

Chapter 7: The Road To Revolution Notes

- **The French and Indian War was very expensive**
 - The British government had to have **the Americas pay some of cost**
 - Very likely the most important catalyst for the American Revolution

The Deep Roots of the Revolution

- Everything in the American colonies was revolutionized
 - People questioned the convention, i.e., weren't content to be stuck in social class
 - Developed a new system of republicanism
 - A political model based on Classical Roman and Greek republics
 - Based on the idea of the common good and opposed to aristocracies that were common in Europe
 - Radical Whigs were a "group of British political commentators"
 - Many Americans read their works
 - Wrote about fear of losing freedom by the corruption of King and Parliament
- Americans had been separated from Britain long enough to lose conventional ideas of aristocracy and monarchy, were used to more free ways

Politics and Power: Republicanism (a political system) and the Radical Whigs (a political party) were both relatively new ideas that were encouraged in the American colonies and played a critical long-term role in shaping American perspectives on the distribution of power. In contrast to the abundance of aristocracies in Europe, remnants of the Middle Ages of feudal-style manors, the New World was more lacking in social stratification, especially in New England—this led to the beliefs of equality and the common good that led to the rise of republicanism. Similarly, this belief fostered a subscription to the Whigs, a British political party that worried about the corruption of the rich and wealthy politicians. In the American colonies, the rich royal governors too ruled the lives of the common people, who were constantly suspicious of losing their freedom to the British officials. These two opposing political ideas (equality for the common good, and corruption of the rich aristocracies) not only shaped the hatred that the Americans felt about themselves and their wealthier British rulers, but they also set the groundlines for political systems for many years to follow, eventually merging itself into the Articles of Confederation and ultimately the Constitution of the United States of America. Even today, our government is a democracy (a form of republic) formed on the same roots of classical-era republicanism.

Mercantilism and Colonial Grievances

- **Mercantilism** is an economic system based solely on amassing as much wealth as possible
 - Usually involved exporting more than importing
 - Colonies provided extra exports and a market
 - Essentially an economic exploitation of the colonies
 - Colonies supposed to be dependent, not form their own independent economy
- Britain passed some unfavorable **laws to limit trade** (to promote mercantilism)
 - Navigation Law (1650) said all trade to Americas must be made in British ships

- Other laws said that all trade to Americas must pass through Britain first, and some products be sold only to Britain
- Currency was low because more was bought from Britain than was exported
 - Ended up bartering much between Americans
 - Had to print paper money, which depreciated and was banned by the British
- British could veto any law regarding mercantilism made in the colonies
 - This system hated by the Americans.

The Merits and Menace of Mercantilism

- Economic laws were loosely enforced at the beginning, could get away with them
- British did help the economy
 - Paid bounties for American-built ships
- Colonists felt that the mercantile system was humiliating and restricting
 - Added to much emphasis on British economic officials
 - The nation was emerging, and yet they had so many rules like a little child

Work, Exchange, and Technology: One of the major motivators for England in creating the American colonies was to create profits from them in a system of mercantilism (the accumulation of money through commercialism). This hard belief in mercantilism branched off into various laws that would create resentment by the colonists for the British because they seemed to be economic exploitation by England that had little benefit for the colonists. For example, the Navigation Laws restricted trade to British-owned ships, and others mandated the facilitation of all American trade directly through Britain. Although these strengthened British control on trade, they ended up limiting the Americans' freedoms on the opposite end. Eventually, with the law that the British could veto any colonial legislature regarding trade, this consolidated England's total control on the imports and exports of the colonies, effectively making them totally dependent on Great Britain. This dependence was forced, however, and was precisely the limitation that caused the hatred for Britain that fueled the American Revolution—the revolutionaries were adamant in their want for freedom and independence.

