

LITERACY TEXT #1: Excerpt; secondary article about events leading to the American Revolution

In July 1776 American colonial leaders gathered in Philadelphia and signed the Declaration of Independence, thereby officially declaring their break from Great Britain.

In the immediate months and years preceding this event, the British government under King George III not only ignored colonial petitions but also began to station British troops in American towns. His interventionism came after many years of hands-off rule by the Crown.

Whispers of revolution were growing louder through the colonies. Ultimately, the formation of a revolutionary army was underway. Each local government had to decide whether to contribute troops, knowing that such action would immediately cause the British government to charge colonial leaders with treason.

Virginia leaders had been debating the very question: Supply troops and fight against the British or remain loyal to the Crown? Meeting in St. John's Church in March 1775, Virginia delegates heard the arguments of moderates who expressed concerns about going against the Crown. Then Patrick Henry – an American planter, lawyer and future governor of the state of Virginia -- stepped before the convention to speak. His "Give me liberty, or give me death" speech would go down in American history as one of the great orations of the revolutionary era.

TEXT #2: Primary source, transcript of Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech in March 1775

[The British] tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable--and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

TEXT #3: Excerpts from M. Gandhi's autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth

I think it is wrong to expect certainties in this world, where all else but God that is Truth is an uncertainty. All that appears and happens about and around us is uncertain. But there is a Supreme Being hidden therein as a Certainty, and one would be blessed if one could catch a glimpse of that Certainty and hitch one's wagon to it.

(Gandhi, p.250)

[Nonviolence] is the basis of the search for truth... It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is [the same as] resisting and attacking oneself. For we are all [created] with the same brush and are children of one and the same Creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world.

(Gandhi, p. 276)

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TEXT #4: General overviews of liberalism and conservatism

LIBERAL PRINCIPLES	CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are social and economic problems in the country. These problems make it very hard for some people to chase their goals and achieve success. The government has a duty to solve these problems so that people can fully experience the promises of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” that the country was created for. • Government must be willing to be “big” – to create programs that give people opportunities for success and to impose restrictions that prevent vultures from taking advantage of ordinary people. Government programs are a caring way to support those who have trouble supporting themselves. • We live in a global society, a world community that is ever more interconnected. Our government should therefore place its national interests <i>second</i> to the needs of the world community. In times of crisis or threats, the government should defer to the leadership and decisions set forth by the United Nations. And if a threat to our national interests exists, then our government should pursue diplomacy (negotiation) rather than aggressive militarism. • People should be allowed to live according to their own moral principles as long as their decisions do not bring harm to others. Government should not force traditional values. It must be flexible enough to make adjustments, given the needs of a changing society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are always going to be challenges in the way of success. But the government should trust people to be responsible decision-makers who can overcome challenges. It is not the duty of government to solve every problem. It is the duty of government to protect rights, and it is the duty of the citizens to work hard and act responsibly. • Government should remain “small,” or limited, and not step into people’s lives with programs and regulations. A free society of independent people exists only when the government keeps its hands-off. Government programs lead to laziness and dependency, and they cost tax-payers too much of their hard-earned income. • Our government should preserve its national strength by maintaining the strongest military possible and by holding onto sovereignty (independent decision-making). UN decisions may not always be in the best interest of the United States. Our government knows what our interests and obligations are; we have the resources to take care of ourselves (and others if need be). We are therefore better-off making decisions on our own. And if a threat to our national interests does exist, then we should be inclined to respond with aggressive military action. Talk is often cheap and ineffective. • Government should protect traditional values because they are <i>good</i> for society. It is not appropriate to alter or undo ethical laws that have lasted for generations, especially when changes might infringe upon traditional belief systems.

TEXT #5: Translated excerpts from Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching

1. Being and non-being create each other.
Difficult and easy support each other.
Long and short define each other.
High and low depend on each other.
Before and after follow each other.
2. In dwelling, live close to the ground.
In thinking, keep to the simple.
In conflict, be fair and generous.
In governing, don't try to control.
In work, do what you enjoy.
In family life, be completely present.
3. Throw away holiness and wisdom,
and people will be a hundred times happier.
Throw away morality and justice,
and people will do the right thing.
Throw away industry and profit,
and there won't be any thieves.
4. The Master does his job and then stops.
He understands that the universe is forever out of control,
and that trying to dominate events goes against the current of the Tao.
Because he believes in himself, he doesn't try to convince others.
Because he is content with himself, he doesn't need others' approval.
Because he accepts himself, the whole world accepts him.
5. The Master doesn't try to be powerful; thus he is truly powerful.
The ordinary man keeps reaching for power; thus he never has enough.
The Master does nothing, yet he leaves nothing undone.
The ordinary man is always doing things, yet many more are left to be done.
6. When a superior man hears of the Tao, he immediately begins to embody it.
When an average man hears of the Tao, he half believes it, half doubts it.
When a foolish man hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud.
7. True mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way.
It can't be gained by interfering.
8. The Master has no mind of her own. She works with the mind of the people.
She is good to people who are good. She is also good to people who aren't good.
This is true goodness.
She trusts people who are trustworthy. She also trusts people who aren't trustworthy.
This is true trust.
9. My teachings are easy to understand and easy to put into practice.
Yet your intellect will never grasp them, and if you try to practice them, you'll fail.

