before the outbreak of hostilities, the crown prohibited the emigration of mechanics to the colonies.[24]

Growing tensions between the metropolis and the peripheries fired up the competition between England and its North American colonies. In 1767 the governor of colonial New York tried to calm anxious members of the Board of Trade who feared the rise of local industry, informing them that "the price of Labour is so great in this part of the World, that it will always prove the greatest obstacle to any Manufactures attempted to be set up here, and the genius of the People in a Country where every one can have Land to work upon leads them so naturally into Agriculture, that it prevails over every other occupation." Far from accepting such assurances, imperial agents grew increasingly alarmed by rising American industry. General Thomas Gage, commander in chief of the British forces in North American from 1763 to 1775, worried that colonial manufacturing was getting too competitive and urged the British government to keep "the Settlers within reach of the Sea-Coast as long as we can; and to cramp their Trade as far as it can be done prudentially." American cities "flourish and increase by extensive Trade, Artisans and Mechanicks of all sorts are drawn thither, who Teach all sorts of Handicraft work before unknown in the Country, and they soon come to make for themselves what they used to import." Such enterprises, Gage warned, "must create Jealousy in an Englishman."[25]

The Battle over Technology and the American Revolution

As the imperial struggle approached, Americans increased their efforts to uncover the techniques and processes of English industry in order to compete successfully with the metropolis. Parliament's punitive measures in the years leading to the Revolution only encouraged the colonists to persist in their efforts to build local

industries. Debates over the importation of technology took place in the context of the general discourse of the imperial crisis. Talk of republican simplicity, with its emphasis on separation from Europe and rejection of luxuries, that dominated revolutionary pamphlets did not stand in the way of pirating machinery and luring artisans. Efforts to raise the level of American technology were justified in terms of attaining economic independence, undermining the British hold on the American economy, and guaranteeing the maintenance of a high standard of living in the new nation. Political self-determination, economic independence, and technology piracy seemed to go hand in hand.

Restrictions on American manufacturing were embodied in the Navigation Acts which assigned the colonies the role of raw material producers in the imperial order. Adam Smith had warned in the *Wealth of Nations* that these measures are "impertinent badges of slavery imposed" upon the American colonists by "the groundless jealousy of the merchants and manufacturers of the mother country." Smith was certainly on the mark as far as the Americans were concerned. The colonists challenged the legitimacy of these acts from their early opposition to the Stamp Act onward. Daniel Dulany's attack on the Stamp Act, for example, charged that the mercantile restrictions made British industrial imports "dearer and not so good in quality," and declared the rising American manufacturing to be the "Symbol of Dignity, the badge of Virtue" of the new self-sufficient colonies. Such rhetoric was the standard staple of colonists' complaints in the coming decade of imperial discord.[26]

During the colonial era advocates of American manufacturing avoided openly challenging the Empire's restrictive industrial colonial policy. When a Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture, and Economy was established in 1764 in New York, it announced that it would "encourage such Manufactures as will not interfere with those of England, and to promote such Growths and