

THE FIGHT FOR THE REPUBLIC

James Fenimore Cooper and The Society of the Cincinnati

by Patrick Ruckert

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles on the American patriotic tradition, and its historical enemy, the European (British/Venetian) oligarchy. The purpose is to inject the issue of the American System, and the quality of republican leadership and culture that must be revived, into the political process. As of now, none of the purported Presidential candidates of either party has exhibited the quality of leadership required to deal with the onrushing collapse of the global financial system, the persistent war danger coming from London and from such London assets as Dick Cheney, and the myriad other crises confronting the nation and the world. We are going to need a quality of leadership from the next President that is so far lacking among the current crop of contenders.

Through this effort, we intend to create the conditions for a genuine American patriotic candidate to emerge. Who is the now-unknown American patriot? That question cannot be answered at this moment, but we have the longstanding tradition, promoted by Founding Father Benjamin Franklin, of the wide dissemination of patriotic writings, that we will draw upon. Of special relevance is the period of the early 19th Century, when patriots had to fight the treasonous role of the Jackson-van Buren gang which had sabotaged the American System model of economics. Thus, we turn first to James Fenimore Cooper as exemplary of the patriotic forces fighting for republicanism against oligarchism.

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Whenever the government of the United States shall break up, it will probably be in consequence of a false direction having been given to public opinion. This is the weak point of our defences, and the part to which the

enemies of the system will direct all their attacks. Opinion can be so perverted as to cause the false to seem true; the enemy, a friend, and the friend, an enemy; the best interests of the nation to appear insignificant, and trifles of moment; in a word, the right the wrong, and the wrong the right. In a country where opinion has sway, to seize upon it, is to seize upon power. As it is a rule of humanity that the upright and well-intentioned are comparatively passive, while the designing, dishonest and selfish are the most untiring in their efforts, the danger of public opinion's getting a false direction is four-fold, since few men think for themselves.

—James Fenimore Cooper,
The American Democrat, 1838

Again and again, Lyndon LaRouche has made the point that nations and cultures are destroyed, not by evil leaders, but by wrong or false beliefs, adopted as popular opinion by that nation's population. Should such false beliefs—ways of thinking about what it means to be human, how to organize an economy, what is a healthy culture—hold sway, then such a population has set itself on the path to its own destruction.

The story that follows is the story of a great American patriot, James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), and his fight to save the American Republic; and how the enemies of this nation, and what it represented for all humanity, saw in Cooper a man who had “constituted himself the literary antagonist of the monarchy, aristocracy, and feudality of all Europe, and particularly England.”

In the decades following the American Revolution and the adoption of the Constitution, the quality of mind and intellect, which allowed for those events to succeed, was gradually undermined. Whereas the Founding Fathers were the intellectual giants of their era, with important but few exceptions, the suc-



James Fenimore Cooper took up his pen to save the republic that his father's generation had created; he did so, not only as the most widely read writer of his time, but also as a leader of the American secret intelligence service--the Society of the Cincinnati--during the second quarter of the 19th Century (portrait by John Wesley Jarvis).

ceeding political leadership of the nation increasingly sank lower and lower into mediocrity, or downright evil. Recognizing this trend, and determined to reverse it, Cooper took up his pen to save the republic that his father's generation had created by waging war on stupidity, ignorance, treachery, and cowardice. He did so, not only with his pen, but also as one of the key leaders of the American secret intelligence service during the second quarter of the 19th Century. As a result, Cooper, like LaRouche, was seen by the enemies of the United States as a clear danger to their plans to destroy our republic.

The fact that only a handful of Americans know Cooper's story today is testimony to the fact that those who control the media, the education, and the literature of our country, still consider him to be a dangerous threat to their evil intentions, nearly two centuries after his death. In fact, if Cooper is known at all, it is mainly as the author of a series of frontier adventure novels called *The Leatherstocking Tales*.

But, as LaRouche has written: "The principal function of most of Cooper's published writings, which were composed in the conceptual form of Classical drama, was to inform Americans on how to look at foreign and domestic situations in which we confront our republic's enemies."

The First Generation: William Cooper

James Fenimore Cooper, born on Sept. 15, 1789, grew up in the midst of the men who had made the American Revolu-

tion and wrote the Constitution of the United States. His father, William Cooper, served under George Washington in the Continental Army. After the war, Washington directed Cooper to move to upstate New York to establish frontier settlements of patriotic Americans. Washington's plan at the time was to make Albany, New York the capital of the United States. By so establishing a populated center near the Canadian border, Washington knew that the threat from British-controlled Canada to re-impose its colonial rule would be lessened.

The senior Cooper became a leading figure in developing the frontier and was the founder of Cooperstown, New York. He wrote several books on establishing settlements, and was one of the earliest proponents for constructing the Erie Canal.

