

6950 + 1m 6953 pdf.
ADAMS, J.
1787

A Defense of the Constitutions of the United States

by John Adams

Introduction: Published in January of 1787, six months before the Constitutional Convention by American Founder, John Adams. In it he calls for a republic consisting of a balance of powers between the executive, judicial, and legislative powers. Citing penetrating examples of the successes, but mostly failures in so-called republican experiments and the reasons for those failures which usually consisted in a failure to balance those powers. For those pushing for a more pure democracy today are many examples of what history has proven about their baneful effects including centralization of power, violent factions, and moral corruption in the extreme, and thus anarchy and tyranny. Written in typical Adams prose, a most worthy read. Of interest is Adams call for a thorough examination of the constitutions of the American Indians which had well defined these three powers, and which he said were given unfairly a bad name. Steve Farrell

Preface

Letter 1 Preliminary Observations

Letter 2

Democratical Republics

Letter 3 St. Marino

Letter 4 Biscay, The Grisons, United Provinces of the Low Lands

Letter 5 Switzerland, Appenzel

Letter 6 Switzerland, Underwald

Letter 7 Switzerland, Glaris

Letter 8 Switzerland, Zug

Letter 9 Switzerland, Uri

Letter 10 Switzerland, Switz

Aristocratical Republics

Letter 11 Switzerland, Berne

Letter 12 Switzerland, Fribourg

Letter 13 Switzerland, Soleure

Letter 14 Switzerland, Lucerne

Letter 15 Switzerland, Zurich

Letter 16 Switzerland, Shaffhause, Mulhouse, Bienne

Letter 17 Republics of St. Gall, and Geneva

Letter 18 Swiss Republics of Lucca and Genoa

Letter 19 Republic of Venice, United Provinces of the Low Countries

Monarchical Republics

Letter 20 England

Letter 21 Poland

Letter 22 POLAND, Part 2

Letter 23 RECAPITULATION

Ancient Republics and Opinions of Philosophers

6950 + 1m 6953
ADAMS, J.
1787

Letter 24 DR. JONATHAN SWIFT
Letter 25 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
Letter 26 DR RICHARD PRICE
Mixed Governments
Letter 27 MACHIAVELLI
Letter 28 SIDNEY, MONTESQUIEU
Ancient Republics, And Opinions of Philosophers
Letter 29 Harrington
Letter 30 POLYBIUS Part 1
Letter 31 POLYBIUS Part 2
Letter 32 Dionysius, Valerius
Letter 33 Plato 6p.
Letter 34 Sir Thomas Smith
Letter 35 Carthage
Ancient Aristocratical Republics
Letter 36 Rome
Ancient Monarchical Republics
Letter 37 Tacitus on Ancient Germans
Letter 38 HOMER on PHÆACIA
Letter 39 HOMER on ITHACA
Ancient Aristocratical Republics
Letter 40 LACEDÆMON
Ancient Democratical Republics
Letter 41 Athens
Letter 42 Antalcidas Crushes Liberty by Deceit
Letter 43 Achaia and the Volatility of Small Republics
Letter 44 Crete's So-Called Democracy
Letter 45 Corinth
Letter 46 Argos
Letter 47 Iphitus
Letter 48 Thebes
Ancient Aristocratical Republics
Letter 49 Crotona, Pythagorus 2p.
Letter 50 Sybaris, Charondas 3p.
Letter 51 Locris, Zaleucus 2p.
Letter 52 Rome
Conclusion
Letter 53 Congress
Letter 54 Locke, Milton, and Hume
Letter 55 Conclusion

IN . A DEFENSE OF THE CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES

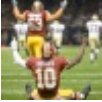


The Moral Liberal

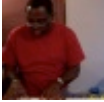
op Facebook

Vind ik leuk

454 personen vinden **The Moral Liberal** leuk.



Kt



Dale





Sociale plug-in van Facebook

Spreken als Obama?

Tekst lezen en toch oogcontact? Apparaatuur, training en coaching.

www.scriptease.nl

AdChoices 

Sybaris & Charondas: Adams 'Defense' No. 50



Liberty Letters, John Adams, 1786

A Defense of the Constitutions of the United States, Letter 49

Ancient Aristocratical Republics: Crotona. Pythagoras

My dear Sir,

THE city of Sybaris was a Grecian colony in Italy, planted by Achaeans; and, according to Diodorus Siculus*, its beautiful situation between two rivers, the Crathis and the Sybaris, the extent and fertility of its territory, and the freedom of its laws, had, in a short space of time, drawn together a prodigious number of inhabitants, and greatly enriched them.

But the common fate of all nations and cities attended them. They had three parties; a chief, a better sort, and a people. The most powerful citizens were caballing as usual against the chief, whose name was Telys, and, whatever his character for virtue was, appears to have had more cunning than Grecian chiefs commonly had, at least he discerned better where the balance lay; for he courted the people, by flattering their follies. He excited a popular cry against the aristocratical party, drove them from the city, confiscated their fortunes, and distributed them among the rest of the citizens. The exiles fled to Crotona. Telys sent ambassadors to demand them, on pain of war. Pythagoras thought the cause of his aristocratical friends just, and persuaded his fellow-citizens to refuse to deliver them up. The Sybarites marched an army; but were met by another from Crotona, with Milo, the strong man, at their head, whose reputation prevailed; the Sybarites were all massacred, and their city pillaged, and left a desert. First happy effect of a government without acknowledged orders and legal balances! — Fifty-eight years afterwards, some Thessalians established themselves at Sybaris: they had not been there five years, when the Crotonians came and drove them out. — Under Callimachus, archon of Athens, it was repopled the third time, and had the name of Thurium. A populous colony was sent there, under Lampon and Xenocrates, who built a beautiful city for a capital, and twenty-five subordinate cities: but the inhabitants could not long live in good intelligence among themselves; they fell into dissensions, grew extravagant, luxurious, and effeminate to a proverb. The quarrel began in this manner: —