The Stamp Tax Uproar

- 140 million pounds of debt, half from Americas
- Prime Minister George Grenville made colonists angry
 - Made Navigation Laws strict (1763)
 - Created the Sugar Act (1764) that made taxes from sugar to Britain
 - Taxes were lowered when colonists got angry
 - Quartering Act (1765) passed that made colonists have to provide food and shelter for British soldiers
 - Stamp Tax (1765) required stamps that showed tax paid on all paper
- George Grenville and Britain thought the new laws fair; colonists thought opposite
 - Colonists saw economic limitation and clamping down on freedom
- Admiralty courts for offenders of new acts
 - A new and different “guilty until proven innocent” system was hated
 - No jury system was hated — no vote, not fair
- Americans said “**No taxation without representation**”

- Said that the British had the right to rule them, but not to tax them (that is robbery of property that the British shouldn't be able to do)
- George Grenville dismissed it, said Americans were already represented by every member of Parliament
 - American colonists not satisfied, buildup of more hate

America in the World: The interactions between Great Britain and the American colonies here were pivotal. For the first time, Britain saw the Americas an essential provider, because they were in great debt because of the war, and the Americas were a large sink of money during that war. Instead of simpler trade-restricting laws such as the Navigation Laws, these new “acts” now asked for money from the colonists. Each act, which put a small “duty,” or tax, on a common tradeable item with the Americas, was met by anger in the colonies; Great Britain responded to multiple revolts in this, such as by lowering the sugar tax. In this way, England created a closer and more money-oriented bond with the American colonies, and a new sense of a feedback mechanism was created as the colonists cried out and the British responded. This set the stage for higher rates of both policy changes and rebellions in the colonies, because now communication was better established.

Forced Repeal of the Stamp Act

- Stamp Act Congress (1765, NYC, 9 colonies represented) met to protest the stamp act
 - Wrote up rights and grievances against the king
 - Had little effect on history
- American people had nonimportation agreements in which they bought little from England and encouraged buying colonial goods (like a boycott)
 - A strong step towards uniting the colonies, as it promoted interaction between them
 - More colonists than ever participated in efforts like these, in boycotts and rallies
- Violent Sons of Liberty and Daughters of Liberty groups protested
 - Raided houses of officials against the nonimportation acts, stole their money, hung effigies (models) of them
- Stamp tax collectors were forced out of business so that Stamp Act was never really carried out
 - Act was later nullified and repealed because it couldn't be enforced
 - Britons angry because they had to pay heavy taxes while the American colonies paid lesser taxes (1/3 of the cost they used up in the war)
- The Declaratory Act (1766, same year as repealing of the Stamp Act) **said that the British had absolute rule over the American colonies** (could “bind” them whenever necessary)

American and National Identity: The repeal of the Stamp Act and the resistance to the other, similar taxes that Britain imposed on the Americas exemplify the expanding sense of the ideal of independence and rebellious freedom in the American colonies. When Britain made a single company the monopoly of American tea trade, the lower prices did not trick the colonists into buying the tea; rather, the colonists believed that the loss of choice over tea choices and the potential exploitation of this large company would be to their detriment. Therefore, they declined the material benefit (lower prices) to protect their ideals; this is like much of the hate building up to the Revolutionary War, in which the taxes were not too detrimental to the colonists' pocketbooks (they paid much lesser taxes than the citizens of Great Britain), but it was the idea of unlawful “taxation without representation” that caused them to flare up. This in

turn led to the sense of rectified rebellion, with the boycotting of British goods through the nonimportation agreements and the loss of the stamp officials so as to prevent the Stamp Act. In both of these cases, the result is also nonviolent, which demonstrates that Americans will be industrious to solve their problems as well—this will be evidenced much later in MLK’s famous preachings of love to fight enemies, not hate—by looking for better solutions than fighting. However, when further provoked, violence became the only option and the Revolutionary War broke out.

