

NOTES ON THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

FOLLOWING are some teaching notes on the American Revolution unit with partial bibliography appended:

FACTORS MAKING FOR AMERICAN NATIONALITY

1. Character of settlers—individualistic.
2. Distance from Europe—distance only name for time and effort.
3. Adequate natural resources sufficient to maintain large population.
4. Rapid increase in population.
 - 1700—275,000
 - 1720—475,000
 - 1740—900,000
 - 1760—1,600,000
 - 1775—2,500,000
5. Experience in Colonial Wars. Resentment of British officers. Knew each other.
6. Expulsion of France from North America which took away desire for protection.
7. Long practice in self-government.
8. Indifference to English trade regulations. English laws not enforced.

FACTORS MOVING TOWARDS UNION

1. Same race—religion—consciousness of kind—more alike than different.
2. Expansion of settlement which brought people nearer together.
3. Geographically a unit. Near together after all. All along same coast, etc.
4. Communication developed—roads built—postal union 1720.
5. Co-operation incident to Colonial Wars and Indian troubles. Inter-colonial meetings. Menace of Indian a unionizing factor.
6. Frontier conquered by Germans, etc. People who do not have feeling of loyalty to Colonial Government or English Government. Without strong colonial ties.
7. Common religious interests. Church relations overswept borders.
8. Colonial sympathy against English prerogatives. Interchange of reports against crown and governor.

FACTORS AGAINST COLONIAL UNITY

1. Colonies had individual history.
2. Difficulties of communication.
3. Boundary disputes.
4. Disputes as to commanders in colonial wars.
5. Ill feeling between different colonies.
6. Obstacles against solidarity within each colony.

POLITICAL CAUSES OF AMERICAN

1. America populated by radicals and dissenters.
2. Act of Uniformity not extended to Colonies.
3. 17th Century a period of laxity in colonial affairs.

4. English imperial policy formulated middle of 18th Century.

A. Independent executives and judges.

1. To be paid from money collected at custom houses.

B. Defensive system improved.

1. Albany Congress of 1754.
2. Pontiac rebellion.
3. Colonies pay part of expenses of late wars and up-keep of troops by Stamp Act and Trade Laws.
 - a. Reception of Stamps in America.
 - b. Stamp Act Congress.
 - c. Non - importation - consumption agreement.

C. Enforcing trade regulations.

1. Writs of Assistance.
2. Admiralty Courts.
3. Revenue cutters to patrol coasts.
 - a. Gaspee incident.
 - b. Capture of ship *Liberty* 1768.
4. Two regiments sent to Boston.
 - a. Boston Massacre.
 - b. Removal of troops.
5. Government aid to East India Company.
 - a. Allowed them to send tea direct to colonies.
 - b. Reception of tea in America.
 - c. Boston Tea Party.
 - d. Five Intolerable Acts.
 1. Closing port of Boston.
 2. Changing Massachusetts charter.
 3. Trial in England.
 4. Quartering Act.
 5. Quebec Act.
 - e. Committees of Correspondence.
 - f. First Continental Congress.
 1. Non-importation and consumption agreement.
 2. Provided for Congress following year.
 - g. Gage governor in Massachusetts.
 1. Call for Assembly.
 2. Assembly meets at Cambridge.
 3. Ignores government of Gage.
 4. Militia drilled and arms collected at various places—Concord, Lexington, etc.
 5. Gage attempts to seize these stores, April 19, 1775.

5. Fundamental question: Should British Parliament rule Great Britain in all its parts or should Parliament rule England, and colonial assemblies rule Colonies, with only a federal bond between.

- a. English conception of representation.
- b. American conception of representation.

BRITISH IMPERIAL PROBLEM

Three distinct concepts of nature of Empire.

1. Theory of Colonial Dependency. Britain regarded as head and mistress of her

dominions and the dominions as children, proper subjects for exploitation under the old colonial system. Adherents to this view believed that the Parliament then existing at Westminster was in fact an imperial Parliament, in the form it then had, *i. e.*, that the Lords and Commons of Great Britain were adequate representatives of all the outlying portions of the Empire as well as of the constituencies which they happened to represent on the island of Britain. They believed that this Parliament and political supremacy and overlordship over all the Dominions wherever situated.

2. There were those who believed that there should be an Imperial Parliament, but that the Parliament as then constituted was not such an assembly. These men held that the British Empire was in essence a federal state, and that as such it should have a Federal Parliament, representing all the dominions, with supreme jurisdiction over all the empire and paramount over all subordinate legislatures. These were the advocates of "imperial federation."
3. There were those who held to the theory that the colonies in America were in fact states in the political sense, that their local legislatures were the supreme power over them, under the Crown; that their sole connection with Great Britain lay in the Crown. "Commonwealth of Nations." This view never carried to its logical conclusion."

