

## A.7 American Revolution and Constitution

Q1 - "At the news of the declaration of Independence crowds gathered to cheer, fire guns and cannon and ring church bells in Philadelphia, Boston and other places, but there were many people in America who did not rejoice." Comment. [1986].

Ans:

Thomas Jefferson (4 July 1776) drafted the declaration of Independence which was an important event in American war of Independence. The news of it was not same for everyone as there were many people in America who did not rejoice.

American revolution dealt a big blow to monarchical society and aristocratic privilege. According to Gordon Wood - "The American Revolution was partly fought over differing interpretations of who in America were

the proper social leaders."

There were loyalists who were around 20% of white Americans who supported Britain in American Revolution and declaration of Independence didn't went well with them. The non-expansionists supported the Britain and were strongest in the middle colonies of New York and Pennsylvania. While small farmers supported the Patriots in Massachusetts, Virginia but in New York and South Carolina they became loyalist.

After the declaration of Independence, about 80,000 loyalists left the US during the course of Revolution and their departure weakened the old colonial patrimonial power structure. This exist of many people (loyalist, non-expansionists) left space for what Jefferson called "aristocracy of virtue and talent".

Thus, there were crowds who were cheerful at the news of declaration of independence, but some were not in rejoice mood. However, by Treaty of Paris (1783), loyalists' safety and security were taken ~~care~~ concern.

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Q2- What were the factors that worked in the drafting of American Constitution? To what extent, American Constitution can be called of British origin? (2005).

Ans:- The historical, socio-economic and intellectual ~~forces~~ currents of the time were factors working behind the drafting of US Constitution.

- Historical and socio-economic factors :-

- (i) creating a new order free of exploitation keeping in mind the exploitation faced by 13 colonies from mother country.
- (ii) Liberty being denied through policies such as mercantile capitalism, navigation act, etc. Thus, liberty found ample expression in Article of Socio-economic confederation to include personal, religious & socio-cultural field.
- (iii) The negative aspect of monarchical form was done with making republican constitution.

(iv) ~~13~~ 13 colonies were seized of rights and hence American Constitution incorporated the bill of rights and to ensure that the right is maintained, judicial review was maintained.

(v) colonies were subjected to limitation in political aspects and slogan "No taxation without representation" held valid. American constitution led to formation of an ideal federation with political freedom system and units having admissible autonomy and equal representation in the senate.

Intellectual factors:

(i) Inspired by Montesquie's 'separation of power', framers of constitution ensured no part of President is not responsible to the house of representatives.

(ii) Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau also influenced the founding fathers and Rousseau's ideas of rights of men come to be reflected in preamble of American constitution.

The above factors and series of compromises such as between-federalist/antifederalists, free/slave states, large/small state, etc were behind the working of Philadelphia Convention which produced the constitution.

— To what extent, its British origin?

13 colonies in America were subjected to colonial rule of British and number of reforms/exploitation were carried out during this period. Thus, no doubt it heavily influenced the framers of American constitution like the way British rule/reforms influenced framers of Indian Constitution. Democracy, Equality, freedom of religion, primary, liberty to trade, etc are some example reflecting British origin.

But it would be wrong to say that it is entirely of British origin as in American Constitution we have written constitution, republic, federalism, strong judiciary, presidential form which were not of British origin like the same way Indian Constitution.