Two of his closest friends were John Jay and Alexander Hamilton, authors of *The Federalist Papers*, a series of articles authored by Hamilton, Jay, and James Madison in 1787-1788, which explained and argued for the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. Today they are still one of the most important and profound works on republican ideas, principles, and institutions ever written. Jay's son, Peter, was James Fenimore's life-long friend, associate, and fellow leader of the second generation of American republicans. Hamilton, George Washington's second-in-command during the Revolutionary War, was William Cooper's lawyer during attempts by British land companies to steal millions of acres of forest land in upper New York State. Appropriately, the lawyer for the British was the traitor Aaron Burr.

William Cooper also served in the Congress. In 1809, he was murdered by associates of Burr, just five years after Burr himself had murdered Hamilton in a duel.

The Society of the Cincinnati

In the years following the end of the Revolutionary War (1783) and the adoption of the Constitution (1789), the British-led oligarchy still hoped to reverse their defeat. In order to meet the challenge posed by the British, the Revolutionary War leadership had established a private, political intelligence organization aimed at not only protecting the young republic, but also, replicating its achievements on a world scale. The Society of the Cincinnati was founded in May 1783 by Baron von Steuben, Samuel Verplanck, Washington, and Hamilton. France's Marquis de Lafayette founded the European branch of the Society, and along with, especially, German republican forces, created the network, of which, 40 years later, James Fenimore Cooper would be a leader.

By 1815, despite the sweeping rout of republican forces and institutions in Europe, which the Congress of Vienna celebrated, the American defeat of England in the War of 1812 created a resurgence of the United States, and an aggressive intervention into Europe by the republican forces of the Society of the Cincinnati, which continued into 1832. Though defeated in Europe, the ideas generated by the American Revolution, the great German poet of freedom Friedrich Schiller,

the vom Stein-Humboldt reforms of 1809-1813, and so forth, had embedded the republican spirit deeply in the German people, among others in Europe.

The objective of the Congress of Vienna was to eradicate this republican spirit and the ideas of the American Revolution, along with the American republic itself, from this planet, before the system of wealth and power of the feudal oligarchy itself was eradicated. The Holy Alliance set in motion new ventures to accomplish this task. While maintaining a ruthless suppression of republican ideas, the Holy Alliance also launched an all-out assault on the culture and intellectual traditions of the American Revolution and German Classicism.

England, for example, flooded both countries with the feudalism-worshipping novels of Sir Walter Scott. Scott was not only a leading figure of the fascist Romantic movement; he directly deployed against Cooper and his network in Paris in 1830-31.

Cooper and the Spread of Republicanism

In the United States, James Fenimore took up his pen in the 1820s to defend his country. He began writing novels that expressed American principles. As he said in his *Notions of the Americans*, in 1829, the demonstration of these principles was the principal duty of an American author:

The literature of the United States is a subject of the highest interest to the civilized world; for when it does begin to be felt it will be with a force, a directness, and a common sense in its application, that has never yet been known. If there were no other points of difference between this country and other nations, those of its political and religious freedom, alone, would give a color of the highest importance to the writings of a people so thoroughly imbued with their distinctive principles; and so keenly alive to their advantage.

Like any competent leader, Cooper believed that attack was the best defense. And attack he did. Cooper went on to say, that for half a century America had been operating silently on Europe by force of example, but that the time had now come for those authors familiar with America's "doctrines and its experience," to press these upon the world's attention with articulate expression.

"Books," he said, "are, in a great measure, the instruments of controlling the opinions of a nation like ours. They are an engine alike powerful to save or destroy."

Between 1815 and 1824, the British spy, Sir Walter Scott, exerted a dominant influence on German literature. By 1824, the year Cooper's second novel, *The Spy*, was published in Germany, Scott was quickly pushed aside; and not only in Germany. In fact, Cooper became, in just a few years, the most widely read author in the world. His works were translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Russian,

Hungarian, and even Persian. Clearly, as he had forecast, the world was thirsting for American literature and ideas.

The *Paris Glove*, in 1827, wrote: "Cooper portrays solitary heroes who exercise the height of human virtues and human potentialities. He shows us the promise of a new civilization in which laws are the guarantees of human liberty. In the pages of Cooper we see the political revolution, which made such a society possible, and we witness the progress of settlements, which are bringing it to fruition. Unlike Walter Scott, who hides his lack of principle behind a ruse of objectivity, Cooper proclaims his faith in liberty, country, and the dignity of human nature. Cooper represents to the European reader the very type of noble American republican."

Samuel F.B. Morse—Classical painter, inventor of the telegraph, and Society of the Cincinnati agent—writing from abroad to a friend in America, said: "I have visited, in Europe, many countries, and what I have asserted of the fame of Mr. Cooper I assert from personal knowledge. In every city of Europe that I have visited, the works of Cooper were conspicuously placed in the windows of every book-shop. They are published as soon as he produces them in thirty-four different places in Europe. They have been seen by American travelers in the languages of Turkey and Persia, in Constantinople, in Egypt, at Jerusalem, at Isphahan."