ECONOMIC CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

American Revolution was not a conflict caused by King George III, nor a spontaneous uprising on the part of the people of the colonies, neither does "Taxation without representation" cover the cause of the conflict.

The causes of the Revolution must be considered from economic, intellectual, social, political, psychological, and religious viewpoints.

A. Economic Viewpoint: Colonists came to New world because

1. Of the economic, religious, and social conditions of the Old World.
2. Business men wanted England to expand.
3. Government wanted source of supply in building up commerce and navy. Wanted to confine exports of colonies to mother country. Would discourage industrial development in colonies if same could be made at home. Enumerated certain articles which had to be sent to England entirely, such as tobacco, indigo, sugar, rice, molasses, naval stores, copper, iron ore, ashes, beaver skins, whale products, and hides. Also forbade farmers growing tobacco in England. Southern colonies and West Indies were more important to England than the New England Colonies. The prohibition and navigations laws were for the most part ignored.

MOLASSES ACT OF 1733

Molasses from French West Indies cheaper

than from English West Indies. New England traded with French. The French products were about 25% cheaper. England attempted to prohibit this trade by a heavy tax, but the act was not enforced at this time, and it only led to smuggling, openly connived at, which in turn led to disrespect of law. England, by not enforcing her acts, helped to establish that disrespect of law which became a habit in the thirteen colonies.

CHANGE IN IMPERIAL POLICY ABOUT 1750

England now centralized the control of Indian affairs and western lands. The support of troops for the protection of the frontier was now shifted in part to the colonies. She also started to enforce her past acts in regard to the colonies.

The English policy at this time must be thought of in the light of the Hundred Years War, fought over large areas of the earth's surface. The English had carried this burden until they could carry it no longer, and now asked the colonies to help defend themselves in the future.

From 1754 to 1763 the British War debts, already heavy, increased five fold. Therefore, England did not feel that she was laying a burden upon the colonies when she asked them to adhere strictly to the new British system and to stop the illegal trade with the French.

A. The Congress which met in Albany in 1754 wanted to:

1. Regulate Indian policy.
2. Purchase Indian lands.
3. To raise and pay an army and navy.
4. To levy taxes in time of war.
5. Make laws for union with consent of Crown. This plan of union fell through because of particularism.

FORCES TENDING TO PULL COLONIES OUT OF EMPIRE

1. Feeling of individualism.
2. Distance from England.
3. Environment.
4. Disrespect of English law.

GREENVILLE POLICY

1. Sugar Act. An act for revenue mainly. £40,000 a year from act at cost of £13,000 for collection. This act
 - a. restricted trade
 - b. took specie out of colonies
 - c. diminished industry in New England
 - d. caused unemployment and business depression.
2. Stamp Act. A revenue act supposed to get £61,000 annually. No specie in colonies to pay it.
3. Mutiny Act. A defense act. Colonies to pay for expense of about 10,000 troops. Business depression forbade more taxes of this type.
4. Proclamation of 1763. Closed the west and cut off a cheap supply of land. The colonial governments were forbidden to grant lands west of the mountains, and the settlers already there were told to get out. This act also proclaimed that all lands west

of the Mississippi were reserved for the Indians.

5. Currency Act of 1764. This act forbade the use of paper money and there was very little hard money in the colonies at any one time, so this act was bitterly protested by the debtor class.

POLITICAL THEORIES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

All this time the colonists were spinning political theories to bolster up or rationalize their economic desires. The first protest against the British economic system came from the assemblies, the second from the pamphlet writers, and the third from mobs.

The colonists first took refuge in the theory of rights of Englishmen under the British Constitution. Driven from this, they turned to the natural rights philosophy, *i. e.*, their rights not as Englishmen, but as human beings.

SUMMARY OF THEORIES OF INDIVIDUALS

Stephen Hopkins: "The Rights of the Colonies Examined" 1764.

Argument: All colonies in ancient and modern times have always enjoyed as much freedom as the mother state and it could hardly be supposed that the British colonies were an exception to that rule. Hopkins does not define the rights of the colonies—he merely raises questions about them. Have we not rights? We have always enjoyed rights and privileges; why should we not continue to enjoy them? etc.

James Otis: "The Rights of the Colonies" 1764.