TEXT #6: Translated excerpt from the “Funeral Oration” given by the Athenian leader Pericles in honor of fallen Athenians who died in year 1 of the Peloponnesian War between the Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta (speech given around 431 bce)

¹ There they wiped out evil with good...²There no hearts grew faint because they loved their riches more than honour; no poor man shirked his duty in the hope of future wealth. ³All these they put aside to strike a blow for the City.

⁴ Counting the quest to avenge her honour as the most glorious of all ventures, and leaving Hope -- the uncertain goddess -- to send them what she would, they faced the foe as they drew near him in the strength of their own manhood; and when the shock of battle came, they chose rather to suffer the utmost than to win life by weakness.

⁵ So their memory has escaped the reproaches of men's lips, but they bore instead on their bodies the marks of men's hands, and in a moment of time, at the climax of their lives, were rapt away from a world filled, for their dying eyes, not with terror but with glory.

TEXT #7: Excerpt from chapter 1 of Philip Gourevitch's book, We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed with our Families.

"Every survivor wonders why he is alive," Abbe Modeste, a priest at the cathedral in Butare, Rwanda's second-largest city, told me. Abbe Modeste had hidden for weeks in his sacristy, eating communion wafers, before moving under the desk in his study, and finally into the rafters at the home of some neighboring nuns. The obvious explanation of his survival was that the RPF had come to the rescue. But the RPF didn't reach Butare till early July, and roughly seventy-five percent of the Tutsis in Rwanda had been killed by early May. In this regard, at least, the genocide had been entirely successful: to those who were targeted, it was not death but life that seemed an accident of fate.

"I had eighteen people killed at my house," said Etienne Niyonzima, a former businessman who had become a deputy in the National Assembly.

Everything was totally destroyed--a place of fifty-five meters by fifty meters. In my neighborhood they killed six hundred and forty-seven people. They tortured them, too. You had to see how they killed them. They had the number of everyone's house, and they went through with red paint and marked the homes of all the Tutsis and of the Hutu moderates. My wife was at a friend's, shot with two bullets. She is still alive, only she has no arms. The others with her were killed. The militia left her for dead. Her whole family of sixty-five in Gitarama were killed."

Niyonzima was in hiding at the time. Only after he had been separated from his wife for three months did he learn that she and four of their children had survived. "Well," he said, "one son was cut in the head with a machete. I don't know where he went." His voice weakened, and caught. "He disappeared." Niyonzima clicked his tongue, and said, "But the others are still alive. Honestly, I don't understand how I was saved."

Laurent Nkongoli attributed his survival to "Providence, and also good neighbors, an old woman who said, 'Run away, we don't want to see your corpse.'" Nkongoli, a lawyer, who had become the vice president of the National Assembly after the genocide, was a robust man, with a taste for double-breasted suit jackets and lively ties, and he moved, as he spoke, with a brisk determination. But before taking his neighbor's advice, and fleeing Kigali in late April of 1994, he said,

I had accepted death. At a certain moment this happens. One hopes not to die cruelly, but one expects to die anyway. Not death by machete, one hopes, but with a bullet. If you were willing to pay for it, you could often ask for a bullet. Death was more or less normal, a resignation. You lose the will to fight. There were four thousand Tutsis killed here at Kacyir [a neighborhood of Kigali]. The soldiers brought them here, and told them to sit down because they were going to throw grenades. And they sat."

"Rwandan culture is a culture of fear," Nkongoli went on. "I remember what people said." He adopted a pipey voice, and his face took on a look of disgust: " 'Just let us pray, then kill us,' or 'I don't want to die in the street, I want to die at home.' " He resumed his normal voice. "When you're that resigned and oppressed you're already dead.... These victims of genocide had been psychologically prepared to expect death just for being Tutsi. They were being killed for so long that they were already dead."

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