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The Declaration of Independence

For a dependent country, freedom is the ultimate goal of their existence. But this goal is easier said than done. This movement requires certain cooperation from the majority of the people of the nation with the governance system. After this seemingly impossible task is accomplished, then a plan needs to be drafted and debated upon. Then the declaration of independence is made publicly. Such is the case of the US declaration of independence in 1776.

The Declaration of Independence was drafted by Thomas Jefferson, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. This document, as the name suggests, was aimed at the formal declaration of independence of the American Colonies from the governance of the British Crown. This declaration included a detailed explanation of why the colonists needed their independence. Throughout its course, it talks about the natural rights of human beings, such as their rights to revolution, while simultaneously discussing the oppressive measures taken by the Crown against the colonists. The Continental Congress approved the final shape of the draft on July 4th, 1776, which is celebrated throughout the states as a national holiday even today.

Before the idea of declaration was even though off by the founding fathers of the United States, the relations between the colonists and their master were already under severe strain. There were often slight conflicts between the Colonists and the British. The Seven Years' War added further fuel to the fire. Furthermore, the British were in a financial crisis, due to their participation in this war. The British parliament had to take steps to stabilize its ailing economy. They thought of implementing a series of taxes on their American subjects through several legislative acts, like the Stamp Act and the Townsend Acts. The British defended their rights of taxation as their right of payment to defend the colonists from the French. The colonists, however, had a different point of view in which they stated that, since they were not part of the legislative process, so these acts had no legal value. That was the time when the maxim "No Taxation without Representation" was chanted in the crowds. The colonists gave the notion that the British had no legislative jurisdiction over them, and that they have their legislative setup. Congress began to oppose the taxation levied on the American colonies on legal grounds and asked the American people to boycott British goods. The British held their stance which created further tension among the two parties. King George went as far as asking help from his European allies in the containment of the rebellious activities of the Colonists.

As the year 1776 dawned, the desire for independence was further surmounting in the hearts of the colonists. The British decided to pressurize the Americans into submission rather than negotiating with them. In February of 1776, the Crown passed the Prohibitory Act, which was aimed at establishing a naval blockade against the colonies. King George hired German mercenaries for the purpose. Needless to say, these measures were also counterproductive to the British cause as well.

The desire to gain independence was stronger than ever before, at that point in history. But when though they had popular support, there was still some hesitation among the members of the Congress regarding the declaration of Independence. The congress believed themselves to be a collection of representatives at the time at were bound by the laws of their respective states, which did not promote the much-needed sense of unity. Therefore, all the states started to legally allow their representatives in Congress to vote for independence. This political initiative was first taken by North Carolina and others followed in its footsteps.

Naturally, some states were opposed to the whole notion of independence, the primary ones of them were the states of New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania. The latter one was seen as the state that should be politically targeted to change its political ideas as it was assumed that others will follow suit if the state of Pennsylvania changed its mind. For this purpose, John Adams wrote a preamble, trying to explain why the declaration of independence was vital for their survival as a nation. Adams' labor would naturally bear fruit as the British simply refused to negotiate with their American "subjects". This, coupled with the naval blockades with the help of the German Mercenaries gave the Americans enough reason to unite against the British under one banner. John Adams' Preamble was given official status by the Congress and passed. After that, a series of meetings started that were aimed at finding the right set of representation to debate and draft the declaration of independence officially. Richard Henry Lee offered the resolution on the floor for discussion. The crux of the resolution was that the "United Colonies" had an inherent right to be independent of the British and that all sorts of political connections that currently existed between the British and the American needed to be revisited and/or dissolved. After several rounds of discussions, the support needed to move the declaration forward started to materialize at the end of June 1776.

After the resolution was finally passed, the next step that needed to be taken as the preparation of the initial draft of the declaration. Some wordings were changes to serve the interests of the participating parties. Most important of these were the parts related to the Slave Trade by Congress. The first part of the Declaration was naturally about natural law. This law was the basis of the entire argument of independence as it referred to the inherent right of the people to administer policies independence to their liking. The next part discusses the main crux of the idea that prompted the whole movement of the declaration of independence in the first place. This part mainly described the rights of the citizens to overthrow the government if it failed to serve the interests of the general public. In the part after that, the congress charged King George with a series of crimes against the people of the united colonies, declaring that he was no longer fit, politically or otherwise, to rule them as their sovereign.

The list in the latter part was rather long, as it charged the British King for several offenses. These included his refusal to Consents to Laws that promoted the wellbeing of the American colonists, putting constructive checks and balances on the governors that ruled their respective colonies, frequently dissolving the house of representative without citing a proper reason to the general public, making judgment in a dictatorial fashion, and inflicting damage on the colonies by a series of regional wars. In the part of the declaration after that, the members of the congress expressed their disappointment with the behavior of the British crown as it failed to respond favorably to the attempts made by the congress to seek a truce through negotiations. The final part of the declaration enforced the fact that the British were solely responsible for the current crisis due to their criminal negligence. It said that the British had brought the conditions to such a point that independence from the British was the only viable option. Hence, the declaration of independence ended with a note that American Colonists did not want to keep political ties with the British and wanted to become an independent country.

Different historians have different notions when it came to the interpretation of the different impacts that the declaration of independence had left on American history. According to Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of the United States, there were no innovative ideas when it came to this declaration. He declared these ideas as the shared sentiment of the American people. There was, however, one man to whom the main idea that brought forward this resolution was attributed. He was the English Political Theorist, John Locke. This conclusion was reached by many historians as the whole jargon of the declaration of independence has a close resemblance to the Second Treatise of Government that was presented in one of Locke’s many revolutionary works.

After the approval of the Declaration, the final draft was read publically in the Hall of Independence by John Dixon. This declaration started to increase the drive of the general public towards the notion of independence as any symbol of the British Crown that was present in the colonies was destroyed. A statue of the British King George was pulled down in New York and was used to make ammunition for the musket that was later used against the Red Coats in the many battles.

There were many issues in the declaration that were addressed later by other Presidents years after the declaration of independence was signed. For example, the issue of slavery was resolved by President Abraham Lincoln. This was one of the core issues that even caused serious fault lines among the American people that even led to civil war due to a serious debate that was focused on the creation of a new slave state to balance representation in the congress at the time. The meaning of the entire concept was discussed in detail between him and Stephen Douglas in 1858, focusing particularly on the part that says that "all men are created equal". Lincoln was of the view that the term all men was a universal reference and should be interpreted as such for the sake of progress of all the American citizens. He believed that this maxim was the crux of the entire declaration and therefore it should be protected and upheld to function as a moral guide for the sake of the interpretation of the constitution.

Before the publication of the declaration, several copies were made that were used in the course of discussions related to the fine points of the declaration. To this date, there is a copy written on a parchment known as the Engrossed Copy which was kept by the Library of Congress, but after an argument by the National Archives, the copy ended up permanently at the Rotunda of the Charter of Freedom.

To conclude the argument, the Declaration of Independence shows a strong desire of a nation to become independent of its oppressors. This move managed to set a precedent that was followed later by numerous other nations. Even in these times, we see the drive of impeachment of the current President of the United States as an idea instated in American society through the tenants of the declaration of independence. But most important of all, it managed to teach the entire world a very important lesson. The people of the world should never be scared when it comes to the defense of their rights, and their desire to seek independence from oppressive powers.

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