In Germany, more than 100 editions of his most well-known novels were published between 1826 and 1914, while complete sets of his books were issued at least a dozen times. Among school children, the *Leatherstocking Tales* was read by Germans at least as much as by Americans. Titles of his books became German household words. In the early part of this century the German Boy Scouts were called "*Die Pfadfinder*," and the last bottle of wine at an evening drinking party was called "*Der letzte Mohikaner*."

During the 50 years following the 1815 Treaty of Vienna, millions of Germans fled the tyranny of the Holy Alliance by migrating to the United States. Nearly every German knew someone in America. Thus, Cooper's books were important for those going to America, and for their friends and relatives left behind. During the American Civil War, many of these Germans played leading roles in the victory of the North.

Cooper's book, *Notions of the Americans*, commissioned by American Revolutionary War hero, and Society of the Cincinnati member, the Marquis de Lafayette, in 1828, was the most important of Cooper's works in directly communicating knowledge about America and its republican ideas. Written in the popular form of a travel book, it describes America, its people, institutions, history, heroes, its cities, and industries. Echoing the ideas of the *Federalist Papers*, this book was a powerful tool for republicans, and was used as such during the European revolutions of 1828-1832.

Cooper had a direct influence on some of the best-known writers of Europe, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). Goethe was fascinated with America, and, after 1816, regularly received American visitors. He studied Amer-



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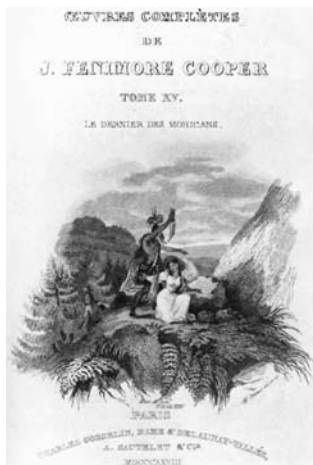
The Pilot



FOC Darley

The Bravo

do not remember a stronger conviction of the superiority enjoyed by true over factitious greatness, than that which flashed on my mind when I was told this fact [that he was viewing Schiller's birthplace—ed.]. That sequestered hamlet rose in a moment to an importance that all the appliances and souvenirs of royalty could not give to the palace of Ludwigsberg. Poor Schiller! In my eyes he is the German genius of the age. Goethe has got around him one of those factitious reputations that depend as much on being a coddled celebrity—for you must know there is a fashion in this thing, that is quite independent of merit—while Schiller's fame rests solely on its naked merits. My life for it, that it lasts the longest, and will burn brightest in the end. The schools, and a prevalent taste and the caprice of fashion can make Goethes in dozens, at any time; but God only creates such men as Schiller.



The Last of the Mohicans
(French edition)



The Leatherstocking Tales (German edition)

Cooper's works were translated, published, and read throughout the world.

ican geography, culture, government, and exploration reports, and said in 1819 that had he been younger, he would have emigrated to the United States. He read *The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Spy*, *The Pilot*, *The Prairie*, and *Red Rover* in the period between 1826 and 1828.

A popular tale, which took Goethe 30 years to complete, and is known as the “Novelle,” included whole sections all but copied from Cooper’s *The Pioneers*.

‘God Only Creates Such Men as Schiller’

While Goethe may have been influenced by Cooper, Cooper had no illusions about Goethe, as seen in the following statement, which Cooper made after seeing the birthplace of Friedrich Schiller in Marbach, Germany:

Few men can feel less of the interest that so commonly attaches to the habits, habitations, and personal appearance of celebrated men, than myself. The mere sight of a celebrity never creates any sensation. Yet I

humanity, so that mankind would be equipped to create an age of reason. Cooper personally financed young American artists studying the Old Masters in Europe, like the sculptor, Horatio Greenough, whose bust of George Washington can be seen on the Mall in Washington, D.C. today. Cooper had written, in *Notions of the Americans*, that the practical cares of life had held back real artistic development in America. Yet the talent is there, he said: “It wants training and a push to bring it forth.”

Later in that book, he writes: “The purely intellectual day of America is yet in its dawn.” His optimism and faith in creating an American Renaissance was explicit: “We live in the excitement of a rapid and constantly progressive condition. The impetus of society is imparted to all its members, and we advance because we are not accustomed to stand still.” And, “Our prosperity is owing to our intelligence, and our intelligence to our institutions. Every discrete man in America is deeply impressed with the importance of diffusing instruction among our people.” Cooper demonstrates his determination

to carry out the objectives of the Society of the Cincinnati, in his conclusion to *Notions of the Americans*:

A new era is now about to dawn on this nation. It has ceased to creep; it begins to walk erect among the powers of the earth. All these things have occurred within the life of man. Europeans may be reluctant to admit the claims of a competitor, that they knew so lately a pillaged, a wronged, and a feeble people; but nature will have her laws obeyed, and the fulfillment of things must come. The spirit of greatness is in this nation; its means are within its grasp; and it is as vain as it is weak to attempt to deny results that every year is rendering more plain, more important, and more irresistible.

