

Session Notes

American Revolution and American People: A Comparative Inquiry

February 2, 2002: Sovereignty with Alice Nash and Virginia Ahart.

Discussion: The word Sovereignty is treated like a noun but it isn't. It is hard to define.

Groups are asked to think about an example of sovereignty. Ex 1: Confederate states asserting vision of sovereignty different of that of the government at the time. Ex 2: Cherokee vs. State of Virginia. Ex3: French Rev. the people want sovereignty over the rulers.

If we took away the word sovereignty, you would have the word *power*. The location and nature of power in American Revolution. (ex: federal vs. state power) Sovereignty is an idea that needs shared agreement of what it means.

What are the ideas about government? If you believe that the order in the world came from God than it is hard to fight against God. The reformation of the protestant breaks from the chain. When Henry married Ann Bolyn, he became the head of the church and moved the pope from the top. Now there is a change of order of power. Later there was an overthrow of monarch (beheading). Therefore the order changes again. There are new people coming in that don't agree with the precious order.

Most people need a rationale to have an idea about something. As the US, we feel we are legitimate with our government. We think logical. We thought things through-laws etc., but look back and there are moments when these laws were in conflict or contradictory. Sovereignty exists in a series of relationships. Ex: US we declared Sovereignty from Britain, but what other nations are going to do business with us. Are we able to pay our dept? be a real nation? etc.

Words have different meanings and different concepts. Ex: describe what a cup is? Around the room we get a differences from a specific object to a measurement, but nobody cares that others have different definitions because we don't have a stake in it.

Ideas of power:

- Power is action- to cause positive, negative, or neutral.
- Ability to influence- neg. or Pos.
- The ability to achieve a goal or outcome- or not- intent?
- Conscience behavior used as a catalyst
- Submission is not without power
- Difference in control and power
- Power comes in different forms
- Consequences = power
- Relative to who and how we use it.
- Hierarchy
- Rules and judgement

Hegemony exists when people find their own self-interest or even survival depends on keeping the system going-even if they hate it. Ex: Southern slaves need to keep chopping cotton. Need to make sure the farm is successful to ensure their own needs otherwise their children could be sold. Ex: Earning wages- if you don't have a paycheck you can't participate in the system.

Group Work

Groups of three split up to do a 2-minute skit concerning the characters they are given to show sovereignty at stake without using the word. Characters can not be named.

Characters not used: (mother, Father, Child) (Actor, director, audience)

Group 1: Runaway slave, Abolitionist, Slave Owner

Slave owner claims to have sovereignty over slave, but when owner gets to MA he doesn't have the power anymore because it is a free state.

Group 2: Principal, Union Rep., Teacher

Teacher has power to get help; Union rep has power to influence; principal has power over teacher.

Group 3: Indian, Quaker, and Puritan

Quaker-power of God; Indian- power of knowledge.

Group 4: Teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, and School Board

Power of money; power of public opinion

Group 5: Federal (president), state (Governor); Local Official (school committee chair)

Sovereignty linked with responsibility.

Definition of Sovereignty: Power of self government; The right or inherent right of self government; Legitimate (recognize) government

Sovereignty in Theory & Practice

- Crusades- “Just War”
- 1492- Reconquista (taking back Grenada)
- Papal Bull of 1493
- “Doctrine of Discovery” –Valladolid (1550)
- Aboriginal Title
- Vacuum Domicilium- Empty domicile

Competing Sovereignty

- The Vatican- Monarchs- Non-Christians
- Britain-England-Colonies
- Tensions between Colonies: Large vs. small (geography, population); Economic base/ wealth
- Local- State- Federal Government
- First Nations
- Territories

Tensions- where did Colonies get their sovereignty? Their Charters

Iroquois played a hand in Federal Government- people of the long house (families shared housing) 5 Families- Mohawk, Iroquois, ***, ***, ***, in New York.

Resource: William and Mary Journal- Forum pro/con of the proof of the Iroquois having impact on Jefferson.

Curriculum Ideas

High school group

- American Gov. class- sovereignty states
- Holy Roman Empire
- Give list of countries include Palestine, Israel etc. and then ask them if they are sovereign states and then explain.

Elementary group

- Explorers- challenge why explorers did horrible thing even though they were religious
- Role play different roles
- Movie to set the stage
- Speakers, field trips

Middle school group

- Role play (small groups) to discuss. Ex: School system- who is in control? Why? Ex: Sports-why does the official have the power?

Guest Speaker: Charles Robert Venator Santiago

Born in Puerto Rico in a political family. Looking for political alternatives for Puerto Rico.

Need to understand the history: How US formed itself with the Territory clause? How US citizens belong to a nation but not part of the US?

First group of territories- Northwest, Canada, Spanish territories. Next- Southwest territories before the Louisiana Purchase
Louisiana Purchase debate over whether to have this new territory. Threatened the senate, making it an unbalanced power.
How do they manage such a large area? Court concludes that Louisiana is in the process of statehood.

(?) Marshall trilogy

Dredd Scott case- 1st part of case decides whether Dredd Scott is a citizen; 2nd part decides whether the courts can rule over the territory. 1856-1901 Dred Scott case was the leading case for territories.

Massacre of Wounded Knee- creation of territory for Indians until 1890's 5 territories: Alaska, New Mexico, Hawaii, ***, ***.

Puerto Rico alternative state: First territory that does not have opportunity to become a state. (Foreign place for federal purposes.)