

Document Packet 'A'

Instructions: Read the background and context, followed by the four documents, then answer the questions that follow.

Background and Context:

In the early 1790s, the nation's leaders were still unclear about exactly how the new government would function and how much power the President of the United States would have. John Adams and his political allies, a strong proponent of a strong central government, admired the British system of constitutional monarchy and felt that the American President should, in a constitutional sense, have a similar stature to that of a British King. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison believed, on the other hand, that a weaker central government with power diffused throughout the people in true democratic form was superior.

In 1790, John Adams published *Discourses on Davila*, which advocated for a stronger central government and a British system. In 1791, Thomas Paine, the author of *Common Sense* and a friend of Jefferson's, published a new pamphlet entitled *Rights of Man*, which was designed to promote Republican ideals in revolutionary France.

Questions:

Document A1:

- 1) Into what two groups does Madison divide the nation?
- 2) How would you describe Madison's attitude toward Anti Republicans? What does he believe that they stand for? Provide specific examples.
- 3) How would you describe Madison's attitude toward Republicans? What does he believe that they stand for? Provide specific examples.

Document A2:

- 1) What did Jefferson say in the "note" that he added to *Rights of Man*?
- 2) What ended up happening to this "note?"
- 3) Who/what did Jefferson have in mind when he wrote this note?

Document A3:

- 1) According to Madison, what has Adams been writing about lately?
- 2) When Madison says that Adams has been the 2nd Magistrate of government, what do you think he means?

Document A4:

- 1) How much later is this letter written than the other 3 documents?
- 2) According to Jefferson, what kind of party has "sprung up?" Why does this concern him?
- 3) Who do you think Jefferson is referring to when he talks about "Samsons and Solomons?" What has happened to these people?

Overall Questions:

- 1) How would you describe the tone of these letters as these men discuss political matters?
- 2) What do these letters teach you about the personality and political beliefs of Thomas Jefferson?

Document A1

For the National Gazette

Dec. 20. [1792]

Who Are the Best Keepers of the People's Liberties?

James Madison

Republican.—The people themselves. The sacred trust can be no where so safe as in the hands most interested in preserving it.

Anti-republican.—The people are stupid, suspicious, licentious. They cannot safely trust themselves. When they have established government they should think of nothing but obedience, leaving the care of their liberties to their wiser rulers.

Republican.—Although all men are born free, and all nations might be so, yet too true it is, that slavery has been the general lot of the human race. Ignorant—they have been cheated; asleep—they have been surprized; divided—the yoke has been forced upon them. But what is the lesson? That because the people may betray themselves, they ought to give themselves up, blindfold, to those who have an interest in betraying them? Rather conclude that the people ought to be enlightened, to be awakened, to be united, that after establishing a government they should watch over it, as well as obey it.

Anti-republican.—You look at the surface only, where errors float, instead of fathoming the depths where truth lies hid. It is not the government that is disposed to fly off from the people; but the people that are ever ready to fly off from the government. Rather say then, enlighten the government, warn it to be vigilant, enrich it with influence, arm it with force, and to the people never pronounce but two words—Submission and Confidence.

Republican.—The centrifugal tendency then is in the people, not in the government, and the secret art lies in restraining the tendency, by augmenting the attractive principle of the government with all the weight that can be added to it. What a perversion of the natural order of things! to make power the primary and central object of the social system, and Liberty but its satellite.

Anti-republican.—The science of the stars can never instruct you in the mysteries of government. Wonderful as it may seem, the more you increase the attractive force of power, the more you enlarge the sphere of liberty; the more you make government independent and hostile towards the people, the better security you provide for their rights and interests. Hence the wisdom of the theory, which, after limiting the share of the people to a third of the government, and lessening the influence of that share by the mode and term of delegating it, establishes two grand hereditary orders, with feelings, habits, interests, and prerogatives all inveterately hostile to the rights and interests of the people, yet by a mysterious operation all combining to fortify the people in both.

Republican.—Mysterious indeed! But mysteries belong to religion, not to government; to the ways of the Almighty, not to the works of man. And in religion itself there is nothing mysterious to its author; the mystery lies in the dimness of the human sight. So in the institutions of man let there be no mystery, unless for those inferior beings endowed with a ray perhaps of the twilight vouchsafed to the first order of terrestrial creation.

Anti-republican.—You are destitute, I perceive, of every quality of a good citizen, or rather of a good subject. You have neither the light of faith nor the spirit of obedience. I denounce you to the government as an accomplice of atheism and anarchy.

