

Taxation and representation debate

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Taxation and Representation Debate

In this debate, I will argue for the colonies to be exempted from paying taxes to the Crown since they are not represented in British parliament and cannot be represented due to their local circumstances. Moreover, they are entitled to the inherent rights and liberties of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain; right to life, liberty and property. The British parliament in imposing taxes on colonies and plantations argues that these dominions “ have been, are, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial crown and parliament of Great Britain” and that the “ King's majesty of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the crown of Great Britain” (Parliament-The Declaratory Act of 1766). As such, colonists have no power to vote or pass any resolutions or question British Parliament’s actions. The colonists do not refute the fact that they are subordinate to British parliament and just like British residents, they owe allegiance to the Crown but they also have the same rights as natural born of Britain owing to the fact that their ancestors were born there (First Continental Congress). As such, they ought to have equal representation in parliament as the Britons. However, this is not the case as they have no representation in the parliament and hence are not bound by decisions of that parliament. Governments are given consent by the people to defend their lives, liberty and property and according to Adams “ it is the community to assess pay” for such service (Adams, The Rights of Colonists). Since the whole community cannot be in the Assembly, it is their representatives to air their opinions. But the colonists are not represented in British parliament hence do not give consent personally or

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through their representatives thus are not supposed to be taxed.

As for the British argument that parliament represents all British possessions, this may be true but experience has proved that the same parliament does not safeguard their rights or property. Henry Patrick in his article Give me Liberty or Give me Death in 1775 argues that they have tried all the means necessary (petitions, remonstrations, supplications) to have parliament listen and act on their pleas to no avail. Instead, navies and armies are placed in the colonies to force them to submit. Besides, their ancestors left Britain due to oppression to set up a new society in which they have the right to set up new bodies to represent them and were allowed to do so by the Crown charters although Jenyns in the The Objections to the taxation consider'd 1765 argues that charters only empower them to make bye-laws, and raise duties for the purposes of their own police. According to the First Continental Congress in 1774, English colonists “ are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial legislatures in all cases of taxation and internal polity.” The British parliament in this case only has the right to regulate external commerce for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country excluding taxation, internal or external without subjects’ consent. Parliament cannot claim to represent all British possessions without having their representatives and even if there were, they would not be truly and properly representative of the American colony as it has many people (five millions) and huge; three thousand miles in length and unexplored breadth and three thousand miles from Britain (Adams, Rights of Colonists). The circumstances thus do not allow representation in British parliament and without such representation, it does not have right to impose taxes on the

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subjects.

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