

# Events and mistakes that led to the revolutionary war assignment

[War](#), [Revolutionary War](#)



post university| Events and Mistakes that led to the Revolutionary War| | |  
By. Bryan J. Korec| 9/25/2011| | The American Revolution displayed certain stages throughout that matched with the broad general pattern. As a prelude before the Revolution itself, there were already preliminary symptoms of unrest within America that followed the first step in the general pattern of revolutions. Prior to the initial shots in 1775, growing discontent against the British Government who were passing certain acts that the Americans thought as very unfair had already risen to a high degree.

With the majority of acts incurring economic and financial costs, by 1767, the Townshend Acts had been passed, putting further taxes on paper, glass and tea. Upon the taxes that the Stamp Act of 1765 incurred on such items as newspapers, official documents and almanacs, the American people became highly agitated and a feeling of resentment quickly spilled over the masses, ‘ several person were for dying rather than submitting to it... ’ [pg52 Maier, P. ] Additionally, the Colonialist became increasingly violent, ‘ Almost immediately after the Acts [implementation], outbreak of mob activity.

By 1770, the preliminary symptom of unrest displayed through protest and discontent was evident. The Colonialist did not feel that they were obligated to be subject to these taxes without representation in British Parliament. Additionally, the psychological pre-condition associated with the cause of war was present in the Colonialist discontent regarding the numerous Acts bearing economic consequences. Not only had the events up till 1770 displayed active protests and early mob activity, it also hinted at the

potential oncoming violence the growing mob could inflict which was the next step in the general broad pattern of revolutions.

Following on from active demonstrations and protests, the American Revolution followed the general pathology through to the advanced symptoms of unrest which was characterized by the creation of a violent mob during the Boston Massacre in 1770. Taking place on the March 5th 1770, the massacre found its backdrop against a dispute between a colonialist and British soldier. After a misunderstanding between Edward Gerrish and Captain Lieutenant John Goldfinch, Private White mishandled the dispute by striking Gerrish on the head.

Resulting from this a growing crowd of American colonialist gathered taunting White. Being relieved, Captain Preston went down to relieve the crowd. Amongst the crowd, one of Preston's men was struck down.

Immediately after this, Preston's men fired on the crowd killing five and injuring a further six men. The response to the 'massacre' was self-evident, with numerous artists drawing upon this incident for numerous pieces of anti-British propaganda. The massacre was the final straw for both radical politicians and simple American colonialists in Boston.

The word 'massacre' used by the Americans was not describing those killed; it was instead referring to the current mood held by many of the colonialists. The colonialists had been 'massacred' in a sense that they were no longer going to tolerate British government's power. Upon the previous acts that implied economic sanctions, the blood of American lives was indeed the last

straw. The display of violence acted as both a political pre-condition and characteristic that identified a successful revolution.

As a political pre-condition, the murder of five Americans displayed the conflict between the Colonialists and their Imperial masters. Under characteristics, the violence witnessed in Boston fulfilled one of the four characteristics of revolution. With the Colonialist all but effectively severing ties with Britain, the next step of the pathology was met, overthrowing the incumbent government in the form of the drafting and signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Written by Tomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that the thirteen colonies of America were no longer a part of the British Empire.

Distributed to the public, the Declaration of Independence was signed by fifty-six signatories from all thirteen American colonies. Differing to the pathology, the Declaration of Independence was a passive but firm way of legally and officially severing ties with Britain. Unlike other revolutions, the American Revolution did not physically overthrow the Britain as British parliament still resided in London, ' We have not raised armies with the ambitious design of separating from Great Britain... '[Weintraub, S. Pg 67] Nevertheless, the Declaration of Independence was a significant milestone in the American Revolution.

The Declaration of Independence displayed two of the characteristics of revolution; ideology and leadership. Foundational to the Declaration were two philosophical themes- individual rights and the right of revolution-

derived from the English philosopher John Locke. Locke advocated that an individual's rights rose above the power of any group or government, ' The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone... ' [Locke, J. PgN/a]. That individual was entitled to his or her own course of action, not bound to a third party.

As part of his social contract theory, Locke expounded that according to natural law, people had a right to life, liberty and estate. He maintained that people could instigate a revolution if a government acted against the interests of its people and replace it with one it deemed fit. Additionally, the importance of leadership is seen within the implementation of the Declaration. Without the brains ' Committee of Five' which drafted the original declaration, the American Revolution would not have taken the next step in its successful progression.

The Declaration of Independence was indeed an important part of America's Revolution. Not only did it fulfill the ' overthrow of existing government' step within the revolution pathology, it also displayed two of the four integral characteristics associated with revolution. In response to the Declaration of Independence, King Henry dispatched a significant British force to put down the perceived colonial problem within America. This marked the next step within the board pattern of revolutions which was the clash between the Revolutionaries and Counter-Revolutionaries in a ' Civil War'.

For the majority of the time from 1775 to 1781, the British enjoyed success in both the Northern and Southern theatres of war. Throughout the New York

and Jersey Campaign General Howe pursued a battered patriot army led by George Washington, ' With remnants of his army in tents, Washington had already disconsolately on December 18th 1776, ' the game is nearly up" [Weintraub, S. Pg84]. If not for a few strategic victories at Trenton and Moore's Creek Bridge, Washington's army may well have surrendered to Howe's British troop.

The turning points and ultimate demise of Britain's objective to put down the rebellion came during the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 and the Siege of Yorktown in 1781. General Burgoyne, coming from the north was meant to meet up with Howe's army based in Philadelphia. The objective was to cut and divide the American colonies with the two armies meeting up at Albany. However Burgoyne was met by a Continental Army led by Gates. This ended in British defeat and the surrender of Burgoyne's army.

The American's victory at Saratoga was a turning point because it renewed revolutionary confidence and determination after Howe's successful campaign in New York and New Jersey. Additionally, it also encouraged France to actively and openly support the Americans cause. Yorktown Virginia was the next vital turning point, resulting in a American victory. After several demoralizing defeats and the toll the war had taken on the British merchants and economy, Britain withdrew effectively ending the war and handing the Americans a successful revolution.

Although not a ' civil war' in nature, America's ongoing conflict with Britain from 1775 till 1781 marks its own distinct deviation from the general

pathology of revolutions. Though they were a series of battles that pitched Revolutionaries against Counter-revolutionaries, the conflict between America and Britain does not match the definition of a 'civil war'. Furthermore, America totally bypassed the next two steps within the pattern of revolutions. It did not encounter or experience a rise of extremists or reign of terror.

Rather, after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 America went into a seemingly prosperous period, an immediate post revolutionary society. The extent to which the American Revolution followed the broad pattern of revolutions is at best difficult to totally assess. Though the first two stages of the broad pattern align almost perfectly, from there on, the American Revolution seemed to take its own course. Though somewhat resembling the stages of the board pattern, the success of the American Revolution took a different and at times 'short-cut' path to post-revolutionary America.

The whole entirety of the revolution however did exhibit characteristics and causes of revolution at all times. Through the Acts passed by British parliament, it is safe to assume that the catalyst to the American Revolution was significantly economic in nature. Though hazy, there is one concrete fact known about the American Revolution. It was the result of a mature preference for freedom, not a vague ill-defined craving for independence onset by economic circumstances that ultimately brought about the succession of America.