Cooper and Lafayette Lead European Revolts Against the Holy Alliance

Cooper arrived in Europe in 1826. Based in Paris with Lafayette, he coordinated the work of other Americans, like Samuel Morse and Edgar Allan Poe (another member of the Society of the Cincinnati), throughout Europe. In 1824, John Quincy Adams, a collaborator of the Cincinnati, was elected U.S. President. During Adams' Presidential campaign, Lafayette made a magnificent tour of the United States, helping to ensure Adams' victory. Lafayette's stay in New York during that tour was hosted by James Fenimore Cooper.

Adams had spent many years in Europe on diplomatic missions for the young United States, and knew well the nature of the oligarchy. He personally witnessed, as the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, beast-man Napoleon's occupation of Moscow in 1812.

During 1827 and 1828, Lafayette's home was the headquarters of the European republican movement. Cooper's letters to other Cincinnati members, like Peter Jay, report on meetings with Alexander von Humboldt and many others. Over the next few years, Cooper made an intense study, not only of the contemporary battles he was in the midst of, but of the history of feudalism, monarchy, and aristocracy. He concluded that actual monarchy was dead in Europe. Only a semblance of it remained, he said; and what dominated Europe was a financial oligarchy determined to maintain its feudal order against the American-led republican movement.

It was this activity and study, which led Cooper to write his three novels placed in European settings. His belief that fictional works are "formidable weapons in the cause of morality," was no better demonstrated than in the oligarchy's response to the first of the three novels, *The Bravo*. This book ripped away the popularized myth of the "gentlemanly nature" of the members of the aristocracy. Cooper's insight into the irrational, lawless character of the oligarchical mind, and his ability to vividly portray the struggle between the oligarchy and republicanism in *The Bravo*, places him in the com-



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The Paris home of Lafayette, hero of the American Revolution and Cincinnati Society member, was the headquarters of the European republican movement. This medallion commemorates Lafayette's contribution to America's War of Independence.

pany of such great writers as Schiller.

Cooper began writing *The Bravo* in 1830, shortly after a two-week stay in Venice. The title refers to an assassin and spy in the pay of the rulers of Venice. Venice, as Lyndon LaRouche said more than two decades ago, was and is "the worst cesspool in modern history." For centuries, Venice looted the world, created and destroyed empires, and enslaved millions through a highly refined system of manipulation, supported by military force. Internal order and stability in the "Most Serene Republic" was maintained by one of the most ruthless, cruel, cynical, and faceless systems ever devised.

Ten years after the death of Cooper, his daughter Susan Cooper wrote, that when her father first discovered the internal workings of the Venetian political system, it filled him with horror and indignation. For Cooper, the evil of Venice was no abstraction. The real power behind the Treaty of Vienna exuded the stench of the canals of Venice. This city of parasites, was the global center of the oligarchical financial and political power. Two other great republican authors have written about Venice: Shakespeare wrote two plays, *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and Schiller's *The Ghost-Seer; or, Apparitionist* show how the forces of the evil Venetian oligarchy conspired to destroy a good but weak man.

The Bravo presents us with a map of the thinking processes of the oligarchical mind. The sense of individual identity of the oligarch is entirely located in the social structure of the oligarchy itself. Universal principles, or law, neither define the individual's self-conception, nor even any internally defined purpose. He is totally "other-directed"—a mere tool or appendage for maintaining the continuity of the oligarchical system. Thus, for the oligarch, since there is no universal or higher purpose to his individual life—no obligation to

principles, law, or justice—nothing, no matter how bestial or obscene, is forbidden. Of course, one should not embarrass the family with one’s lawless behavior. Thus, the masks worn by the Venetians disguise the perpetrator of evil, while the act is permitted and condoned.

Cooper followed with two more novels depicting the evil nature of oligarchical systems and institutions, *The Heidenmauer* (1832) and *The Headsman of Berne* (1833). *The Heidenmauer* is set in the early 16th Century and depicts the early phases of what became the 1511-1648 religious wars of Europe; it is a virtual textbook on counterintelligence warfare. *The Headsman of Berne* is an examination of the political and social relations in feudal Switzerland.

Cooper was in Germany when the July 1830 revolution broke out in Paris. When he arrived back in Paris in August, the King, Charles X, had been driven from the country, and Louis Philippe had been installed on the throne. Lafayette was the leader of the revolutionary forces and held the position of Commander of the National Guards in the new government. Cooper recognized at once that Lafayette had made a horrendous error in allowing Louis Philippe to be made king, rather than establishing an American-modelled republic on the spot. Though Cooper tried to salvage the situation, by December, Lafayette was out, and the oligarchy’s power was re-established through the duplicity of Louis Philippe.

