



THE REBELLION IN QUESTION
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
MONDAY 10 OCTOBER

The American Revolution was a political and social upheaval that took place between 1765 and 1783 during which colonists in the Thirteen American Colonies rejected the British monarchy and aristocracy, overthrew the authority of Great Britain, and founded the United States of America. As we approach the most important votes in Britain and America in our lifetime, it could not be a more appropriate moment to reconsider the American declaration, and resulting war, of independence against British rule. 'No taxation without representation' cried independent-minded Americans. 'Look at the benefits of belonging to the British Empire' replied the colonialists. In 1773 Boston Harbour filled with tea, and by 1774, Samuel Adams and Thomas Jefferson were arguing that Parliament was the legislature of Great Britain alone, and the colonies' allegiance was not to the British Parliament, but to the Crown. Tom Paine, born in Thetford, Norfolk, in the hotbed of English radical printers and politics, contributed his incendiary pamphlet 'Common Sense' to the revolutionary cause. Passed on street corners and read in taverns, it encouraged a complete break with history. Called "a corsetmaker by trade, a journalist by profession, and a propagandist by inclination" it was Tom Paine, the radical Englishman, who more than any other urged the Americans to rebel against English rule. He has a rightful claim to being called 'The Father of the American Revolution'. In 1775 at Concord there was fired the shot that was heard around the world, and the American War of Independence had begun, to be followed in 1776 by 56 courageous men gathering at the Pennsylvania State House to defy the King of England and read the Declaration of Independence. 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.' Since breaking away from the Crown have the Americans succeeded in treating all "men" equally?