

only ninety vessels of which less than half were in commission.

The British answer to the Berlin decree was an Order in Council of November, 1807, by which all neutral trade with France or her allies was prohibited unless through Great Britain. In December of the same year Bonaparte issued his Milan decree which was a sort of supplement to that of Berlin. It declared every vessel which should submit to be searched by British cruisers, or should pay any tax, duty or license money to the British government, or should be found on the high seas or elsewhere, bound to or from any British port, to be denationalized and forfeited. Spain and Holland, at the dictation of France, immediately issued similar decrees, and thus was established the famous continental system of Napoleon, which crushed the neutral trader. It was a system which grew out of Bonaparte's determination to destroy Great Britain and break up the British Empire, a resolve which was warmly approved by a large part of the people of the United States. In their insane hatred of England they were ready to aid in the destruction of the only Constitutional Government that then existed in Europe, and the establishment of the grinding military despotism of Bonaparte over the greater portion of the civilized world.

While the British Orders in Council and Bonaparte's Decrees were agitating commercial circles in the United States, the impressment of British seamen found on board of American vessels had become a source of great ill-feeling towards England. In 1800 the British Minister had proposed a reciprocal surrender of all deserters, but this was declined by the United States, because the proposal was so worded as to sanction