In a letter to Peter Jay on Sept. 8, Cooper reported on the lost opportunity: “For a few days the old veteran [Lafayette] held the fate of France in his single hand.” Cooper’s letters to Jay, U.S. Naval Commander William Schubrick, and a few others, written during this period, are intelligence reports on the developments throughout Europe; the plans and activities of the enemies of America; profiles of political leaders and recommendations for action by the Cincinnati Society networks.

For example, the following was written to Peter Jay on Sept. 8, 1830, on the developments in France:

It is certain that the revolution here is regarded with a very evil eye, by the English Aristocracy.... I have just had a visit from two Italians.... They tell me to expect important events from that quarter.... At Rome there is great discontent, and all of upper Italy is ready for revolt. Can Austria be neut[ral] in such a state of things? It is true discontent pervades the Tyrol, Hungary, and Bohemia. Saxony is far from satisfied—Poland feels still like a Nation—Half the small German States are tired of their oppressors, and, in short, there is everywhere a tendency to revolt.... In fine, there is need to remodel Europe—to give Italy a national character—to secure civil rights in Germany and to break down a hundred useless and troublesome barriers which now exist—to bring people under the same government who have common interest and sympathies....

I have just seen letters from Constantinople. They say that the Turks look for the intervention of England in the affair of Algiers, and that they hope to regain their lost ascendancy over the African regencies. Our agents complain, THERE AS THEY DO EVERY WHERE ELSE of the English influence being used against us. Of this fact be assured there is not a shadow of doubt. As a nation, and often as individuals they do us all the harm they can” (emphasis in original).

The remainder of this very long letter reports on the intelligence he gathered on the British direction behind the South Carolina secessionist movement; and other political developments in the United States.

During the Winter of 1831-1832, Cooper’s house in Paris was “the nucleus of republican sympathies in the great capital.” Samuel Morse and the American sculptor Greenough held “grand discussions of the means of renovating art.” Morse, who was an accomplished Classical painter before he turned to inventing the telegraph, would report to Cooper on the conversations he had with monarchs, prime ministers, and other leading figures—conversations that took place while he painted their portraits.

Cooper’s house was also where the American Polish Committee met each week, with Lafayette rarely absent. The Committee had been formed on July 9, 1831, by Cooper and Lafayette, to collect funds and other aid for the Polish republican revolt, which, by then was a full-scale insurrection against Russian rule. The following are excerpts from Cooper’s letter to the American people on behalf of the Polish Committee. This letter was published in newspapers throughout the United States:

Your countrymen, at Paris, venture to address you in behalf of the ancient (and violated) republic of Poland.... The necessity of order and of defence has given birth to nations.... Next to the tie of blood, that which unites man to his country is the strongest. The sentiment of patriotism is among the purest that adorns human nature—experience has shown it can not be destroyed without bringing with its loss a moral abasement that disqualifies its subjects for all aspiring and noble enterprises.... Conquest falls upon a people like a blight, checking the currents of its generous ambition and withering its fairest hopes.... Such a fate, befalling the smallest community, would be entitled to, and we are certain it would awaken, your pity, but when Poland was overcome the fifth power of Christendom was trodden upon.... The crime of Poland was too much liberty. The independent existence, in the vicinity of those who had reared their thrones on the foundation of arbitrary will was not to be endured.... Against the injustice of her lot and the further accumulation of these manifold

wrongs, the Poles have arisen before God and man. They have proclaimed their sufferings, they have asserted their rights and nobly have they staked all worldly interests on the issue. . . . People of America! Of all the nations of the earth you are the most favored. . . . The self denial and hardships of your ancestors are requited to their descendants in a tenfold return of peace, security, and happiness. To you, then do we apply to contribute from your abundance, to the urgent wants of this wronged nation. . . . Your great example is silently wearing away the foundations of despotism throughout Europe. . . . Be not then unworthy of your trust, by coldly withholding yourselves from the finest charities of your nature, but remember that not a freeman falls, in the most remote quarter of the world, that you do not lose one who is enlisted in your own noble enterprise. . . .

As a result of Cooper's appeal, committees to support Poland were formed in cities throughout the United States. Although the Polish revolt was crushed by September 1831, the work of the Committee went on. In January 1832, Cooper published in American newspapers the letter he received from the leaders of the Polish revolutionaries. One of these was Gen. Karl Kniaziewicz (1762-1842), who was trained by Gen. Thaduis Kosciuszko, a participant in the American Revolution and member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

That same January, Cooper sent Dr. Samuel Grindley Howe to Poland to deliver money and intelligence to the republicans. Howe was arrested, held for one month, and then deported to France. Howe, prior to this assignment, had spent five years in Greece aiding the Greek republicans in their revolt against Turkish and Russian domination. Thirty years later, Howe was the chief medical officer for the Union Army in the Civil War. His wife, Julia Ward Howe, is best known today as the author of the Civil War anthem, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

By the Spring of 1832, the republican revolts had been crushed in country after country.

