

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

First and Second Continental Congress

- Formed to meet the problem of what to do about England
- Had no legal basis

Articles of Confederation

- Second Continental Congress approved the Articles of Confederation in 1777
- Required ratification by all 13 States
- Not ratified by all 13 states until 1781, when it went into effect

What the Articles Did:

- ⦿ Congress was the only branch of government
- ⦿ States chose their delegates
- ⦿ Each state had one vote in Congress
 - What is the problem with this?
- ⦿ Executive and Judicial issues were handled by Congress

Powers of Congress

- ◎ Congress could:
 - Make war and peace
 - Make treaties with other countries
 - Borrow money
 - Establish post offices
 - Ask the states for troops for an army

Weaknesses of Congress

- ⦿ No power to tax
 - Congress could only borrow money
- ⦿ No power to regulate commerce between the states
 - What is the problem with this?

Other Problems

- 9 of 13 States had to vote to pass a law
- Amendments needed all 13 States

What Happened?

- ⦿ Congress could not borrow enough to pay the Army
- ⦿ States taxed one another's goods
 - NO FREE TRADE
- ⦿ State's printed their own money
- ⦿ Debts went unpaid

Shays' Rebellion

Small farmers lost their land as the economy got worse

In 1786, a former Army officer named Daniel Shays led an uprising that forced some courts to close

The states quieted the rebellion

Need for Stronger Government

⦿ Options?

- Modify the Articles
- Scrap the Articles
- King?
 - Suggested by Lewis Nicola, an Army officer to George Washington



To Lewis Nicola

George Washington

Newburgh, May 22, 1782

Sir: With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I have read with attention the Sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence, and reprehend with severity. For the present, the communication of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agitation of the matter, shall make a disclosure necessary.

I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable; at the same time in justice to my own feelings I must add, that no Man possesses a more sincere wish to see ample justice done to the Army than I do, and as far as my powers and influence, in a constitutional way extend, they shall be employed to the utmost of my abilities to effect it, should there be any occasion. Let me conjure you then, if you have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your Mind, and never communicate, as from yourself, or any one else, a sentiment of the like Nature. With esteem I am.

Mark 3:24

- And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.