

Lesson 5: Revolution in England and North America This is the first time you have looked at it. The English Commonwealth and the Glorious Revolution The best and most dedicated soldiers on the side of Parliament were Calvinists who had religious quarrels with Charles I. They abolished the monarchy in 1649, had Charles executed, and set up a republic or commonwealth. One member of the Constitutional Convention explained that rights are the only protection against the government: It having been found from universal experience that the most express declarations and reservations are necessary to protect the just rights and liberty of mankind from the silent powerful and ever active conspiracy of those who govern...it is submitted that the new Constitution...be bottomed upon a declaration, or Bill of Rights, clearly and precisely stating the principles upon which this Social Compact is founded to wit, That the right of conscience in matters of Religion shall not be violated; That the freedom of the press shall be secured; That the trial by Jury in criminal and civil cases, and the modes prescribed by the Common Law for safety of Life in criminal prosecutions shall be held sacred; That standing Armies in times of peace are dangerous to liberty and ought not to be permitted unless assented to by two thirds of the Members composing each house of the Legislature under the new Constitution; That elections of the Members of the Legislature should be free and frequent; That the right administration of Justice should be secured by the freedom and independency of the Judges; That excessive Bail, excessive Fines, or cruel and unusual punishments should not be demanded or inflicted; That the right of the people to assemble peaceably for the purpose of petitioning the Legislature shall not be prevented; That the Citizens shall not be exposed to unreasonable searches, seizures of their persons, papers, houses, or property. Here is an excerpt of Parliament's condemnation of Charles to death: ...[H]e (the said Charles Stuart) being admitted King of England and therein trusted with a limited power to govern by and according to the law of the land and not otherwise, and by his trust, oath, and office being obliged to use the power committed to him for the good and benefit of the people and for the preservation of their rights and liberties, yet nevertheless out of a wicked design to erect and uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people, and to take away and make void the foundations thereof and of all redress and remedy of misgovernment, which by the fundamental constitutions of this kingdom were reserved on the people's behalf in the right and power of frequent and successive Parliaments or National Meetings in Council, he (the said Charles Stuart) for accomplishment of such his designs and for the protecting of himself and his adherents in his and their wicked practices to the same end hath traitorously and maliciously levied war against the present Parliament and people therein represented, as (with the circumstances of time and place) is in the said charge more particularly set forth; and that he hath thereby caused and procured many thousands of the free people of this nation to be slain, and by divisions, parties, and insurrections within this land, by invasions from foreign parts, endeavored and procured by him, and by many other evil ways and means... On the walls, written in English and Dutch, is the caption "This House Is To Let" (i.e. "This House For Rent"). Such criticism was banned in England, so cartoons like this one were printed abroad and distributed to Englishmen in the Netherlands or smuggled into England. This is an engraving of the Boston Tea Party. W.D. Cooper, *The History of North America*. London: E. Newberry, 1789. Nevertheless, the colonists hated the new taxes and with good reason. England had just executed a king

and fought a civil war about who had legitimate authority to ask for taxes. The colonists argued that Parliament could not tax them, since the colonists had no voices in Parliament. Their motto was, "No taxation without representation." We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness -- That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Two years after Cromwell's death in 1658, important nobles in Parliament requested the return, or restoration, of the executed king's son, Charles II. Cromwell dissolves Parliament in this engraving of the time, printed in the Netherlands. Cromwell and the Calvinists imposed their strict version of Christianity in the British islands, banning, for example, the theaters that had delighted Elizabethan England. For all which treasons and crimes, this court doth adjudge that he, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body. They were also inspired by philosophers like John Locke, whose Second Treatise on Government declared that people had the right to remove a government that failed to protect their lives, liberties, or property. Although the English still held major cities like New York and Charleston, Parliament decided the war was not worth it. A peace agreement was concluded in 1783, recognizing the colonies' independence. When a nation's foreign policy creates a reaction or leads to self-inflicted harmful effects, as they did for France after the American Revolution, these unintended consequences are called blowback. The U.S. Constitution The American colonies had joined together to defeat the English, but each colony was essentially its own sovereign nation. Additionally, tariffs--taxes on goods that crossed borders to other states--cost businessmen and consumers much money. Eventually, the idea of a federal government gained broad acceptance and representatives from each state were sent to the Constitutional Convention to draw up a Constitution. The separation of powers was based upon the work of an Enlightenment political theorist, Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu. As reproduced in *The Trial of Charles I--A Documentary History*, ed. David Iagomarsino and Charles J. Wood (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1989), 106-9. The political philosophers Hobbes and Locke (discussed in Lesson 4) were both Englishmen and their ideas were shaped by the experience of this civil war. The outcry against these acts provoked the colonists to assemble and plan a rebellion against England and the king. The colonists were inspired by the English Revolution, in which people had defied the king and crafted new rights and rules for society. The following section of the Declaration of Independence was so similar to Locke's work that one signer, Richard Henry Lee, accused Jefferson of copying the Declaration out of Locke's writings. By April of 1775, colonists had already fought the English army in Massachusetts at Lexington and Concord. In 1778, the French king signed a treaty of alliance with the rebel colonies, and in a year or so the Spanish and Dutch did the same. Throughout six years of uncertain or unfavorable war, Washington somehow managed to convince enough colonists that they should, and could, defeat the English. For months, militias of poor farmers controlled most of Western

Massachusetts. The Constitution separated power into three branches: legislative (Congress), executive (the president), and judicial (the courts). When he saw that Parliament would not condemn the king to death, Cromwell removed the opposing forces. He ended up opposing the people and Parliament and ruling as an absolute monarch himself. This tax would help pay for the war and also help finance the British East India Company, which had a monopoly on tea exports from China. The American Revolution

In September 1774, the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. This passage proposes the idea of natural, human rights, just as philosophers such as John Locke had done. It also explains that governments come from the consent of the people, not from God or the divine right of kings. Washington understood that the struggle with the English, like most guerrilla warfare, would be decided by survival and not by glorious battles. In 1781, colonial and French forces defeated the English in battle at Yorktown, Virginia. The English colonies had each been founded by different groups for different purposes. Virtually every colonist was against the taxes. From The King Is Sentenced.