Return to America

In the Fall of that year, Cooper looked around Europe and saw that the republican movement, which had shown so much promise of success two years earlier, was everywhere repressed by force or guile. As he reflected on the past two years, he regretted once again the fatal compromise Lafayette had made with Louis Philippe. For had Lafayette taken the power offered to him in 1830, the whole of Europe could have been won. There was nothing more for Cooper to do in Europe for the present.

Serious problems were developing in America. The British-directed South Carolina secession movement arose; President Andrew Jackson was destroying the dirigist economic system of the country and refusing to defend American insti-

tutions abroad; and reports from Cooper's U.S.-based allies about the degeneration of American society disturbed him greatly. Arriving in the United States after seven years abroad, he was shocked at the deterioration of the institutions created by his father, Washington, Hamilton, Lafayette, and the others of the first generation of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Cooper went right to work to revive America's knowledge of and commitment to the ideas of 1776. In 1834, he published the book-length *A Letter to His Countrymen*, in which he elaborated on the theme he had begun in *Notions of the Americans*. Americans must break the slavish dependence on foreign (oligarchical) opinion, he said. This problem especially dominated the U.S. newspapers. For example, during 1833, the *New York American* reprinted an attack on *The Bravo* from the Parisian *Journal des Débats*. Cooper responded to this article in a letter to Samuel Morse: "*The Bravo* is certainly no very flattering picture for the upstart aristocrats of the new regimes, and nothing is more natural than their desire to undervalue the book; but the facility betrayed by our own journals, in an affair of this nature, is a source of deep mortification to every American of right feeling. . . ."

By the mid-1830s, Cooper himself became the main target of the treasonous, oligarchy-allied press of the United States. The vicious, vile, and lying campaign against him by the newspapers was a precedent for similar attacks on Lyndon LaRouche today. For example, reviews of his books, by especially British and American newspapers (many of them actually owned by British subjects), were vicious. Typical was a review of his novel *The Monikins*: "It is a mass of husks and garbage, and has disgraced the country," one wrote. A review of a commentary written by Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law, read, "Lockhart showed potent causticity in exposing the gangrene of Cooper's mind in its most foul and diseased state."

Name-calling was not enough; Cooper was lied about, misquoted, and distorted, his views falsified by one journal after another. Cooper counterattacked with a series of libel suits numbering in the dozens. Unlike today, the judgment of the courts in such suits was based on truth. Thus, he won case after case, actually putting several newspapers out of business.

His approach to this battle, which was referred to at the time as "Cooper's War Against the Press," was, in his words: "So far as my means allow, insult shall be avenged by law, violence repelled by a strong hand, falsehood put to shame by truth, and sophistry exposed by reason."

As newspaper after newspaper attacked him, he sued, again and again, and beat them, one after another. He was determined, he said, to "bring the press, again, under the subjection of the law. When one considers the characters, talents, motives, and consistency of those who contrive it, as a body, he is lost in wonder that any community should have so long submitted to a tyranny so low and vulgar. When it is rebuked thoroughly, it may again become useful." Cooper's comments

on the nature of the press and reporters are as applicable to-day, as they were in his time:

As the press of this country now exists, it would seem to be expressly devised by the great agent of mischief, to depress and destroy all that is good, and to elevate and advance all that is evil in the nation....

Newspapermen are the funguses of letters who flourish on the dunghill of the common mind....

The press is equally capable of being made the instrument of elevating man to the highest point of which his faculties admit, or of depressing him to the lowest....

The American Democrat

The American Democrat, written in 1838, was one of Cooper's contributions to keeping alive the principles of the republic. This little book was designed to be used as a textbook in schoolrooms throughout the country. In this foray into non-fiction, unfortunately, Cooper lost the excitement and punch that had characterized his fiction. Regardless, it is full of gems like the following:

One may certainly be purse-proud, and of all the sources of human pride, mere wealth is the basest and most vulgar minded.... A people that deems the possession of riches its highest source of distinction, admits one of the most degrading of all influences to pre- side over its opinions. At no time, should money be ever ranked as more than a means, and he who lives as if the acquisition of property were the sole end of his existence, betrays the dominion of the most sordid, base, and groveling motive, that offers. Property is desirable as the ground work of moral independence, as a means of improving the faculties, and of doing good to others, and as the agent in all that distinguishes the civilized man from the savage.

Cooper was a religious man, and, as one of the founders of the American Bible Society in 1816, helped to set in motion the missionary work that sent to peoples all over the world the best that America had to offer. Among the missionaries sponsored by the American Bible Society were those who went to Hawaii, and, later, became a decisive influence on Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Republic of China in 1911.

