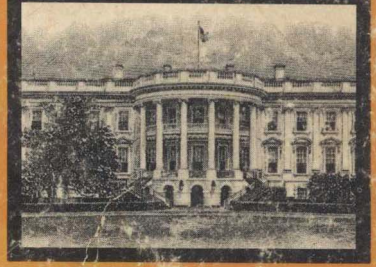


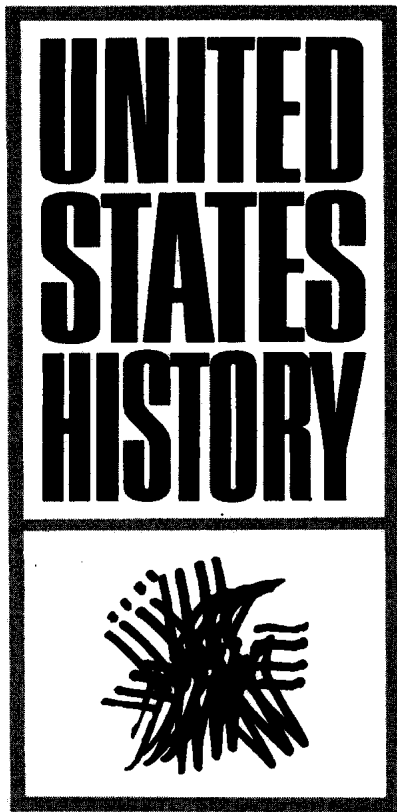
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Ideas in Conflict . Daniel Powell





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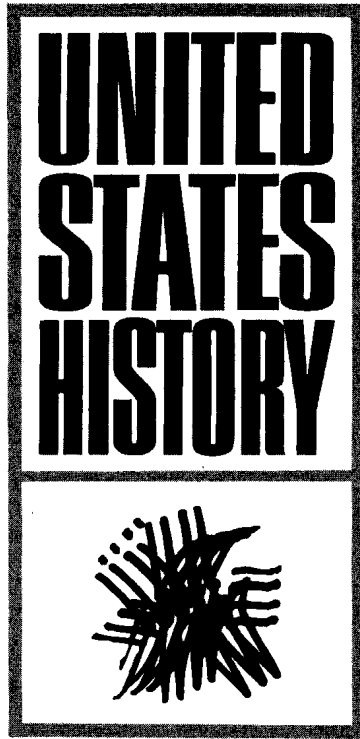
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UNITED STATES HISTORY: **IDEAS IN CONFLICT**



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To my wife Marjorie

INTRODUCTION

Ideas in Conflict is designed to involve students directly in some of the most provocative debates in American history. Each of the twelve Topics examines a controversy that had important consequences for Americans living at the time of the debate, a controversy which is relevant to modern problems. Using the inductive method, *Ideas in Conflict* obliges the student to interpret and evaluate the raw materials of history. The readings in each Topic present arguments by people who lived at the time of the debate, often central participants in the controversy. As he reads, the student will find himself in the midst of the struggle, weighing the merits of each side, perhaps identifying himself with one person or group, more often experiencing a bewilderment as to which side has the stronger case. The process of reading, interpreting, and drawing conclusions about controversial issues is not simple. It requires alertness, application, and discrimination. The study of controversial issues can help the student to develop his critical faculties as well as sparking his interest in American history.

In order to give the student some practical guidelines for attacking each problem, two sets of questions have been written, each with a different purpose. The questions preceding the readings alert the student to the main arguments of each writer. The Questions for Closer Study following the selections require the student to employ the skills of the historian—to identify interpretations, evaluate arguments, detect bias, and note similarities and contrasts. Used independently or as part of a program, *Ideas in Conflict* will help develop these important social studies skills.

Making the study of American history exciting is a three-sided enterprise. First, there must be a motivated student. Second, there should be an able and imaginative teacher. There is no substitute for the good teacher, no matter how excellent the educational materials. We cannot replace professionalism with paraphernalia. Yet, worth-while books undoubtedly help arouse the student's interest and add dignity to the learning process. Thus, addition of the third ingredient, excellent materials, should result in a lively, interested class.

In selecting the Topics, I have placed special emphasis on recent problems in American history. Questions about the use of atomic weapons, the treatment of minority groups, civil disobedience, and American policies toward Communist China are vitally relevant to Americans. The manner in which these conflicts are resolved may very well determine the future of mankind.