The Townshend Tea Tax and the Boston “Massacre”

- Charles Townshend create Townshend Acts that taxed (put a “light import duty” on) many common goods
 - Charles Townshend was a very gifted orator in Parliament
 - Among the items taxed were “glass, white lead, paper, paint, and tea”
 - There was a minute distinction that made it “an indirect customs duty” that was unlike the Stamp Act and therefore more legally taxable—however, the colonists were still angry and didn’t care about this tiny distinction
 - Colonists worried that this was simply a way to get control of them—the money was going straight to royal governors, and taxed the tea that so many Americans drank
 - People didn’t care as much about Townshend Acts as the Stamp Act, because it was lesser and because smuggling was common
- British sent some troops over to Boston to maintain order
 - Troops were intoxicated and without orders
 - Men began to taunt them, and they panicked and fired, killing or wounding 11 people
 - This was the **Boston Massacre**—greatly angered colonists for loss of life
 - Soldiers got away with little to no punishment
 - Crispus Attucks was leader and one of the first to die

The Seditious Committees of Correspondence

- **King George III was a bad leader, arrogant and greedy for power**
- Townshend Acts brought in very little money to Britain (295 pounds annually from tax instead of 170,000 pounds spent during the war annually)
 - Lord North (under King George III) pressured into repealing the Townshend Acts
 - Purposefully leaving behind the tea (the ones the Americans hated the most) just to keep their presence on the American colonies
- Samuel Adams and other revolutionaries in the colonies were keeping the rebellious spirit alive
 - Continued to oppose Navigation Laws and tea tax
 - Samuel Adams especially faithful to his rights and he cared much for politics
 - Created a system of committees of correspondence in Boston, in which revolutionary letters could be exchanged to keep the revolution alive
 - Similar systems set up in 80 other cities
 - A central colonial system was set up in every colony, achieved the same purpose but allowed for intercolonial communication

Culture and Society: In this time period of greater British intervention, the colonists began to foster a new sense of overall suspicion. After listening to the radical Whig’s speculation on the potential of the

monarchy to impose absolute power on the colonies to do his bidding, the colonists too were worried that all of the recent development in the new acts (e.g., the Townshend acts) were simply a scheme to control the colonies or unrightfully steal money from them. As a result, revolutionary groups such as the committees of correspondence and the similar intercolonial system set up by revolutionaries such as Samuel Adams were created, and these together kept alive the idea of revolution. As the ideas of revolution became more popular as the preaching of the revolutionaries became more widespread, the very idea of suspicion and revolution if necessary (such as in this case) became ingrained into American society. This time period made revolutionary ideas not absurd or overly radical, which allowed for greater support and anti-British settlement to be garnered for the revolution.

Tea Brewing in Boston

- In 1773, the British East India Company had a lot of extra tea (17 million pounds), needed a market to sell them
 - British government gave the company complete control of the tea trade with the Americas
 - Tea became cheaper than ever before from this company
 - However, the Americans were still suspicious and saw this as an act to limit the American's choices by establishing a monopoly upon them
- English tried to enforce law, faced strong opposition by the Americans
 - Philadelphia and New York turned the ships back
 - Annapolis burned ships
 - Charlestown seized tea because tax not enforced
- Thomas Hutchinson, governor of Massachusetts, didn't want his colony to rebel
 - Forced ships to stay in harbor until their load was transported onto land
 - Infuriated the colonists
 - About 100 colonists dressed as Native Americans stormed the ships, and dumped 342 crates of tea—this was the **Boston Tea Party**
- There were many supporters of the Boston Tea Party amongst fellow colonists, but some worried that it would lead to widespread anarchy

Parliament Passes the “Intolerable Acts”

- British wanted to punish Massachusetts (especially Boston) after Boston Tea Party
 - **Intolerable Acts were severe measures to punish them, hated by the Americans**
 - Boston Port Act one of them—closed Boston ports until damages repaid
 - New Quartering Act gave more freedom to British soldiers
- Quebec Act passed also in 1774
 - Allowed French freedom to practice Catholicism and old traditions
 - Traditions did not include republican-like assembly nor trial by jury
 - Gave French more land southward
 - American colonies annoyed—showed that British would not give freedoms of trial by jury nor republican assembly, and it stole some land just west of the American colonies
 - In contrast, it is generally viewed as a good law that gave more freedom and land to the French; negative interpretation by the American colonists

Politics and Power: The efforts by the British to maintain the British East India Company, and, later, the Intolerable Acts were actions meant to levy their power on the American colonies. The monopolization of the American tea trade by the British East India Company was a move by the government of Great Britain that was meant to help the economy by reducing lost tea taxes, but it also consolidated British rule by only giving them a single option from which to buy tea. The colonists, recognizing this, forcibly rejected this by various means of boycotting and destroying tea, such as in the Boston Tea Party. This was followed by a penalization of the colonists with the Intolerable Acts, meant to subdue them into following Britain's rule. These were essentially little quarrels and revenges that paved the path to the American revolution, but they also were demonstrations of power for both groups. The British threatened with their legislature; the Americans showed their rebellious might in their sometimes total rejection of the British laws.