In 1839, Cooper published a masterful, two-volume *History of the United States Navy*, that is still, today, a standard reference for its early history. He had spent four years in the Navy in his youth, and maintained an active attachment to that institution throughout his life. On at least two occasions, U.S. Presidents considered him for appointment as Secretary of the Navy.

His comments in this book on the necessity of military preparedness are as applicable today as they were when they



Library of Congress

Samuel F.B. Morse (shown in a photo by Mathew Brady), best known for inventing the telegraph, was an accomplished Classical painter, and a member of the Cincinnati; he reported to Cooper on the conversations he had with numerous leading figures, whose portraits he painted.

were written. Cooper demonstrated that the reluctance to assert the potential power of the country to build a navy that would make the U.S. a world power, was the reason the European powers were able to intimidate the nation. He said that the nation had never built what it needed in time of peace to protect our trade, seamen, and ports; and never allocated enough in time of war.

Two of his later novels, *The Crater* and *The Mercedes of Castile*, are beautiful demonstrations of how an author, committed to uplifting and educating his readers, is able to communicate important scientific concepts and ideas in the context of exciting adventure stories. *The Mercedes of Castile* is the story of Christopher Columbus. *The Crater*, a Robinson Crusoe-type of adventure, is one of the best antidotes to the environmentalist lie that mankind is a pest to nature. Not only is the book loaded with ideas and "how to" about astronomy, navigation, volcanoes, the sea, weather, agriculture, and shipbuilding, but the theme itself is one that can guide us in colonizing Mars.

In the book, two men stranded on a desert island transform it by their labor and ingenuity into a lush garden. This tale is a beautiful demonstration of mankind acting on the injunction

of Genesis to “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.”

In all, Cooper wrote more than 40 novels, innumerable essays and letters, and an important handful of non-fiction works.

Cooper’s Legacy: The Republic Survives

During the 1840s, as the oligarchy of Europe pushed forward its attempt to split the United States between North and South, Cooper and others of the Cincinnati Society network began building a new republican political movement. The millions of German immigrants who had come to America after 1815, became one of the driving elements of this new movement, contributing an infusion of republican spirit and culture, helping to revive the great ideas of 1776. This movement, which was to found the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln in 1856, used the dying Whig Party in 1852 to run Gen. Winfield Scott for President. Scott was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, the hero of the War of 1812, and Commander of the U.S. Army for 30 years. During 1850 and 1851, Cooper, Scott, and Cooper’s old friend Commodore William Schucrik planed out Scott’s campaign.

Cooper’s unfortunate death in 1851 put Scott’s campaign in the hands of Cooper’s enemies, ensuring that Scott would lose the election. Yet, Cooper’s work in helping to build the new republican movement in the United States, resulted eight years later in the victory of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln crushed the oligarchy-run insurrection of the Southern States and launched the American Industrial Revolution, ensuring the survival of the United States as, in the words of Lafayette, “the temple of liberty and beacon of hope for all mankind.”

From *The Bravo*

‘A Republic, If You Can Keep It’

There is no question that James Fenimore Cooper took Benjamin Franklin’s words to heart in The Bravo, where, from the opening, he declares war on Sophists, especially those of the “Serenissima Republic,” who falsely claim title to “republic.” The Preface begins: “It is to be regretted the world does not discriminate more justly in its use of political terms. Governments are usually called either monarchies or republics.”

In the 1834 Letter to His Countrymen, Cooper is specific: “aristocracy” and “oligarchists” are the enemy of the American System. He writes “with the painful convic-

tion that many of my own countrymen were influenced by the fallacy that nations could be governed by an irresponsible minority, without involving a train of nearly intolerable abuses, I determined to attempt a series of tales, in which American opinion should be brought to bear on European facts. With this design The Bravo was written, Venice being its scene, and her polity its subject.” Nearly midway through, Cooper interrupts the gripping tale to directly address the reader. Here are his words.

—Michele Steinberg

“Venice, though ambitious and tenacious of the name of a republic, was, in truth, a narrow, a vulgar, and an exceedingly heartless oligarchy. To the former title she had no other claim than her denial of the naked principle already mentioned, while her practice is liable to the reproach of the two latter, in the unmanly and narrow character of its exclusion, in every act of her foreign policy, and in every measure of her internal police. . . . At the period of which we write, Italy had several of these self-styled commonwealths, in not one of which, however, was there ever a fair and just confiding of power to the body of the people, though perhaps there is not one that has not been cited sooner or later in proof of the inability of man to govern himself! In order to demonstrate the fallacy of a reasoning which is so fond of predicting the downfall of our own liberal system, supported by examples drawn from transatlantic states of the middle ages, it is necessary only to recount here a little in detail the forms in which power was obtained and exercised in the most important of them all.