Daniel Powell

Publisher's note: The readings in this volume show spelling and punctuation as they appeared in the sources from which they were taken. Omissions from the original text are indicated by ellipses. Interpolations supplied for clarity appear in brackets.

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INTRODUCTION In breaking away from the British Empire, American colonists had to make a radical decision. Today, few Americans doubt the wisdom of that decision, but in the eighteenth century, American colonists were as much at odds among themselves as they were with the British. Numerous colonists spoke out eloquently and energetically for moderation, conciliation, and compromise. So convincing was the Loyalist point of view that large numbers of colonists remained loyal to Great Britain during the Revolution. It has been estimated that probably no more than one third of the colonists in 1776 were persuaded that the thirteen colonies should rebel against Great Britain.

In 1776, the colonists had to consider what they might gain and what they could lose by breaking away from British rule. Topic 1 presents some of the arguments advanced by three men who were influential opinion-makers during the period before the colonies declared their independence from Great Britain.

Samuel Seabury, writing under the pseudonym of "A. W. Farmer," was an Anglican minister who remained a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War. The first reading in Topic 1 includes excerpts from four of Seabury's pamphlets promoting conciliation with Great Britain. The first two pamphlets were written in protest against the first Continental Congress, which voted to stop trade with Great Britain and end all consumption of British goods until redress of colonial grievances should be secured. The pamphlet dated November 16, 1774 is addressed to the farmers and other inhabitants of North America; that of November 28, to the merchants of New York. The third and fourth pamphlets defended the British point of view in the controversy with the colonies. The pamphlet dated December 24, 1774 was a reply to a pamphlet written anonymously by Alexander Hamilton, and the pamphlet of January 17, 1775 was addressed to the New York legislature. During the war, Seabury served as chaplain with a Loyalist regiment, but unlike many Loyalists, he remained in the United States after the Revolution.

The second reading is an excerpt from John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer, in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, first published between December 1767 and February 1768. Dickinson, an eminent Pennsylvania lawyer, argued that although Parliament had the right to regulate colonial trade, it had no right to tax the colonists. His letters were influential in shaping the theoretic-

cal foundation of the colonists' opposition to British rule. In spite of his belief that Great Britain had no authority to tax the colonists, Dickinson was reluctant to sever colonial ties, and he opposed the Declaration of Independence. He served in the Patriot militia during the war and later helped frame the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.

The final reading is from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, written in January 1776. This pamphlet sold 120,000 copies within three months after it was published and has been credited with helping many colonists make up their minds to throw off British rule. After the American struggle for independence, Paine lent his efforts to the French Revolution.

Look for the arguments developed by each of the writers for conciliation with, or separation from, the British Empire. As you read, consider the following questions:

1 What economic advantages does Samuel Seabury believe the British Empire offers to the American colonists? What other reasons does he give in favor of conciliation with Great Britain?

2 What is John Dickinson's attitude toward the right of a colony to revolt? What methods does he advocate for bringing about changes in British policy?

3 What practical arguments does Thomas Paine present in favor of independence? What idealistic reasons does he give? How do his arguments differ from Seabury's?



ARGUMENTS FOR CONCILIATION

Samuel Seabury, *Letters of a Westchester Farmer, 1774–1775*, pp. 46, 49–50, 97, 111, 117–118, 127, 130–131, 133–134, 140–141, 161. Westchester County Historical Society, 1931.

[November 16, 1774]

Can we think to threaten, and bully, and frighten the supreme government of the nation into a compliance with our demands? . . . A single campaign, should she exert her force, would ruin us effectually. But should she choose less violent means, she has

it in her power to humble us without hurting herself. She might raise immense revenues, by laying duties in England, Ireland and the West-Indies, and we could have no remedy left; for this non-importation scheme cannot last forever. She can embarrass our trade in the Mediterranean with Spain, Holland &c. nor can we help ourselves; for whatever regulations she should make, would effectually be enforced, by the same Navy that she keeps in readiness to protect her own trade. . . .

. . . The first distress [of non-importation] will fall on ourselves: it will be more severely felt by us, than by any part of all his Majesty's dominions; and it will affect us the longest. The fleets of Great-Britain command respect throughout the globe. Her influence extends to every part of the earth. Her manufactures are equal to any, superior to most in the world. Her wealth is great. . . . The total loss of our trade would be felt only for a time. Her merchants would turn their attention another way. New sources of trade and wealth would be opened: New schemes pursued. She would soon find a vent for all her manufactures in spite of all we could do. Our malice would hurt ourselves only. . . .

