



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



PAMPHLETEERING AND PROPAGANDA

Address to the Soldiers.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU are about to embark for *America*, to compel your Fellow Subjects there to submit to POPERY and SLAVERY.

It is the Glory of the British Soldier, that he is the *Defender*, not the *Destroyer*, of the Civil and Religious Rights of the People. The *English* Soldiery are immortalized in History, for their Attachment to the Religion and Liberties of their Country.

When King JAMES the Second endeavoured to introduce the Roman-catholic Religion, arbitrary Power into *Great Britain*, he had an Army encamped on *Hounslow-Heath*, to terrify the People. Seven Bishops were seized upon, and sent to the Tower. But they appealed to the Laws of their Country, and were set at Liberty. When this News reached the Camp, the Shouts of Joy were so great, that they re-echoed in the Royal Palace. This, however, did not quite convince the King, of the Averfion of the Soldiers to be the Instruments of Oppression against their Fellow Subjects. He therefore made another Trial. He ordered the Guards to be drawn up, and the Word was given, that those who did not chuse to support the King's Measures, should ground their Arms. When, behold, to his utter Confusion, and their eternal Honour—the whole Body grounded their Arms.

You, Gentlemen, will soon have an Opportunity of shewing equal Virtue. You will be called upon to imbrue your Hands in the Blood of your Fellow Subjects in *America*, because they will not admit to be Slaves, and are alarmed at the Establishment of Popery and Arbitrary Power in one Half of their Country.

Whether you will draw thofe Swords which have defended them against their Enemies, to butcher them into a Renunciation of their Rights, which they hold as the Sons of *Englishmen*, is in your Breasts. That you will not stain the Laurels you have gained from *France*, by dipping them in Civil Blood, is every good Man's Hope.

Arts will no doubt be used to persuade you, that it is your Duty to obey Orders; and that you are sent upon the just and righteous Errand of crushing Rebellion. But your own Hearts will tell you, that the People may be so ill treated, as to make Resistance necessary. You know, that Violence and Injury offered from one Man to another, has always some Pretence of Right or Reason to justify it. So it is between the People and their Rulers.

Therefore, whatever hard Names and heavy Accusations may be bestowed upon your Fellow Subjects in *America*, be assured they have not deserved them; but are driven, by the most cruel Treatment, into Despair. In this Despair they are compelled to defend their Liberties, after having tried, in Vain, every peaceable Means of obtaining Redress of their manifold Grievances.

Before God and Man they are right.

Your Honour then, Gentlemen, as Soldiers, and your Humanity as Men, forbid you to be the Instruments of forcing Chains upon your injured and oppressed Fellow Subjects. Remember that your first Obedience is due to God, and that whoever bids you shed innocent Blood, bids you act contrary to his Commandments.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

your sincere Well-wisher,

AN OLD SOLDIER.

This handbill, probably the only surviving copy, is an early example of American Revolutionary War propaganda, printed to encourage British soldiers to desert. It includes a satirical comparison of living conditions for soldiers on both sides of the lines as well as an appeal to British troops from an "old soldier" to refuse their orders to kill colonists, the "sons of Englishmen."

Handbill

[Cambridge or Watertown, Mass. : unidentified printer, 1775?]

from the Massachusetts Historical Society Collection

1. What side does the "old soldier" support? Why is it important that it is an "old soldier" speaking?
2. What is the connotation of 'Prospect Hill' as opposed to 'Bunker's Hill'? Do the names make a difference to your emotional reaction?
3. What are the different ways of appealing to the English soldiers? Which do you find more effective? Why combine them?
4. What examples from history does the "old soldier" use in his argument? What point is he trying to make?
5. If you were to try to convince someone you knew not to join the Army, what arguments would you make?



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



PAMPHLETEERING AND PROPAGANDA



In 1754, **Benjamin Franklin** published one of the most famous cartoons in history: the Join or Die woodcut. Franklin's art carried significant importance at the time and is considered an early masterpiece of political messaging.

At the time, Franklin was the publisher of the Pennsylvania Gazette. He also had been chosen as a delegate for an upcoming conference in Albany, New York, to deal with a combined threat to the British from French and Indian forces.

During what later became known as the Albany Congress, representatives from seven colonies – Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island – were going to meet to discuss the French threat and work on a treaty with the Iroquois Confederacy.

As the Albany Congress approached, Franklin was concerned about a recent military loss to the French and he was clearly pondering a colonial alliance to confront more French aggression. A few days after the small military defeat, Franklin published an article about the loss, as reported by a young major in the Virginia Regiment, George Washington.

“The Confidence of the French in this Undertaking seems well-grounded on the present disunited State of the British Colonies, and the extreme Difficulty of bringing so many different Governments and Assemblies to agree in any speedy and effectual Measures for our common Defence and Security,” Franklin wrote.

“They presume that they may with Impunity violate the most solemn Treaties subsisting between the two Crowns, kill, seize and imprison our Traders, and confiscate their Effects at Pleasure (as they have done for several Years past) murder and scalp our Farmers, with their Wives and Children, and take an easy Possession of such Parts of the British Territory as they find most convenient for them,” Franklin concluded, warning that the British presence in North America was at stake.

Accompanying the article was the “JOIN, OR DIE” cartoon, with a snake cut into eight pieces that symbolized the British colonies. Franklin's message hit home as the cartoon and article started appearing in other colonial newspapers.



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



PAMPHLETEERING AND PROPAGANDA

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What was the primary purpose of pamphlets in colonial America?
 - A. To provide agricultural advice
 - B. To spread opinions and political ideas
 - C. To entertain with fictional stories
 - D. To report local and international news

2. Which pamphlet is considered one of the most influential during the American Revolution?
 - A. *Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*
 - B. *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine
 - C. *Plain Truth* by James Chalmers
 - D. *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*

3. What was unique about Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*?
 - A. It was published under a Roman pseudonym
 - B. It sold 120,000 copies in three months
 - C. It supported the British government
 - D. It focused solely on religious issues

4. What is the definition of propaganda as discussed in the lesson?
 - A. False information meant to deceive
 - B. Entertainment media meant for the masses
 - C. Information intended to influence opinions or views
 - D. Reports of historical events

5. Who was a prolific writer and propagandist who frequently published in the *Boston Gazette*?
 - A. John Adams
 - B. Samuel Adams
 - C. Thomas Paine
 - D. Benjamin Franklin



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



PAMPHLETEERING AND PROPAGANDA

6. What was the purpose of pseudonyms in colonial writings?
 - A. To provide legal protection for the writer
 - B. To enhance the intellectual credibility of the writer
 - C. To focus on anonymous eyewitness accounts
 - D. To prevent public access to the writer's identity

7. What was the role of newspapers in spreading information during the colonial era?
 - A. They only covered local events
 - B. They connected the colonies by sharing news across regions
 - C. They focused primarily on entertainment
 - D. They were primarily used to publish British government decrees

8. What type of propaganda did Paul Revere create?
 - A. Pamphlets
 - B. Engravings, such as the Boston Massacre illustration
 - C. Handbills
 - D. Letters to newspapers

9. What was Benjamin Franklin's "Join or Die" image designed to convey?
 - A. Unity among the colonies was essential for survival
 - B. The colonies should negotiate with Britain
 - C. The colonies should prepare for war
 - D. Independence was not an option

10. What were handbills, and how were they used?
 - A. Long pamphlets distributed at events
 - B. Newspapers delivered door-to-door
 - C. Single-page flyers posted or handed out to spread messages
 - D. Letters sent directly to British officials



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



PAMPHLETEERING AND PROPAGANDA

Answer Key

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. C