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The Formation of the Early Republic through Jefferson's Writings

Objectives: To provide AP US History students with a greater understanding of the forces behind the crafting of the economy, government, education, and politics of the early American republic.

Materials:

1. Lecture Notes
2. Textbook: *The American Pageant*, chapters 9 & 10
3. Selections from the letters and writings of Thomas Jefferson
4. Selections of the letters and writing of prominent Federalists, e.g. Alexander Hamilton and John Adams, while not included here would be used as a counterbalance to Jefferson's ideas

Time Period: 7-10 class days.

Topics and Assignments

1. American Economy: Agriculture

A. Letter: "Commerce and Sea Power"; pg. 818-821, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What virtues does TJ ascribe to farmers?
- ii. What vices does TJ ascribe to manufactures of "artificers"?
- iii. If the American people choose to engage in international trade, what does TJ see as the probable outcomes?
- iv. If a war with the UK breaks out, what did TJ see as the two necessary American reactions?

B. Letter: "Malthus and the New World"; pg. 1143-1144, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What differences does TJ observe between populations of the US and Europe?
- ii. Why does TJ believe that a mixed economy in the US is not the best economy for both America and Europe?

2. American Education

A. Letter: "A System of Education"; pg. 1348-1351, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What areas of study would be included in TJ's elementary school education?
- ii. What would happen to the members of the laboring class after the completion of the elementary school curriculum? What would the members of the learned class go on to do?
- iii. What two classes made up the subdivisions of the learned class?
- iv. After completion of the general school curriculum, what different paths do the subdivisions of the learned class take?
- v. How was vocational training structured differently than the training at the other professional schools?

3. Religion in America

A. Letter: "To Messers. Nehemiah Dodge and Others..."; pg. 510, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What opinion regarding government and religion does TJ illustrate in his letter to the Danbury Baptists?

B. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVII; pg. 285-86; *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. How does TJ define legitimate government powers? Why is regulation of religion not a legitimate power?
- ii. What examples does TJ cite as beneficial results of free enquiry?
- iii. Why does TJ think religious coercion is ultimately ineffective?

C. Letter: "I have Sworn upon the Altar of God..."; pg. 1080; *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What does TJ state is the only thing the clergy of the US has to fear from him?

4. Slavery in America

A. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIV; pg. 264-67; *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What was the plan proposed to the Virginia legislative assembly regarding the elimination of slavery?
- ii. What reasons does TJ provide for why emancipated slaves could not be absorbed into white society?
- iii. What "proof" does TJ cite for the inferiority of the African mind?

B. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVIII; pg. 288-89; *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What negative impact does slavery have on white slave owners?
- ii. What unfortunate future does TJ see for the United States regarding slavery?

C. Letter: "A Plan for Emancipation"; pg. 1484-1487, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What did TJ believe would be the total cost of freeing the slaves and colonizing them at Mesurado?
- ii. What was the correction that TJ suggested for the colonization plan? According to his calculations, by how much would the cost of colonization be lowered?
- iii. How did TJ propose to pay for the colonization of the slaves?
- iv. Where was the best possible place for the colonization of the slaves, according to TJ?
- v. What warning did TJ give to the younger generation regarding the timely elimination of slavery?

5. The Rise of Political Parties

A. *Anas*; pg. 664-670, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What does TJ claim to be the goals of the followers of Hamilton, during the Constitutional Convention of 1787?
- ii. When TJ assumes the office of Sec. of State, what does he claim shocks him about what was happening in government?
- iii. What does TJ find so offensive about Hamilton's funding of the Revolutionary War bonds at par?
- iv. How did TJ help solve the Assumption crisis?
- v. What government agency was designed by Hamilton to gain the support of the wealthy on a permanent basis?
- vi. What is reason, according to TJ, that he forms an opposition movement to Hamilton's domination of Washington's administration?

B. Letter: "Notes on Professor Ebeling's Letter..."; pg. 698-700, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. What did TJ think was the goal of the anti-republicans at the Constitutional Convention?
- ii. What policies did the anti-republicans enact during the 1st Congress?
- iii. What had happened to the anti-republicans by the time of the 4th Congressional election?
- iv. What type of people were members of the anti-republicans, according to TJ?
- v. According to TJ, what type of people were members of the republicans?

C. *First Inaugural Address*; pg. 494-495, *Jefferson Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

- i. After the turmoil of the election of 1800, what does TJ ask the American people to do regarding party politics?
- ii. What type of government does TJ profess he will endeavor to create as president?