Bloodshed

- First Continental Congress (1774) was written to address the problems colonists were facing
 - Many talented speakers and future leaders (e.g., Samuel Adams, John Adams, Washington, Patrick Henry)
 - Eased tensions between the colonists with social activity
 - John Adams persuaded against a moderate position—wanted to be strict about rights
 - Wrote a Declaration of Rights to the king
 - Created the Association, a complete boycott of British goods
 - Stronger than nonimportation laws: included nonexportation and nonconsumption
- British ordered capture of Lexington and Concord where ammunition and leaders were located
 - Lexington taken, a few casualties
 - Concord defended itself (caused 300 British casualties)
 - Colonial minutemen were the rebel defenders

America in the World: In the first real clash between the mother nation of Great Britain and her daughter of the American colonies, the politicians of the colonies truly stood up for themselves. Meeting in the First Continental Congress, the people were greatly inflamed with their beliefs of rights and the grievances that the British had inflicted upon them. They drafted a straightforward document (the Declaration of Rights) and sent it to King George III. This shows the ability of the colonies, even in their fledgeling state, to autonomously make decisions and have their independent stance on the situation, accusing even the mighty British for sake of rights. Secondly, the colonists fended off the British military at Concord, proving their growing military prowess as well as their diplomatic one. For the first time with an international conflict, the American colonies seemed a suitable rival—they demonstrated their ability to hold their own in difficult situations like this.

Imperial Strength and Weakness

- British strengths:
 - British had greater population (three times that of the American colonies) and was more wealthy

- British had professional army (numbering 50,000), some of which were imported (German Hessians)
 - Also had 50,000 Loyalists (Americans loyal to the British side) and some Native Americans
- British weaknesses:
 - Ireland and France leached away soldiers from the American cause because of potential conflict there with Britain
 - Bad leadership under arrogant George III and Lord North
 - There was some support for the American colonies in Britain
 - The (radical) Whigs party supported them, but the Tories (the other, opposing political group in England) opposed them
 - Poor quality of life for the British soldiers
 - Colonists had an easier job than the British (restore status quo vs. conquer people)
 - **3000 mile separation made communication between orders from British government and action in British army very slow and unreliable**
 - Sometimes transmission time was long enough to make the message obsolete considering the present circumstances
 - Americans were very spread out, with no large targets
 - Large space also meant slower conquering; slower meant more time to train, strategize, even reproduce at a rate that far exceeded the killing

American Pluses and Minuses

- Americans had strong leadership
 - Military under George Washington
 - Diplomats with Benjamin Franklin
- Americans had strong foreign help
 - Had French aid
 - Had recruits for pay
 - Marquis de Lafayette is an example: came to fight for glory and liberty, became general at age of 19
- Americans were on the defensive (favorable position)
 - Were economically and food-wise independent and self-sustainable
 - **They had a strong belief in principles; defending principles as well as homeland**
- Americans had weak sense of unity and were not well-trained
 - Did not have a strong governing / leading body (Continental Congress simply for debating)
 - Did not have a central government (by Articles of Confederation) until near end of the war
 - Jealousy between colonies arose, and little trust of Congress
- Problems with currency, because metal money had largely been used up in the trade with Britain
 - Depreciation with paper money happened, leading to great confusion and debt

Geography and the Environment: Distance played a crucial role in providing an American advantage over the British in conflict. The Americans were fighting on their homeland, perhaps even minutes from their towns and homes that they are so familiar with. The English, on the other hand, have a 3,000 mile journey that takes at least a month in order to reach the Americas. Small, strategic maneuvers from the British headquarters in London could not be carried out in the Americas because of the long time delay, so the second-rate British generals in the Americas had to do much of the decision-making, while the colonists could easily communicate their strategies between the colonies. The movement of news and new soldiers would also have a delay in transmission, which would further complicate the situation. In addition, the colonists had the task of solely preserving their land and keeping the status quo, while the English had the intention of completely conquering the Americas so as to take it under their control, a much more difficult task. Also, the colonists knew the land better, especially in the forested backcountry, which allowed them to more quickly commute through these lands because of their knowledge of the land, which allowed for another advantage over the British.

