Editorial

THERE has never been any question of where we, The American Friends of Lafayette, stand on the issue of French liberation. We have been unequivocal in our support of, first, the Free French, later the Fighting French, and finally the French Committee of National Liberation. We have endorsed the patriotic role of General de Gaulle, convinced that he represents the democratic forces dedicated to liberating France from the German conquerors and their Vichy collaborators. We have avoided partisanship in our attitude towards certain elements in the liberation movement. In our resolution of May 20, 1943, we said: "We do not cast doubt upon the patriotism of General Giraud. We support every move that may promote understanding and cooperation between the divided French forces." History, in the past year, has demonstrated the correctness of our position.

The unity of the French people of all classes, military and civilian, metropolitan and overseas, under the leadership of General de Gaulle, is now an accomplished fact. In France and her possessions only the known enemies of the United Nations are hostile to the French Committee of National Liberation. We believe this cannot be said of some of the French people in this country and some Americans attached to France. For we are unwilling to condemn as defeatists and collaborationists certain groups which cannot see that today every genuine French patriot must rally to the support of the French Committee.

We have an interest in this as citizens of one of the United Nations. As members of The American Friends of Lafayette we have a special interest. A society named for General Lafayette could not be other than deeply concerned about any people's struggle for national liberation. And today we know that freedom is indivisible: If the French people do not regain their freedom, we shall lose ours.

The equivocal and possibly pro-Vichy elements mentioned above may point to the fact that the recognition extended by our Government to the regime led by General de Gaulle was a grudging, halfway measure. The business of American patriots is to correct our Government's policy. French unity against Hitler and against Vichy is now a definite reality. It is a virtue of American war leaders that they recognize realities of this nature. Our government has shown itself capable of abandoning or correcting policies which are found to obstruct victory. Support from us, in the form of resolutions and public statements, strengthens that decisive section of our war leadership which sponsors correct war policies.

Above all we must not be influenced by unsound or misinformed elements sometimes found in Franco-American circles. Who are these people? It requires very little interpolation to have Tom Paine's great lines against a negotiated peace apply exactly to our circumstances. He wrote in Common Sense, in the chapter headed Thoughts on the present state of American affairs:

"Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offense, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation may be included within the following descriptions:

"Interested men who are not to be trusted; weak men who cannot see; prejudiced men who will not see; and a certain set of moderate men who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all the other three."

"It is the good fortune of many to know precisely the same principles as in the case of the capitulation of Charleston by Gen'l Lincoln. This was approved and agreed to."

Louis Gottschalk

After the redoubts had been taken, and while the Americans were at work on the second line of trenches, a flag came out with a letter to Gen'l Washington, proposing a cessation of hostilities for arranging the terms of capitulation. The French and American officers were assembled in the trenches with Washington at their head. The terms of capitulation were discussed. The Marquis de Chastellux, and some others of the French officers, as well as the Americans, spoke in favor of liberal terms, and showing generosity. Lafayette said he agreed with the spirits of their proposals, but said he thought their course was clearly marked out by a precedent of no distant date. He proposed that the capitulation should be on precisely the same principles as in the case of the capitulation of Charleston by Gen'l Lincoln. This was approved and agreed to.

The English marched out between the American & French army drawn up in parallel lines. Lafayette observed as they passed, that they turned their heads towards the French, and would not look at the Americans. A little piqued at this piece of affectation, he thought he would try the effect of music upon them. He ordered his band to strike up Yankee Doodle. The British turned their heads at the sound of this tune.

Cornwallis did not march out with the army. When the British officers came up,
Another Unpublished Account of the Battle of Green Springs: Muhlenburg to Weendon

In the first issue of the GAZETTE, there appeared a letter by Major Galvan on the Battle of Green Springs (with an introduction by Dr. Julian P. Boyd). Following the publication of this letter, a number of communications were received from readers. Through the kindness of one of the members of the American Friends of Lafayette, we present another unpublished letter on the Battle of Green Springs. This confidential letter was written by Brigadier-General John Gabriel Peter Muhlenburg to Brigadier-General Weendon, who was then located at Fredericksburg. As to the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, the letter is reproduced exactly as written in the original document.

