

The Case of Alexander Hamilton

by Nancy Spannaus

The first major political assassination by a British agent of a leading American revolutionary patriot occurred on July 11, 1804. The victim was Revolutionary leader and first U.S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. The assassin was the British-controlled traitor, and all-around scoundrel, Vice President Aaron Burr.

British-influenced historians of the United States have gone to great lengths to cover up the political sponsorship of the Burr-Hamilton duel and its outcome. Hamilton's motives for going ahead with the encounter, which he knew he was likely to lose, have been examined minutely, whereas Burr's thoughts have been well hidden. While it has been acknowledged that Hamilton had successfully destroyed Burr's ambitions to become governor of New York, in the election of 1804, there is nary a word about the fact that Burr's success in that race would have resulted in a major victory for the British plan to recolonize and destroy the United States—by implementing a secession of the Northern states from the Union.

In context, Burr's murder of Hamilton was not an act of personal revenge for attacks on his reputation, but a strategic move by his British sponsors to remove the most powerful organizer of the American System of economics who was on the scene. Eliminating Hamilton permitted European oligarchical agent Albert Gallatin, then Secretary of the Treasury, to move to take down the defenses of the United States, and the Federalist Party to move even closer to the British camp—thus threatening the destruction of the country.

Hamiltonian Economics

Among the stories put out to cover up Burr's role, is the gross distortion of principles upon which Hamilton guided his public career, even to the point of calling him a devotee of British economics. These stories are the product of either ignorance, or perfidy.

As any honest reading of Hamilton's reports on



America's first Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton (shown here in an oil painting by David Huntington, 1865), was the key architect of the United States' credit system, which the British Empire correctly saw as a threat to its continued world domination.

public credit demonstrates—not to mention his exercise of office—our first Treasury Secretary's guiding principle was to use the power of government to create a strong Federal union which could defend itself against the European oligarchical threat, and build up the physical economy essential to that defense, and to technological progress. In total contrast to the Bank of England, which had a stranglehold over the British government through its role in financing wars and other operations, Hamilton's national banking system was dedicated to reducing usury, and facilitating the growth of industry and agriculture, through the provision of credit.

It was this purpose-driven financial system, funded by protective tariffs, which drove the British oligarchy into a rage against Hamilton, which they expressed not only through promoting opposition to his policies, but through an intense campaign of slander, entrapment, and the like. British-run corruption—by promoting the opium trade among the Northern shipping interests, and the reliance on raw materials exports in the Southern states—permitted the defeat of Hamilton's principles,

as found in his *Report on Manufactures*, and weakened the implementation of the credit system itself.

Burr, Agent for Hire...

As far as this author knows, Alexander Hamilton never identified Aaron Burr as an agent of a foreign power. However, from the time the two became acquainted, in the earliest days of the Revolutionary War, around the staff of Gen. George Washington, Hamilton had identified Burr as dangerous and untrustworthy. Indeed, Burr never hid the fact that he was motivated by pure ambition, his motto being, "Great souls care little for small morals." Burr was constantly countermanding instructions in order to aggrandize his own role.

Burr cannot be defined by his political positions, which frequently changed, depending upon whether he was currying the favor of Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans, or the Federalist Party. But he did generally ally with his cousin Albert Gallatin, the son of a Swiss aristocrat, in demanding a cutback in the nation's defenses, in favor of paying debt.

Perhaps the most thorough indictment of Burr by Hamilton is found in the summary, assembled by his biographer Robert Hendrickson, as typical of Hamilton's statements, especially during the 1804 period, when the former Treasury Secretary was fighting indefatigably to prevent Burr from becoming governor of New York:

"Be assured, my dear sir, that this man has no principle, public nor private... [H]is sole spring of action is an inordinate ambition as an individual, he is believed by friends as well as foes to be without probity; and a voluptuary by system—with habits of expense that can be satisfied by no fair expedients... Daring and energy must be allowed him; but these qualities, under the direction of the worst passions, are certainly strong objections, not recommendations. He is of a temper to undertake the most hazardous enterprises, because he is sanguine enough to think nothing impracticable; and of an ambition that will be content with nothing less than permanent power in his own hands."

