

Why the Founding Fathers were against the feds

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Signing of the Declaration of Independence

Did anti-federalists foresee the likes of Castro, Kim Jong-un, King Abdullah, Mugabe, Omar al-Bashir, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Ho Chi Minh, Stalin, Mao Zedong?

Though these leaders may have used democratic sounding titles, such as Chairman, Premier, General Secretary, Chancellor, Prime Minister, The Dear Leader, or El Presidente, they ruled as tyrants.

Anti-federalists saw the danger of power concentrating. They opposed the new U.S. Constitution as they did not think there were enough limits on the federal government to prevent it from usurping power and becoming a totalitarian dictatorship.

Anti-federalist pressure is responsible for the Bill of Rights being added to the U.S. Constitution, which stated in the Preamble: "... the states, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent ... abuse of its powers, that further ... restrictive clauses should be added."

Notable anti-federalists included:

- Patrick Henry
- Samuel Adams
- George Mason
- Richard Henry Lee
- Robert Yates
- James Monroe
- George Clinton
- Melancton Smith

- Arthur Fenner
- James Winthrop
- Luther Martin
- James & Mercy Warren

Following the hated Stamp Act of 1765, the British committed the Boston Massacre in 1770, firing into a crowd, killing five.

In 1773, James Warren proposed that Samuel Adams form Committees of Correspondence to inform the rest of the nation of injustices being committed in Boston: “The rights of the colonists, and of this province in particular, as men, as Christians, and as subjects; to communicate and publish the same to the several towns in this province and to the world as the sense of this town.”

The British increased taxes and in response colonists had the Boston Tea Party, Dec. 16, 1773. In 1774, the British retaliated by blocking Boston Harbor to starve the city into submission. In 1775, at the Battle of Bunker Hill, hundreds were killed, including the president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, Dr. Joseph Warren.

James Warren, who also fought at Bunker Hill, was elected Massachusetts’ next president. James Warren was married to author Mercy Otis Warren, called “the conscience of the Revolution” for her correspondence with many founding fathers.

James Warren described the Battle of Bunker Hill to his wife, Mercy Otis Warren, June 18, 1775: “My Dear Mercy ... Extraordinary Nature of the Events which have taken place in the last 48 Hours. ... The Night before last our Troops possessed themselves of a Hill in Charlestown & had time only to heave up an Imperfect Breastwork. ... (British) Regular Troops from the Batteries in Boston & two Men-of-War (ships) in the Ferryway began early next Morning a Heavy Fire on them which was Continued till about Noon when they Landed a large number of Troops. ... After a Stout resistance & great Loss on their side dispossessed our Men, who with the Accumulated disadvantages of being Exposed to the fire of their Cannon & the want (lack) of Ammunition & not being supported by fresh Troops were obliged to abandon the Town & retire to our Lines towards Cambridge. ...

“Savage Barbarity never practiced among Civilized Nations they fired & have Utterly destroyed the Town of Charlestown. ... Among the first of which to our inexpressible Grief is my Friend Doctor (Joseph) Warren who was killed. ... Many other officers are wounded and some killed. ... It is Impossible to describe the Confusion in this place, Women & Children flying into the Country, armed Men Going to the field, and wounded Men returning from there fill the Streets. ... I hear nothing yet but the roaring of Cannon below. ... I need not say that I long to see you, perhaps never more in my life.”

James Warren, in his new position as president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, approved the Resolution, June 16, 1775: “It has pleased Almighty God in his Providence to suffer the Calamities of an unnatural War to take Place among us. ... And as we have Reason to fear, that unless we become a penitent and reformed People, we shall feel still severer Tokens of his Displeasure. And as the most effectual Way to escape those desolating Judgments, which so evidently hang over us ... will be – That we repent and return everyone from his Iniquities, unto him that correcteth us. ... Among the prevailing Sins of this Day, which threaten the Destruction of this Land, we have Reason to lament the frequent Prophanation of the Lord’s Day, or Christian Sabbath. ... It is therefore resolved ... by this Congress ... the People ... throughout this Colony ... pay a religious Regard to that Day, and to the public Worship of God thereon.”

As recent presidents have issued far-reaching Executive Orders, Executive Memoranda, Executive Proclamations, and enacted laws through regulations – thus circumventing the role of Congress, the wisdom of anti-federalists is being revisited.

At the time the U.S. Constitution was being written, anti-federalist James Warren submitted essays to the local newspaper under the name “Helvitiis Priscus,” which was the name of a Roman republican who resisted the dictator Nero. On Dec. 27, 1787, the Independent Chronicle published an article by “Helvitiis Priscus” in which James Warren criticized the Constitutional Convention: “... that assembly, who have ambitiously and daringly presumed to annihilate the sovereignties of the thirteen United States; to establish a Draconian Code; and to bind posterity by their secret councils. ...”