Camp (Malvern Hill) July 29, 1781.

This Morning, My Dear General, at half past 9 o’Clock I was favored with Yours of the 27th, enclosing two Sheets of paper; This Sent me into a Frenzy, so to say, that I could not be satisfied with this letter, without endeavoring to convince You, that I am not only a Man of my Word, but also a Fair Correspondent, for here, let me see, exactly at 10 o’Clock, I am writing away pell-mell with a borrowed pen & ink on the very paper You sent me.

News You say must naturally originate with the operating Army. This may have been the case heretofore; & may happen again, but at present it will not apply, we have now been ten days encamped in Malvern Hills, without being able to find out what His Lordship has in view; This much is certain, that a Fleet of Transports is now lying in Hampton Road with some troops on Board, but you know They may as well be destined up the Bay as down, & that the remainder was in the river & his plan was defeated. He pointed out the map the route, which he intended to pursue. But Lafayette assured him, that all his efforts would have been in vain, that the Americans would have pursued him and cut off his retreat before he could have escaped from Virginia.

Cornwallis returned his visit the next day, and was not a little surprised to find at Lafayette’s quarters the same negro spy, whom he had supposed to be acting in his interests but who was in reality engaged in the service of Lafayette. “Ah you rogue,” said Cornwallis to him, “then you have been playing me a trick all this time.”

As soon as the capitulation was over Lafayette went on board to de Grasse & proposed to him to sail immediately to Charleston, & take with him forces to co-operate with Greene & capture Charleston. Lafayette would command the American forces. De Grasse declined, stating that it was necessary for him to proceed to the West Indies. When Cornwallis saw Lafayette going off to the vessel he said to some of his officers, “He is now for Charleston, & they will certainly succeed against that place.” Lafayette is sure that nothing would have been more easy had not de Grasse’s obstinacy defeated the project. Naval officers are always impatient to be on their own element, and never contented to act in concert with land forces.

* * * "The one goal of my life—the well-being of all, and liberty everywhere." Lafayette.
LAFAYETTE was quite typical of the French aristocracy before he became interested in America. His devotion to liberty and equality was born only after he had decided to join the American insurgents; it was not the cause of his volunteering to come to this country. Having determined to come here, he became interested in American ideals. Those ideals developed while he was in America and especially when he began to feel a warm devotion to George Washington. Seldom has one prominent man in history so deliberately modeled after another as Lafayette did after Washington.

Upon his return to France after the Battle of Yorktown, Lafayette began for the first time to take a personal interest in his peasants, to wish to free the Negroes, to bring about toleration for Protestants, and to advocate other liberal reforms. Yet he was not a republican. During the French Revolution, which followed shortly, he might have aided in establishing a republic, but instead stood quite definitely for a strong constitutional monarchy. In 1791, in fact, he ordered his men to fire upon a republican demonstration; and in 1792, when the king was in danger, he tried to save the monarchy. Failing, he deserted the French army. Of all this Lafayette kept Washington informed and clearly expected Washington’s approval.

Lafayette might now have become a symbol of counter-revolution, were it not for the fact that he was imprisoned by the very German Governments that were using force to quell the Revolution; and those Englishmen and Frenchmen who stood out as friends of liberal thought tried now to ‘save him. Thus once more, the name of Lafayette became a rallying cry for liberals.

It was only after his imprisonment that Lafayette became a friend of the republic. Upon Bonaparte’s becoming First Consul he supported the Consulte. Perhaps he thought, as did Bonaparte himself momentarily, that the Consul would become a French Washington. But he was soon undeceived. He openly opposed the creation of the Life Consulte and thenceforth lived in quiet but well-known hostility to the dictatorship of Napoleon. He emerged from retirement only when, during the Hundred Days, a liberal constitution was granted to France, and took a leading part in the new legislature.

