

Debate Over Taxation And Representation

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Great Britain and America, were its colonies, expressed divergent views about taxation and representation, and their strong beliefs concerning the same with each side had a strong basis of support towards their argument that not only raised concerns and emotions among the proponents but also led to long-lasting changes and other whole new views about colonists and their colonial powers. This essay seeks to give an in-depth explanation of the British view of taxation and representation in the first part and the colonist's view and beliefs about the same in the second part.

British solemnly believed in the taxation of their colonies with or without their consent, and they further belittled the grievances of their American subjects of representation in the parliament that comprised the House of Lords and that of Representatives. Both readings present a colonial master who strongly believes in a master-servant kind of bond between Great Britain and America, their subjects. They argue that Britons must wield full authority over their subjects through the use of legislation enacted by the supreme parliament and had powers to make decisions and changes to colonial rules that do not require any contradiction.

The Great Britain parliament declaratory argues that parliament reserved the "full authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind to the colonies and the people of America together." No representation of the Americans is needed in the Supreme Parliament. (Declaratory Act) Some Jennys's reading 1765 argues that "why does not this imaginary representation extend to America as well as over the whole island of Great Britain" because all laws that are made in parliament are just, and no government whatsoever in its right conscience would come up with unjust laws hence no need for representation of the Americans in the parliament.

This government had the right to collect taxes from their subjects with or without their consent. Some Jennys 1765, in his reading terms, the arguments of those against forced taxation as insolent and absurd and instead presents an interesting view that "no man that I know of is taxed by his consent and an Englishman, I believe is a little likely to be so taxed as any man in the world" this clearly portrays the stand of the British that believed demands by Americans not to be taxed without their consent were unwarranted, and it was clear that even some British states Manchester and Birmingham that did not send a single member to the parliament for representation were also taxed which clearly proves insolent the demand for representation. To sum this up, Great Britain believed that the liberty of the Americans did not come through exemption from taxes or demanding representation, but rather strict conformity to the parliament laws, which were more of a form of slavery. This shows the relationship between Great Britain and their subjects and the enormous power and rights they wielded over their subjects.

American side also had their viewpoint on the rights and freedoms that they were entitled to as far as their colonial masters were concerned. The two readings convey that Americans were entitled to

equal and fair treatment as their colonial masters counterparts, as enshrined in the British constitution. The reading of the resolution of Stamp Act Congress 1765 argues that "...subjects in these colonies are entitled to all the inherent rights and liberties of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain." This strongly affirms their conviction of equality among all of them. (Stamp Act Congress) Americans were also convicted of the need for a representative of their own in the House of the Lords and House of Commons and also formation and representation in their subordinate legislative in their various states.

The advantages of their representation in enhancing cooperation, unity, and coexistence with their colonial masters were key, as clarified in James Oti's 1764 reading, "... equity of an American representation would be the most effectual means of giving both countries a thorough knowledge of each other's interest as well as of the whole which is inseparable". (Otis) This colonist was thus convinced that getting their voice in the legislature was vital for ensuring the prevalence of justice and effective legislation beneficial to all. They felt they had to vote for their representatives. Americans also resented the imposition of taxes heavily without their consent, which they considered slavery and oppression of the highest order termed as taking away one's property by force. James Oti argues that "imposition of taxes is completely irreconcilable with the rights of colonists.... and a breach of the law of nature, no law whatsoever can make it just." This makes it clear that this act was not only a form of oppression but also slavery of the highest order.

They also stressed the need for strict adherence to the stated laws outlined in the British constitution that was binding to all and condemned the selective application of those laws by the parliament to fulfill its ambition but not for the common good of the people, specifically the colonists. They condemn the despotic rule applied to them, arguing that constitutionally, every man in dominion was free and thus entitled to liberty and not arbitrary decrees as was the case. Slavery and the use of unconstitutional laws like taxation without consent were dehumanizing in all aspects and unwarranted. The trial of the jury was also considered an inherent and invaluable right of every subject.

These instances show that the American colonists were completely dissatisfied with how Great Britain was running the affairs of the colony and specifically oppressing them. Theirs was a wake-up call for the Great Britain Government to rise to the occasion, grant them full liberty, and stop further infringement of their rights in a bid to promote universal brotherhood.

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