Assignment

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Assignment

The declaration of independence happens to be the most important document in the history of the United States of America. Its importance can never be denied as it played a major role in defining the rights of Americans as a separate and independent nation. But this document just not came into being overnight; there’s a long history behind this piece of paper. In 1775, colonial loyalty to the King was still on the peak despite widespread condemnation of Parliament for constant opposition of colonists’ rights. It was widely believed that the King would step in to protect his subjects from a rogue Parliament any day now. A Continental Congress met to discuss options, and a peace petition was submitted to London asking for mercy, reconciliation, and the restoration of colonist's rights.

Then open fighting began, the first shots “heard 'round the world" fired between career British soldiers and colonial armed commoners with no particular military training on the road between the towns of Lexington and Concord. The American Revolution had begun. Then a virtually unknown author named Thomas Paine wrote a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense,*which argued that monarchy and hereditary rulership were extremely unrecommended systems of governance and the colonies should become independent. It was the greatest best-seller of the era, making Paine a celebrity and “king” an epithet. Those two causes shifted popular sentiment dramatically away from reconciliation and toward independence.

Many cities, counties, and states had already authored declarations of independence, rejecting Parliament and sometimes the King as abusers of rights and usurpers to power. Into this zeitgeist, the Continental Congress met again. They sent one last petition for peace to London, discussed independence, and ordered the authoring of a united Declaration of Independence to be written in case the future vote supported independence. A committee of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson was appointed to compose the document, and Adams assigned Jefferson the task of authoring it.

Jefferson applied his vast writing and philosophical skill to the task of expressing movingly the sentiments of the American people (Stanton, 2015). The resulting draft he presented to the committee was a masterwork, not just compiling the ideas of the many local declarations into one coherent whole, but declaring with immense passion and clarify the rights of all mankind and assert the justice of this resistance to oppressive British rule.

The news came from London. The King had not apparently even read the colonists' petition for peace, and instead declared those who organized the resistance to be in open rebellion and, therefore, subject to execution. Every member of the Continental Congress was now threatened with death. Jefferson brought his latest draft back to the committee to be read by his elders, Franklin and Adams (Eyer, 2015). Adams was so struck with admiration that he could only hesitantly offer praise, but Franklin cautiously offered some advice; that slavery not be mentioned so as not to offend the southern states, that the “sacred and undeniable” truth that “all men are created equal” be instead stated to be “self-evident” to sound less like a religious sermon, and other minor changes.

On July 2nd, 1776, the Continental Congress voted to declare independence from Great Britain, and two days later, on July 4th, they voted to confirm the wording of the Declaration and have it published across the continent. Over the coming months, copies of the Declaration were read on street corners, from church pulpits, and in homes across the thirteen rebelling colonies, with many holding signing parties to personally commit their loyalty to the new mandate to create a free country.

This document, authorized 242 years ago, is the origin of the United States of America, today the greatest national power on this planet, a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. God bless America that she will remain true to that conception and dedicated to that proposition as long as the sun shines above the Earth.

**Refrences**

Eyer, K. R. (2015). The Declaration of Independence as Bellwether. *S. Cal. L. Rev.*, *89*, 427.

Stanton, E. C. (2015). *A declaration of sentiments and resolutions*. Applewood Books.