Culture and Society: The British were better in terms of more conventional fighting, but the Americans were more industrious and radical. The British greatly outnumbered the Americans (3:1), and they had better trained troops; on the other hand, the Americans had a ragtag group of people willing to sacrifice their lives to a cause, and they had young, strong leaders. Both sides did have foreign aid. As was shown by William Pitt's new ideas in the French and Indian War, it seems that the newer methods of fighting employed by the Americans—with minutemen and local militias—would end up being the dominating force in the Revolutionary War, while older and more obsolete methods of straight forwards combat with little motive, as the British were trained to do, would not fare as well against the war that that the Americans fought desperately for independence.

Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Revolt (Special Section)

- In Spanish colonies, also were tax revolts
 - Stamp Act revolt and Quito revolt happened in same year
 - In 1781 another tax revolt in New Granada occurred
- Treaty of Westphalia stopped some conflict in Europe over religion (the Thirty Years' War), so attention turned over to the Americas
 - After the defeat of French and Spanish in the French and Indian War, the French and Spanish became hostile to the British—important allies to the colonists during American Revolutionary War
- Complex social structure in Spanish America complicated relations and prevented a strong revolt against Spain
- The old habits of republicanism of the English colonists that were violated by the British gave them cause to fight back

America in the World: By comparing the British taxation of the American colonies to the Spanish with theirs, it appears that the Americans did not truly have to revolt. The Spanish colonies in South America had received taxation and too rebelled; however, their rebellion ended with force by the Spanish, and they did not achieve a full revolution and independence from Spain. This demonstrates that while most of the colonists credit the British acts for their misery, it was not only them who were given taxes; in addition, the taxes were already reduced in comparison to those for the British citizens. However, it was

ultimately the sense of American freedom that swayed the decision, even if it was unconventional to successfully win against a colonizing power

A Thin Line of Heroes

- Americans had previously relied on the British for weaponry, but now they couldn't
 - Relied on the French later for steady supply of materiel
- Valley Forge (PA) was location of great military hardships
 - Lack of food and clothing in cold, harsh winter
- Militia largely made of untrained, young Americans—skittish and incomparable to British
- Smallpox weakened forces
- **Women played a large role in assisting the men**
 - At home, they maintained farms and businesses
 - Camp followers were groups of women following the American army and providing services like cooking and sewing
- Around 7000-8000 men were trained
 - Baron von Steuben (German) trained many men
- **African Americans also made up large part of army** (around 5000)
 - Most came from northern colonies (where there were more free slaves)
 - Fought in major battles (“Trenton, Brandywine, Saratoga”) and had other important roles in the army (“cooks, guides, spies, drivers, and road builders”)
 - British promised to free slaves that helped them; thousands of slaves fled to them and many were relocated after the war to free places
- Some Americans were working for profit, worked against common interest by trading with British
 - Made profit but encouraged the British and did not help the starving American troops.

Culture and Society: The Americans working against the British in general were a diversified group. There were the majority white men who made up the soldiers. These were the men who braved the winters and famines and diseases of Valley Forge, that made up the bulk of the fighting force. With them ran many African Americans, who fought for freedom not only for America but also for themselves. Behind them were the women as “camp followers,” who supported the effort by performing household tasks for the fighting men and also at home by upkeeping the regular life. The important role of these two groups that were suppressed by white men by most of American history was largely masked and led up to a great resentment for the fortunate white men. Just like white men, they had fought for their freedom as well—their contribution in the American Revolutionary War would become a major point of contention in the women’s suffrage movement and the anti-slavery and anti-segregation movements.