After Waterloo he was largely responsible for Napoleon’s second abdication. It was during the Restoration that the noblest period of Lafayette’s career took place. He fought the Bourbons in the Chamber of Deputies, opposed their intervention in Spain to suppress revolution there, championed the abolition of the slave-trade, organized relief and aid for the Greeks in their effort to secure independence, and sent encouragement to Latin-American and Italian revolutionaries. When re-election was stolen from him by the manipulations of the Bourbons, he accepted an invitation to revisit America, where he was systematically feted and celebrated as no other man ever has been in this country. Reelected in 1827 to the Chamber of Deputies, he took the lead once more in championing liberal and lost causes and in defying tyranny.

Finally, the Revolution of 1830 overthrew the Bourbons. A popular republican movement demanded him as leader and he accepted. Again at the head of a citizen militia, he completed the revolution but proved unwilling to create a republic. He put an Orleansist relative of the Bourbons upon the throne and left the republicans chagrined and defeated. The conditions under which Lafayette accepted Louis Philippe as king are still much mooted, but whatever they were, the king did not abide by them. He soon rid himself of Lafayette, who once more passed into the opposition.

Lafayette’s last years were spent mostly in supporting the cause of revolution in Portugal, Belgium, Italy and Poland. He might yet have become republican had he lived until the next revolution, but in the seventy-seven years that were allotted him his liberalism never quite overcame a distrust of republican institutions for France. Perhaps this explains why he is more of a hero in America than in France, where royals dis-like him because they think he betrayed the monarchy and republicans because they believe he betrayed the republic. But who can doubt where he would stand today? Fascism would have been too reminiscent of the Bourbons, Bonaparte, Talleyrand, and Louis Philippe to fool him long. Freedom, whether in monarchy or republic, was his ideal; and where do Frenchmen find freedom today?

LOUIS GOTTSCHALK

“Serving America is to my heart an inexpressible happiness.” Lafayette.

Books

Secretary Norton reports stocks of the following Lafayette publications, sponsored by our Society or by certain individual members, on deposit in Easton:


GAZETTE OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF LAFAYETTE, volume one, no. 1, February 1942.


Revel, Josiah de Perron, comte de. A MAP OF YORKTOWN...WITH NOTES BIOGRAPHICAL, NAUTICAL & CARTOGRAPHICAL. 1942.

Shriver, J. Alexis. LAFAYETTE IN HARFORD COUNTY. 1781. Bel Air, Maryland, 1931. 121 p.

If any active member has not received copies of these they will be sent upon request. In some cases the stock is nearly exhausted.

In an early issue of the GAZETTE a selection of titles from the Society’s stock of duplicates of Lafayette books, that is, books other than our own publications as listed above, will be offered. Also a partial list of titles wanted for our Collection. Mr. Norton suggests that one urgent “want” can be listed right now:

B. F. Stevens’ FACSIMILES OF MANUSCRIPTS IN EUROPEAN ARCHIVES RELATING TO AMERICA, 1773-1783. London, 1889-1898. 25 volumes.

Simon Bolivar to Lafayette: “You are the citizen hero, the Colossus of liberty, who, with one hand assisted America, and with the other, the old world.” 1824.

Fort Schuyler Indian pow-wow in 1784. The speech of Red Jacket—“Let the ears of Kayewla be opened to receive our words. We love to hear thy voice; it does us good, and never wounds our hearts. Thy words are truth. Thy predictions have been accomplished. We remember the words thou didst speak to us seven years ago. They have all been verified. Thy words to-day shall be proclaimed among the six nations. They will strengthen the chain of friendship which we trust will endure forever.”
"Lafayette, We Are Here!"