Republican.—And I forbear to denounce you to the people, though a blasphemer of their rights and an idolater of tyranny. Liberty disdains to persecute.

Available In: *The Writings of James Madison, comprising his Public Papers and his Private Correspondence, including his numerous letters and documents now for the first time printed*, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). Vol. 6.

Document A2:

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison

Dear Sir

Philadelphia May. 9. 1791.

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Have you seen the Philadelphia edition of Paine's pamphlet? You know you left Beckley's copy in my hands. He called on me for it, before I had quite finished it, and desired me when done to send it to J. B. Smith whose brother was to reprint it. When I was proceeding to send it, I found it necessary to write a note to Mr. Smith to explain why I, a perfect stranger to him, sent him the pamphlet. I mentioned it to be by the desire of Mr. Beckley, and to take off a little of the dryness of the note, added *currento calamo*, that I was pleased to find it was to be reprinted here, that something was at length to be publicly said against the political heresies which had of late sprung up among us, not doubting but that our citizens would rally again round the standard of Common sense. I thought no more of this and heard no more till the pamphlet appeared to my astonishment with my note at the head of it. I never saw J. B. Smith or the printer either before or since. I had in view certainly the doctrines of Davila. I tell the writer freely that he is a heretic, but certainly never meant to step into a public newspaper with that in my mouth. I have just reason therefore to think he will be displeased. Colo. Hamilton and Colo. Beckwith are open mouthed against me, taking it in another view, as likely to give offence to the court of London. H. adds further that it marks my opposition to the government. Thus endeavoring to turn on the government itself those censures I meant for the enemies of the government, to wit those who want to change it into a monarchy. I have reason to think he has been unreserved in uttering these sentiments.—I send you some letters recieved for you. Adieu. Yours affectionately,

Th: Jefferson

Letter Available in: The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume VII. Paul Leicester Ford, ed.

Document A3:

James Madison to Thomas Jefferson

Dear Sir

N. York May 12. 1791.

Your favor of the 9th. was received last evening. To my thanks for the several inclosures I must add a request that the letter to Baynton which came in one of them may be handed to him by one of your servants. The directory will point out his habitation.

I had seen Payne's pamphlet with the preface of the Philada. Editor. It immediately occurred that you were brought into the Frontispiece in the manner you explain. But I had not foreseen the particular use made of it by the British partizans. Mr. Adams can least of all complain. Under a mock defence of the Republican Constitutions of this Country, he attacked them with all the force he possessed, and this in a book with his name to it whilst he was the Representative of his Country at a foreign Court. Since he has been the 2d. Magistrate in the new Republic, his pen has constantly been at work in the same cause; and tho' his name has not been prefixed to his antirepublican discourses, the author has been as well known as if that formality had been observed. Surely if it be innocent and decent in one servant of the public thus to write attacks against its Government, it can not be very criminal or indecent in another to patronize a written defence of the principles on which that Government is founded. The sensibility of H_____ and B_____ for the indignity to the Brit: Court is truly ridiculous. If offence could be justly taken in that quarter, what would France have a right to say to Burke's pamphlet, and the Countenance given to it and its author, particularly by the King himself? What in fact might not the U.S. say, whose revolution and democratic governments come in for a large share of the scurrility lavished on those of France.....

Js. Madison Jr.

Letter Available in: The Writings of James Madison, comprising his Public Papers and his Private Correspondence, including his numerous letters and documents now for the first time printed, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). Vol. 6

Document A4:

Thomas Jefferson to Philip Mazzei

My Dear Friend

Monticello Apr. 24. 1796.

...The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty, & republican government which carried us triumphantly thro' the war, an Anglican monarchical, & aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government. The main body of our citizens, however, remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican, and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the legislature, all the officers of the government, all who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty, British merchants & Americans trading on British capitals, speculators & holders in the banks & public funds, a contrivance invented for the purposes of corruption, & for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound parts of the British model. It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field & Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England. In short, we are likely to preserve the liberty we have obtained only by unremitting labors & perils. But we shall preserve them; and our mass of weight & wealth on the good side is so great, as to leave no danger that force will ever be attempted against us. We have only to awake and snap the Lilliputian cords with which they have been entangling us during the first sleep which succeeded our labors.

Thomas Jefferson

Source: The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 1795-1801. Volume VII. Paul Leicester Ford, ed.