179:

Secretary of State Lord Dartmouth to General Gage (Secret),

Whitehall 27 January 1775.

'Although your letters by the Scarborough [packet] represented the Affairs of the Province under Your Government in a very unfavourable light, & stated an Opposition to the Execution of the Law which marked a Spirit in the People of dangerous & alarming nature, yet as they did not refer to any Facts tending to shew that the Outrages which had been committed were other than merely the Acts of tumultuous Rabble, without any Appearance of general Concert, or without any Head to advise, or Leader to conduct that would render them formidable to a regular Force led forth in support of Law and Government, it was hoped that by a vigorous Exertion of that Force, conformable to the Spirit & Tenor of the King's Commands signified to you in my several Letters, any further Insults of the like nature would have been prevented, & the People convinced that Government wanted neither the Power nor the Resolution to support it's just Authority, & to punish such atrocious Offences.

Your Dispatches, however, intrusted to Mr Oliver, and those which have been since received, by the Schooner St Lawrence, and through other Channels relate to Facts, and state Proceedings, that amount to actual Revolt, and shew a Determination in the People to commit themselves at all Events in open Rebellion.

The King's Dignity, & the Honor and Safety of the Empire, require, that, in such a Situation, Force should be repelled by Force; and it has been His Majesty's Care not only to send you from hence such Reinforcement of the Army under your Command

as general Considerations of public safety would admit, but also to authorize you to collect together every Corps that could be spared from necessary Duty in every other part of America. It is hoped therefore that by this time your Force will amount to little less than 4,000 effective Men, including the Detachment of Marines that went out in the Men of War that sailed in October last, and I have the Satisfaction to acquaint you that Orders have been given this day for the immediate Embarkation of a further Detachment of Seven Hundred Marines, and of three Regiments of Infantry, & One of light Dragoons, from Ireland...

It appears that your Object has hitherto been to act upon the Defensive, & to avoid the hazard of weakening your Force by sending out Detachments of your Troops upon any Occasion whatsoever; & I should do Injustice to your Conduct, and to my own Sentiments of your Prudence and Discretion, if I could suppose that such Precaution was not necessary.

It is hoped however that this large Reinforcement to your Army will enable you to take a more active & determined part, & that you will have Strength enough, not only to keep Possession of Boston, but to give Protection to Salem, & the friends of Government at that Place, & that you may without Hazard of Insult return thither if you think fit, & exercise Your Functions there, conformable to His Majesty's Instructions.

I have already said, in more Letters than one, that the Authority of this Kingdom must be supported, & the Execution of its Laws enforced, & you will have seen in His Maty's [sic] Speech to both Houses of Parliament, & in the Addresses which they have presented to His Majesty, the firm Resolution of His Majesty and Parliament to act upon those Principles; and as there is a strong Appearance that the Body of the

People in at least three of the New England Governments are determined to cast off their Dependence upon the Government of this Kingdom, the only Consideration that remains is, in what manner the Force under your Command may be exerted to defend the Constitution & to restore the Vigour of Government.

It seems to be your Idea that Matters are come to such a State that this is no otherwise attainable then by an absolute Conquest of the People of the three Governments of Massachuset's Bay, Connecticut & Rhode Island, & that such Conquest cannot be effected by a less Force than 20,000. Men.

I am persuaded, Sir, that you must be aware that such a Force cannot be collected without augmenting our Army in general to a War-Establishment; and tho' I do not mention this as an objection, because I think that the preservation, to Great Britain, of her Colonies demands the exertion of every effort this Country can make, yet I am unwilling to believe that matters are as yet come to that Issue...

In this view therefore of the situation of The King's Affairs, it is the Opinion of the King's Servants in which His Majesty concurs, that the first & essential step to be taken towards re-establishing Government, would be to arrest and imprison the principal actors & abettors in the Provincial Congress (whose proceedings appear in every light to be acts of treason & rebellion) if regardless of Your Proclamation & in defiance of it they should presume again to assemble for such rebellious purposes; and if the steps taken upon this occasion be accompanied with due precaution, and every means be devised to keep the Measure Secret until the moment of Execution, it can hardly fail of Success, and will perhaps be accomplished without bloodshed; but however that may be I must again repeat that any efforts of the People, unprepared to encounter with a regular force, cannot be very formidable; and though such a

proceeding should be, according to your own idea of it, a Signal for Hostilities yet, for the reasons I have already given, it will surely be better than the Conflict should be brought on, upon such ground, than in a riper state of Rebellion.

It must be understood, however, after all I have said, that this is a matter which must be left to your own Discretion to be executed or not as you shall, upon weighing all Circumstances, and the advantages and disadvantages on one side, and the other, think you most advisable.

APPENDIX VII

Shy, 'Confronting Rebellion', p. 138

General Gage to Secretary at War Viscount Barrington

Boston, 19 August 1775

'I thought I foresaw the storm gathering many months ago, and it has happened pretty much as I guessed, when I took the liberty to tell your lordship that no expence should be spared to quash the rebellion in it's infancy. And if you thought ten thousand men sufficient that you would vote twenty, and that blood and treasure would be saved in the end. The dye is cast, and tho' the rebels have been better prepared than any body would believe, affairs are not desperate if the nation will exert her force. You have too many amongst you of the same stamp as the American rebels who wish to overturn the constitution; the Americans have duped many others and made them their tools, whilst they thought they only meant like themselves to overthrow the minister. You have gone too far to retreat therefore to proceed with all the force you can collect whether national or foreign force, and I think you will not fail to bring these rebellious provinces to your terms notwithstanding all their gasconades...

The want of men, at such a crisis as the present, is indeed to be lamented, for you must have formidable corps in this country if you expect success...

It gives me pleasure to join in opinion with your Lordship concerning the disposition of the forces; for New York is certainly a place where a very large corps of troops ought to be posted. People would not believe that the Americans would resist in earnest, tho' the affair that happened last year at Cambridge was a strong indication that they would rise in arms; and they then did actually rise, on a false report, from

Boston to Philadelphia. *If what I then wrote to your lordship, amongst other, had been more attended to, affairs would be now in a far better situation.*

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