In his article, James Warren referred to the Lycian League, a thriving confederation of independent Greek city-states which existed from the 8th century B.C. until conquered by Phillip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, in 338 B.C.: “Everyone acquainted with ancient history ... turn their thoughts to the miserable fate of the Lycians ... a sober, virtuous people, who maintained their independence, and their freedom, for several centuries; and supported their own simple institutions, under twenty-three district sovereignties. ... A people bearing a strong resemblance to a party in America had crept in among them, and ... an ambitious Phillip had his emissaries in that body, who by political intrigue, and well-timed plausible speeches, enabled him ... to set himself at the head of the Grecian states; to annihilate their constitutions, and to degrade them to the most abject submission to the will of a despotic tyrant. ... The tyrant alleged the same excuse for his encroachment, that we hear hacknied in the streets of our capitals, for subjugating the Americans...”

James Warren added: “The application ... is left for the consideration of every lover of his country. America has fought for her liberties ... purchased them by the most costly sacrifices. ... And shall ... her freedom be sported away by the duplicity, and the intrigues of those, who never participated in her sufferings? ... mad ambition of a mind ready to sacrifice ... humanity for its gratification? Forbid it heaven! ...”

James Warren, who died Nov. 28, 1808, warned further: “Let the youth of America ... instead of indulging a rapturous admiration for the modern superficial speechifiers in favor of an American monarchy, let them examine the principles of the late glorious revolution ... and before they embrace the chains of servitude, let them scrutinize ... if their pride ... will suffer them to lick the hand of a despotic master. ... Let him be stigmatized with the odium ... the base betrayer of the rights of his country ... though he may artfully have obtained an election. ... Let the old Patriots come forward, and instead of secretly wrapping up their opinions within their own breasts, let them lift up the voice like a trumpet, and show this people their folly and ... impending danger.”

Another anti-federalist was Patrick Henry, the five-time governor of Virginia, renown for his phrase: “Give me liberty or give me death.”

Patrick Henry warned at Virginia’s Ratifying Convention, June 5, 1788: “Examples are to be found in ancient Greece and ancient Rome ... of the people losing their liberty by their carelessness and the ambition of a few. ... We are told that we need not fear; because those in power, being our Representatives, will not abuse the power we put in their hands: I am not well versed in history, but I will submit to your recollection, whether liberty has been destroyed ... by the tyranny of rulers? ...”

Patrick Henry continued: “Those nations ... negligently suffering their liberty to be wrested from them, have groaned under intolerable despotism. Most of the human race are now in this deplorable condition. ... My great objection to this government is, that it does not leave us the means of defending our rights, or of waging war against tyrants. ... Let my beloved Americans guard against that fatal lethargy. ... I would recur to the American spirit to defend us ... to that illustrious spirit I address my most fervent prayer, to prevent our adopting a system destructive to liberty. ...”

Henry added: “Oh, Sir, we should have fine times indeed, if to punish tyrants. ... Your arms wherewith you could defend yourselves, are gone. ... Did you ever read of any revolution in a nation, brought about by the punishment of those in power, inflicted by those who had no power at all? ... A few neighbors cannot assemble without the risk of being shot by a hired soldiery, the engines of despotism. We may see such an act in America. A standing army we shall have also, to execute the execrable commands of tyranny: And how are you to punish them? ... What resistance could be made? The attempt would be madness. ... You cannot force them to receive their punishment:

Of what service would militia be to you, when most probably you will not have a single musket in the state. ... Can the annals of mankind exhibit one single example, where rulers overcharged with power willingly let go the oppressed. ... A willing relinquishment of power is one of those things which human nature never was, nor ever will be capable of. ...”

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Henry wrote further: “When the American spirit was in its youth ... liberty, Sir, was then the primary object. ... We drew the spirit of liberty from our British ancestors; by that spirit we have triumphed over every difficulty: But now, Sir, the American spirit, assisted by the ropes and chains of consolidation, is about to convert this country to a powerful and mighty empire. ... If you make the citizens of this country agree to become the subjects of one great consolidated empire of America ... such a government is incompatible with the genius of republicanism. There will be no checks, no real balances, in this government. ... Suppose it should prove oppressive, how can it be altered? ... Is it not, therefore, a consolidated government? ... There is to be a great and mighty president, with very extensive powers – the powers of a king.”

Patrick Henry concluded: “This Constitution is said to have beautiful features; but when I come to examine these features, sir, they appear to me horribly frightful. ... It squints towards monarchy. ... Your president may easily become king. ... If your American chief be a man of ambition and abilities, how easy is it for him to render himself absolute! The army is in his hands, and if he be a man of address, it will be attached to him, and it will be the subject of long meditation with him to seize the first auspicious moment to accomplish his design; and, sir, will the American spirit solely relieve you when this happens? ... The president, in the field, at the head of his army, can prescribe the terms on which he shall reign master, so far that it will puzzle any American ever to get his neck from under the galling yoke. ... If ever he violates the laws, one of two things will happen: he will come at the head of his army, to carry every thing before him; or he will give bail, or do what Mr. Chief Justice will order him.

“If he be guilty, will not the recollection of his crimes teach him to make one bold push for the American throne? Will not the immense difference between being master of every thing, and being ignominiously tried and punished, powerfully excite him to make this bold push? But, sir, where is the existing force to punish him? Can he not, at the head of his army, beat down every opposition? Away with your President! we shall have a king: the army will salute him monarch. ... What will then become of you and your rights? Will not absolute despotism ensue? ... My great objection to the Constitution ... that the preservation of our liberty depends on the single chance of men being virtuous enough to make laws to punish themselves.”

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