Professor Albert H. Gilmer of Lafayette College, a member of the Executive Council of the American Friends of Lafayette, was recently in Washington. In conference with General John J. Pershing at his quarters at the Walter Reed Hospital, Professor Gilmer gave General Pershing an opportunity to read for the first time his own words spoken at the tomb of Lafayette on July 4, 1917. As Pershing spoke extemporaneously on that historic occasion, it was of interest to him to review his own words.

—J. B. M.

At that time, after Brand Whitlock's long address and Col. Charles E. Stanton's short talk as representative appointed by General Pershing to speak for the American Expeditionary Force, that ended with the famous phrase, "Lafayette, we are here!" General Pershing arose at the request of French and American officials, and made a few effective remarks. He had no notes, nor did he later make any record of the speech. But Col. Stanton's secretary recorded the remarks in shorthand and typed it for Col. Stanton. It was a copy of this that Prof. Gilmer delivered to General Pershing who read it carefully, nodded his head, and said, "I recall now. That is what I said."

Prof. Gilmer showed him also a photograph of a letter of August 17, 1917 in which appeared in print for the first time the phrase and where it was first wrongly attributed to Pershing. The letter said, "General Pershing got off his horse before Lafayette's tomb." Upon reading this General Pershing looked up, quickly recalling the scene, and said decisively, "We didn't have horses at the cemetery." He added, "So this is how it all began?"

He was also keenly interested in the letter to Prof. Gilmer from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, of July 5, 1943, in regard to the authenticity of Colonel Stanton's dynamic phrase. General Eisenhower's letter was published, saying, "It was a grand phrase, and I only wish we had one that would tell us succinctly the story of the Allied occupation of North Africa and succeeding events."

When it was suggested that possibly General Eisenhower might repeat General Pershing's experience by marching his victorious troops through Paris and out to Lafayette's grave, General Pershing looked up quickly and said spiritedly, "I hope sincerely he may."

In speaking of the interview, Prof. Gilmer observed that General Pershing seemed to be in good health for his 83 years, walking with only slight aid from his cane, with the accustomed flash in his eyes, resonance in his voice and mentally alert. The general was interested in and much pleased with the material, autographed some of the documents, and asked to have copies of the articles.

(Reprinted from Easton Express)

The Lafayette Ambulance

The Lafayette Ambulance, presented to the American Field Service by Lafayette College and the American Friends of Lafayette in March, 1943, has served through the desert campaigns and is now in Italy. More detailed news is lacking at this time. So reports Mr. Stephen Gallati of New York, Director General of the American Field Service. We may be assured that this ambulance, bearing the name of Lafayette, is doing its part with honor in the war.

Books and Articles on the American Revolution Published in 1942 and 1943


Root, Winfred Trexler. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, RECONSIDERED. (Canadian Historical Review, XXIII: 300-315, September, 1942.)


Jackson, Luther Porter. VIRGINIA NEGRO SOLDIERS AND SEAMENS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. (Journal of Negro History, XXVII: 247-287, July, 1942.)


Lewis, Charles L. I HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT: errors surrounding the accounts of John Paul Jones' historic words (Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXIX: 237-293, September, 1942, and XXIX: 401-406, December, 1942.)

Lorenz, Lincoln. JOHN PAUL JONES: FIGHTER FOR FREEDOM AND GLORY. Annapolis, United States Naval Institute, 1942. xxii, 846 p.


Root, Winfred Trexler. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN NEW BOOKS AND NEW LIGHT. (Canadian Historical Review, XXIII: 300-315, September, 1942.)

Root, Winfred Trexler. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION RECONSIDERED. (Canadian Historical Review, XXIII: 16-29, March, 1942.)

Rossman, Kenneth R. CONWAY AND THE CONWAY CABAL. (South Atlantic Quarterly, XLI: 32-38, January, 1942.)


George Washington to Lafayette: "Your love of liberty, the just sense you entertain of this valuable blessing, and your noble and disinterested exertions in the cause of it, added to the innate goodness of your heart, conspire to render you dear to me; and I think myself happy in being linked with you in the bonds of the strictest friendship."