The old inhabitants of Sybaris erected themselves into a kind of nobility, and arrogated to themselves all the public employments of any distinction, vouchsafing to the new-comers only those of least importance; they insisted, moreover, that their wives should sacrifice the first to the gods, and that the other ladies should not commence their devotions till the first had concluded: not content with distinctions so assuming, they went farther, and took to themselves, in the distribution of the lands, all those which were nearest the city, and left only the more distant to those whom they called foreigners. The latter, being more numerous and more brave, carried their resentments so far, as to put all the old families to death, and remained sole possessors of all the territory within the walls. Not having people enough left, they invited others from various parts of Greece, divided houses and lands among them, entered into alliance with Crotona, and became opulent. They divided the people into ten tribes, and established among them a democratical government, and chose for their legislator Charondas, who, having examined to the foundation the laws of all countries, chose out of them, for his country, the wisest and most convenient. Some others he added, drawn from his own meditations. His laws are lost, and therefore his orders and balances are not known. It is nevertheless certain, that orders and balances existed in his institution, from certain regulations preserved by Diodorus.

1. He excluded from all his public councils all men who, having children, should marry a second time; and thus mortify their children with the authority of a step-mother.

2. As another check to his democracy, he ordained that all who should be convicted of calumny, should be conducted through the streets crowned with tamarin; a punishment so infamous, that several put an end to their own lives rather than submit to it.

3. He prohibited all society with wicked men: for, says he, the disposition to evil is very strong; and many of those who at first love virtue, are often drawn in, by the charms of secret seductions, to the greatest vices.

3[a]. He ordained, that all the sons of every family should learn to write and read under masters in the pay of the public. This law alone has merit enough to consecrate to immortality the memory of this legislator, and deserves to be imitated by every free people at least.

4. That the property of orphans should be administered by the relations by the father; but their persons and education entrusted to those by the mother.

5. All those who should refuse to take arms for their country, or quit their ranks in the army, instead of being punished by death, should be exposed three days in a public square of the city in women's clothes.

6. To preserve his democratical arrangement, he thought it necessary to prohibit all proposals of changes in his laws. His principle was, that it was as advantageous to submit to the laws, as it is dangerous to subject the laws to individuals; and therefore in trials he reprehended and silenced all criminals, who substituted turns of eloquence and arbitrary interpretations in place of the letter of the laws, and charged them with violating their authority and majesty. The question is, said Charondas, "Whether you shall save the law or the criminal?"

7. Struck with the disorders and seditions which he had seen in many democratical cities, he ordained that no citizen should present himself in the public assembly, to propose any reformation or alteration in the law, without an halter about his neck, which he should wear till the people had deliberated and determined: if the people decreed the proposed alteration hurtful or unnecessary, the reformer should be strangled on the spot. This regulation silenced all new legislators so entirely, that only three examples occurred of any changes.

All his precautions were insufficient: — Returning from the country with his sword, which he had taken to defend himself against highwaymen, he found the assembly in division and confusion. He hastened to compose the tumult. One of his enemies reproached him with violating his own law, by coming into the assembly with an arm. Charondas, who had forgotten the sword, cried, I mean to observe and enforce the law, and plunged it into his own heart, wearied, most probably, into a contempt of life by the disorders incident to unbalanced parties.

When every legislator who has attempted a democratical establishment, has confessed its inherent tendency to immediate dissolution, by the strongest rigours against proposals of innovation, and numberless other provisions to controul it, which have all been found ineffectual, is it worth while still to cherish the fond idea, when three branches are found, by experience, so effectually to check each other; when in two independent assemblies improvements and reformations may be so easily and lately proposed and adopted, and such as are not beneficial rejected?

* Lib. xii. p. 6.

[Table of Contents: A Defense of the Constitutions of the United States](#)

The Moral Liberal recommends: [John Adams](#)

Share this:



0



Post Published: 21 February 2012

Author: Steven R. Montgomery

Found in section: [A Defense of the Constitutions of the United States by John Adams](#), [Founders Corner](#), [Steve Montgomery](#)

Tags: [Ancient Greece](#), [checks and balances](#), [constitutional development](#), [Democratic Republics](#), [just law](#)

Previous Topic: [Report: Disability Claims Soar as Jobless Benefits Run Out](#)

Next Topic: [The Supreme Power in the State: Aristotle's Politics, Bk 3, Prt 13](#)

Leave a Reply

You must be [logged in](#) to post a comment.

AdChoices 

[Zalando.nl Online shop](#)

Groot aanbod
merkschoenen & kleding
Gratis verzending en
retour!

www.Zalando.nl

[Philosophy Papers](#)

Give us your topic and
we'll do the rest! Custom
Made, 100% Original.

www.PhilosophyWriters.com

[Contemplatism](#)

A blog, a genre, a
trapezoid. New and old
ideas examined.

contemplatism.com

[Trendy Leather Bracelets](#)

braided or multi-piece,
silver, Handmade, finest
leather, many colors

www.lederguru.com/adler

[Bored of bad politicians?](#)

They get worse in 'The
Campaign'! Starring Will
Ferrell. Out 11.10

WarnerBros.co.uk/TheCamp..

TML Staff Shine!

Thomas Jefferson – A Leader's Leader