Argument: All British colonies are subject to and dependent on Great Britain. The Parliament of Great Britain has an undoubted power and lawful authority to make acts for the general good which are binding upon the subjects of Great Britain. The power of Parliament is uncontrollable but by themselves and we must obey. They only can repeal their own acts. There would be an end of all government if one or a number of subjects or subordinate provinces should take upon themselves to judge of an act of Parliament and to refuse obedience to it. If Parliament has a right to tax our trade, it has a right to tax anything else. Parliaments are in all cases to declare what is for the good of the whole, but there is in all cases a higher authority, *i. e.*, God. Should an act of Parliament be against any of His natural laws it would consequently be void. Taxation without representation is tyranny, but we have to obey.

Townshend:

Argument: Distinction between external and internal tax, nonsense. He was willing to lay only external taxes to be collected at ports of entry. The colonists now agreed with Pitt that Parliament had no power to take money out of their pockets without their consent.

Hutchinson, Thomas: 1764. Contents of a letter.

Argument: Every interest in England is represented in Parliament, but the colonies have an interest distinct from the interests of England.

Patrick Henry: Virginia Resolves on Stamp Act. May 30, 1765.

Resolved therefore, That the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and sole exclusive right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony . . . The inhabitants of this Colony are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatsoever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the General Assembly.

Soame Jenyns: "Objections to the Taxation of our American Colonies Briefly Considered" 1765.

Argument: Many English communities such as Manchester and Sheffield are taxed without sending representatives to Parliament so that the English colonies are represented as much as these communities. Either Manchester is not represented in Parliament, in which case Parliament can, and does, tax Englishmen without their consent, or else Boston is represented in Parliament, in which case she has no grievance. Virtual representation.

Daniel Dulaney: "Considerations on Raising Revenue by Act of Parliament" 1765.

Argument: Refuted doctrine of virtual representation. The non-electors, the electors, and the representatives residing in Great Britain are individually the same. The security of the non-electors against oppression is that their oppression would fall also upon the electors and the representatives. If non-electors should not be taxed by Parliament, they would not be taxed at all. The colonies pay taxes levied by their own legislatures and, therefore, would not be exempt from taxation if not taxed by Parliament. The influence from Dulaney's argument is that the colonies should send representatives to Parliament, or Parliament has no right to tax. Colonists objected to sending representatives to England. Parliament had always imposed certain duties, the Sugar Act for example. Writers now drew a distinction between internal and external taxes. The Stamp Act Congress drew this distinction in substance. Thus at the time of the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, the colonies did not deny that Parliament possessed of general legislative jurisdiction over them. They maintained only that this jurisdiction did not include the right of laying taxes upon them without their consent, and that direct internal taxes were a violation of constitutional rights.

John Dickinson: "Farmers Letters" 1767-8.

Argument: Distinguished between duties laid for the regulation of trade and duties laid for bringing in revenue. Since a tax might be for both, the real intention of the framers of the law must be considered. His countrymen would have sufficient understanding to discover the intentions of those who rule over them.

Question: Could the British Government by administrative order suspend or abolish the colonial assemblies? Governor Colden of New York had suspended the New York Assembly. To meet this emergency a theory which denied the jurisdiction of the British Government in a particular matter, such as the taxing power,

was inadequate. Some theory had to be found defining the jurisdiction of the British and Colonial Governments. Dickinson assumed that the British were one people, the Americans, another, and each free. An Englishman would have maintained that they were not free, but subject to Parliament. Parliament had always exercised jurisdiction over them.

Samuel Adams:

Argument: All legislature are subject to the British Constitution and the Constitution is founded in the law of God and nature. The power of any legislative body stops where the natural rights of man begin. Adams found one of their rights: every man had the sole disposal of his property.

NATURAL RIGHTS PHILOSOPHY

This philosophy commonplace in the 18th century. There is a natural order of things in the world designed by God and that they can be discovered.

Compact theory of government: Medieval philosophers had conceived of the authority of princes as resting upon a compact with their subjects to rule righteously, failing which their subjects were absolved from all allegiance. Who was to judge? In early history the Pope later by revolution. Subjects are not bound to obey a king who commands what is contrary to the will of God. How was one to know the will of God? In the 18th century nature had stepped in between God and man. You could only know God's will by discovering the laws of nature. I think, therefore I am, and if I can think straight enough and far enough I can identify myself with all that is—that is nature. Reason is the only sure guide which God has given man, therefore, reason is the only foundation of just government. Governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed. Locke justified the Revolution of 1689 on this basis: American philosophers attempting to justify the American Revolution on the same basis. Locke's statement of case, Becker, P. 56.

Benjamin Franklin: Letters, 1768.

Argument: Questioned reasoning of Dickinson and Adams. "I know not what the people of Boston mean by the subordination they acknowledge to Parliament while they deny its power to make laws for them." "No middle ground can be maintained. Parliament has the power to make all laws for us or it has the power to make no laws for us, and I think the arguments for latter more weightier than those for the former." By 1770 Franklin assumed that the Empire was composed of separate states all subject to the King.