“Distinctions in rank, as separated entirely from the will of the nation, formed the basis of Venetian polity. Authority, though divided, was not less a birthright than in those governments in which it was openly avowed to be a dispensation of Providence. The patrician order had its high and exclusive privileges, which were guarded and maintained with a most selfish and engrossing spirit. He who was not born to govern, had little hope of ever entering into the possession of his natural rights: while he who was, by the intervention of chance, might wield a power of the most fearful and despotic character. At a certain age all of senatorial rank (for, by a specious fallacy, nobility did not take its usual appellations) were admitted into the councils of the nation. The names of the leading families were inscribed in a register, which was well entitled the ‘Golden Book,’ and he who enjoyed the envied distinction of having an ancestor thus enrolled could, with a few exceptions . . . present himself in the senate and lay claim to the honors of the “Horned Bonnet.” Neither our limits nor our object will permit a digression of sufficient length to point out the whole of the leading features of a system so vicious, and which was, perhaps, only rendered tolerable to those it governed by the extraneous contributions of captured and subsidiary provinces, of which in truth, as in all cases of metropolitan rule, the op-

pression weighed most grievously. The reader will at once see that the very reason why the despotism of the self-styled Republic was tolerable to its own citizens was but another cause of its eventual destruction.

“As the senate became too numerous to conduct with sufficient secrecy and dispatch the affairs of a state that pursued a policy alike tortuous and complicated, the most general of its important interests were intrusted to a council composed of three hundred of its members. In order to avoid the publicity and delay of a body large even as this, a second selection was made, which was known as the Council of Ten, and to which much of the executive power that aristocratical jealousy withheld from the titular chief of the state, was confided. To this point the political economy of the Venetian Republic, however faulty, had at least some merit for simplicity and frankness. The ostensible agents of the administration were known, and though all real responsibility to the nation was lost in the superior influence and narrow policy of the patricians, the rulers could not entirely escape from the odium that public opinion might attach to their unjust or illegal proceedings. But a state whose prosperity was chiefly founded on the contribution and support of dependants, and whose existence was equally menaced by its own false principles, and by the growth of other and neighboring powers, had need of a still more efficient body in the absence of that executive which its own Republican pretensions denied to Venice. A political inquisition, which came in time to be one of the most fearful engines of police ever known, was the consequence. An authority as irresponsible as it was absolute, was periodically confided to another and still smaller body, which met and exercised its despotic and secret functions under the name of the Council of Three. The choice of these temporary rulers was decided by lot, and in a manner that prevented the result from being known to any but to their own number and to a few of the most confidential of the more permanent officers of the government. Thus there existed at all times in the heart of Venice a mysterious and despotic power that was wielded by men who moved in society unknown, and apparently surrounded by all the ordinary charities of life; but which, in truth, was influenced by a set of political maxims that were perhaps as ruthless, as tyrannic, and as selfish, as ever were invented by the evil ingenuity of man. It was, in short, a power that could only be intrusted, without abuse, to infallible virtue and infinite intelligence, using the terms in a sense limited by human means; and yet it was here confided to men whose title was founded on the double accident of birth, and the colors of balls, and by whom it was wielded without even the check of publicity.

“The Council of Three met in secret, ordinarily issued its decrees without communicating with any other body, and had them enforced with a fearfulness of mystery, and a suddenness of execution, that resembled the blows of fate. The Doge himself was not superior to its authority, nor protected from its decisions, while it has been known



The “Mouth of the Lion” graced the door to the Sala dei Tre Capi—the Council of the Three, of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice. It invites, “secret denunciations against those who conceal gifts and advantages or conspire to hide their true profit,” by dropping the secret “evidence” into its mouth.

that one of the privileged three has been denounced by his companions. There is still in existence a long list of the state maxims which this secret tribunal recognised as its rule of conduct, and it is not saying too much to affirm, that they set at defiance every other consideration but expediency, all the recognised laws of God, and every principle of justice, which is esteemed among men. The advances of the human intellect, supported by the means of publicity, may temper the exercise of a similar irresponsible power, in our own age; but in no country has this substitution of a soulless corporation for an elective representation, been made, in which a system of rule has not been established, that sets at naught the laws of natural justice and the rights of the citizen. Any pretension to the contrary, by placing profession in opposition to practice, is only adding hypocrisy to usurpation.

“It appears to be an unavoidable general consequence that abuses should follow, when power is exercised by a permanent and irresponsible body, from whom there is no appeal. When this power is secretly exercised, the abuses become still more grave. It is also worthy of remark, that in the nations which submit, or have submitted, to these undue and dangerous influences, the pretensions to justice and generosity are of the most exaggerated character; for while the fearless democrat vents his personal complaints aloud, and the voice of the subject of professed despotism is smothered entirely, necessity itself dictates to the oligarchist the policy of seemliness, as one of the conditions of his own safety.”