And more: "To a man of this description, possessing the requisite talents, the acquisition of permanent power is not a chimera. I know that Mr. Burr does not view it as such, and I am sure there are no means too atrocious to be employed by him. In debt, vastly beyond his means of payment, with all the habits of excessive expense, he cannot be satisfied with the regular emoluments of any office of our government... No engage-



Perhaps the most treasonous action taken by British agent Aaron Burr, was his cold-blooded assassination of Alexander Hamilton, on July 11, 1804, shown in this early American etching.

ment that can be made with him can be depended upon; while making it, he will laugh in his sleeve at the credulity of those with whom he makes it;—and the first moment it suits his views to break it he will do so."

Burr knew exactly what Hamilton thought of him, long before he decided to challenge Hamilton to a duel, on the basis of a newspaper publication alluding to Hamilton's comments on Burr's "despicable" character. He had probably heard most of the statements face to face. Hamilton had passionately organized against Burr's getting the Presidency in 1800, and then again in the New York gubernatorial campaign. Yet, having found his path to power blocked, once again, by Hamilton's organizing, Burr decided to act.

...by the British Empire

Burr's murder of Hamilton brought him immediate popular opprobrium, including indictments in New Jersey and New York. (They were ultimately quashed.) While he was laying low in New York, awaiting the coroner's finding, Burr was given \$41,783 by John Jacob Astor, a tycoon of questionable American loyalties, on a very odd basis, viz., for leases Burr didn't own.

But even Burr's public activity, from that point on, shows him to be acting *directly* in cahoots with, and for, his British controllers.

- As of early August (a few weeks after killing Hamilton), Burr is reported to have contacted British Ambassador to the U.S. Anthony Merry, and offered him his aid

in “endeavoring to effect a separation of the western part of the United States from that which lies between the Atlantic and the mountains, in its whole extent.”

- After leaving the Vice Presidency in 1805, Burr traveled extensively in those western areas in 1805-06, organizing in favor of such a separation, until such time as the second Jefferson Administration took note, and issued warrants for his arrest. He was acquitted at trial, in large part because evidence such as a letter from Ambassador Merry, was not available.

- In June 1808, Burr set sail, surreptitiously, for England, where he established contact with top levels of British intelligence, including Jeremy Bentham, at whose estate he sometimes resided. While arguing for the right to stay in England indefinitely, Burr made the argument that he was by law a British subject (!), and thus should be accorded that consideration. According to his favorable biographer, J. Parton, Burr’s preoccupation continued to be to find a sponsor for his earlier proposal to split off the West of the United States, including conquering Spanish territory, including Mexico. An unknown sum of money was expended in supporting him in England—and in subsequent travels throughout the Continent—until he returned to the United States, in 1812.

- From his return in 1812, until his death in 1836, Burr practiced law in New York City, dying a natural death at the age of 80. There is no indication that he ever showed signs of remorse for his mortal blow against the leading economist of the United States.

What Did Burr Accomplish?

It could be argued that Burr’s assassination of Hamilton in fact aided Hamilton’s reputation, and did not serve British aims. This is not true.

The ten years following Hamilton’s death saw the utter collapse of the Federalists into a virtual party of treason, and the destruction of the economy and defenses of the United States under the incompetent Democratic-Republicans. No thanks to the party leaderships had the U.S. beaten off the British attempt to dismantle country in the War of 1812. It was only with the offensive by the Mathew Carey grouping, allied with Henry Clay and others, in the mid 1810s, specifically the publication of Carey’s *Olive Branch*, that a nationalist faction came together around Hamiltonian economics, and established the American System tradition that led to Lincoln, and the transformation of the United States into the industrial envy of the world.