The case is very different with *us*. We have no trade but under the protection of Great-Britain. We can trade no where but where she pleases. We have no influence abroad, no ambassadors, no consuls, no fleet to protect our ships in passing the seas, nor our merchants and people in foreign countries. Should our mad schemes take place, our sailors, ship-carpenters, carmen, sail-makers, riggers, miners, smelters, forge-men, and workers in bar-iron, &c. would be immediately out of employ; and we should have twenty mobs and riots in our own country, before one would happen in Britain or Ireland. . . .

The next thing I shall take notice of, is the advanced prices of goods, which will, not only probably, but necessarily, follow, as soon as the non-importation from Great Britain, &c. shall take effect. . . . You are obliged to buy many articles of clothing. You cannot make them yourselves; or you cannot make them so cheap as you can buy them. You want Woollens for your winter clothing. Few of you have wool enough to answer the purpose. For notwithstanding the boasts of some ignorant, hot-headed men, there is not wool enough on the continent, taking all the colonies together, to supply the inhabitants with stockings. Notwithstanding all the

homespun you can make, many of you find it difficult, at the year's end, to pay the shop-keeper for what the necessities of your families have obliged you to take up. What will you do when the prices of goods are advanced a quarter, for instance, or an half? . . . The price of any commodity always rises in proportion to the demand for it; and the demand always increases in proportion to its scarcity. As soon as the importation ceases in New-York, the quantity of goods will be daily lessened, by daily consumption; and the prices will gradually rise in proportion. . . .

[November 28, 1774]

Only now suppose it possible that [Massachusetts] . . . should succeed, and become a state independent on Great-Britain. The probable consequence would be, that the other New-England colonies would join them, and together with them, form one Republic. When once they had arrived at this height of power, How long do you suppose they would remain in peace with *this* government [New York]? Certainly only till a fair opportunity offered to attack it with advantage. The New-England people have ever cast a wishful eye on the lands of this province. Connecticut, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, have all in their turns encroached upon them; and their encroachments have not only been very troublesome, but also very difficult to remove. A state of continual war with New-England, would be the inevitable fate of this province, till submission on our part, or conquest on their part, put a period to the dispute. The consequences of such an event to the *landed interest* of this colony, need no enumeration.

Whenever the fatal period shall arrive, in which the American colonies shall become independent on Great-Britain, a horrid scene of war and bloodshed will immediately commence. The interests, the commerce of the different provinces will interfere: disputes about boundaries and limits will arise. There will be no supreme power to interpose; but the sword and bayonet must decide the dispute. . . .

[December 24, 1774]

Legislation is not an inherent right in the colonies. Many colonies have been established, and subsisted long without it. The Roman colonies had no legislative authority. It was not till the

later period of their republic that the privileges of Roman citizens, among which that of voting in the assemblies of the people at Rome was a principal one, were extended to the inhabitants of Italy. All the laws of the empire were enacted at Rome. Neither their colonies, nor conquered countries had any thing to do with legislation.

The position that we are bound by no laws to which we have not consented, either by ourselves, or our representatives, is a novel position, unsupported by any authoratative record of the British constitution, ancient or modern. It is republican in its very nature, and tends to the utter subversion of the English monarchy.

This position has arisen from an artful change of terms. To say that an Englishman is not bound by any laws, but those to which the representatives of the nation have given their consent, is to say what is true: But to say that an Englishman is bound by no laws but those to which *he* hath consented in person, or by *his* representative, is saying what never was true, and never can be true. A great part of the people in England have no vote in the choice of representatives, and therefore are governed by laws to which they never consented either by *themselves* or by *their* representatives.

The right of colonists to exercise a legislative power, is no natural right. They derive it not from nature, but from the indulgence or grant of the parent state, whose subjects they were when the colony was settled, and by whose permission and assistance they made the settlement. . . .

. . . [In] every government, *legislation* and *taxation*, or the right of raising a revenue, must be conjoined. If you divide them, you weaken, and finally destroy the government; for no government can long subsist without power to raise the supplies necessary for its defence and administration. . . . Government implies, not only a power of making and enforcing *laws*, but defence and protection. Now protection implies tribute. Those that share in the protection of any government, are in reason and duty, bound to maintain and support the government that protects them: Otherwise they destroy their own protection; or else they throw an unjust burthen on their fellow-subjects, which they ought to bear in common with them. While therefore the colonies are under the British government, and share in its protection, the British government has a right to raise, and they are in reason and duty bound to pay, a reasonable and proportionable part of the expence of its administration. . . .