James Wilson: "Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament." 1774.

Argument: Parliament has no legislative jurisdiction over the colonies. What is the ultimate end of all government? All lawful government is founded in the consent of those who are subject to it. The happiness of the society is the first law of every government. Law is a rule of action which is prescribed by some superior

and which the inferior is bound to obey. Wilson denies the idea of a superior state existing for people. The colonies are connected with Great Britain in the person of the King.

Thomas Jefferson: "A Summary View of the Rights of British America" 1774.

Argument: Our ancestors left England and established new societies in the wilderness. That settlement having been made, the emigrants thought proper to adopt that system of laws under which they had hitherto lived and to continue their union with England by submitting themselves to the same common sovereign who was thereby made the central link connecting the several parts of the Empire. The British Parliament had usurped the power of legislating for the colonies, and these unjust encroachments in late years had so multiplied as to be no longer tolerable. These views not accepted by the Virginia Convention.

John Adams: At First Continental Congress, 1774.

Argument: A member of the Committee to Prepare the Declaration of Rights. Notes on the debates in the Committee. Becker: "Declaration of Independence," P. 119-21.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee on behalf of the Virginia Delegation submitted three resolutions to the Continental Congress of which the first declared that "These united Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved. This resolution of independence was voted by Congress, July 2, 1776. This is the official Declaration of Independence. June 10 it was voted to appoint a committee to prepare a declaration to the effect of the said first resolution. The committee appointed was Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston. On June 28 this committee reported to Congress a draft of the Declaration which, after being modified, was agreed to by Congress on July 4. This is known as our Declaration of Independence, although the document has no such title. Jefferson called it a Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America. Its final title was "the unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America." This document incorporates the resolution on July 2.

TREATY OF PARIS, 1783

Political conditions in England during Revolution. George III—attitude towards America.

Lord North—resigned, March, 1782.

Rockingham—New prime minister. Took office on condition that peace be made.

Fox—Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Shelburne—colonial department. Quarrelled with Fox over handling of peace negotiations.

American representatives—John Adams, Franklin, Jay, Laurens, and Jefferson.

English representatives—Oswald and Strachey.

Instructions to American delegates by Congress. Make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the ministers of our generous ally, the King of France; to undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace or truce without their knowledge and concurrence; and ultimately to govern yourselves by their advice and opinion.

Peace negotiations.

1. Jay suspicious of France and desires separate treaty with England. Marbois letter. France desired part of Mississippi Valley for Spain, another part for England, and the rest an Indian state under American protection.
2. Oswald's commission authorized him to deal with commissioners of colonies or plantations. Jay refused to deal with him unless he dealt with representatives of the United States.
3. Boundary question.
 - a. Northeast boundary (Maine). Not correctly drawn. Finally settled in Webster-Ashburton Treaty.
4. Fisheries. Enjoy fisheries in common with British subjects.
5. Case of tories. England desired that they be indemnified for loss of property. Americans recommended this to States, who did not carry it out.
6. Navigation of Mississippi River. Free to England and U. S., although Spain controlled it. Treaty signed November 30, 1882, incorporated in general treaty September, 1783.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

Maryland, last state, signed March 1, 1781.
Organization.

A congress of one house—each state to have one vote.

Powers.

- a. Decide peace and war.
- b. Manage diplomatic affairs.
- c. Build and equip a navy.
- d. Borrow money.
- e. Make requisitions on states for men and money.
- f. Regulate post offices.
- g. Determine alloy and value of coin.
- h. Final authority in disputes between states.
Any measure of importance to have nine votes to pass. When Congress not in session a committee to sit.

B. Weaknesses of articles.

- a. No power to raise money. Could borrow money, but not repay it.
- b. No power to regulate commerce.
- c. No executive department.
- d. No judicial department.
- e. Could make laws, treaties, etc., but not enforce them.
- f. Laws operated on states not individuals.

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TRAINING AND VOCATION

A considerable number of students do not follow the vocation or profession for which they prepare themselves while attending college. According to a recent survey of land-grant colleges, 45 per cent of the students who registered in agriculture took up some other occupation after leaving the institutions. Of the students who specialized in engineering, there were 32 per cent that went into some other vocation in later life. Approximately 80 per cent of the women students who studied home economics in college became either home makers or entered home economics positions after leaving college, while 20 per cent entered into some other field of endeavor. In the case of students who registered in education, the returns indicate that 43 per cent abandoned teaching after graduation, going into some different occupation.