Comparing Aspects Of The American And French Revolution

Introduction

Revolution is defined as a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favor of a new system. Even though there have been numerous different revolutions throughout history, the two most arguably notorious revolutions are the American and the French revolution. This essay will compare aspects of the French and American revolutions in order to find similarities and differences.

During the late 18th century, both France and the colonies in America experienced revolutions that had a great impact on their country. The American and French revolution changed the way of political thinking, and profoundly changed the course of modern history, triggering the global decline of absolute monarchies. In the French Revolution, monarchism was abandoned, and political power was given to the people until the country became out of control. In the American Revolution, a new nation was formed as the colonies rejected the monarchy of their original home country, overthrew its authority, and founded their independent federation of states.

Causes of the revolutions

To start comparing the American and French revolutions we need to start at the very beginning and look at the causes.

The main causes for both of the revolutions were Economic challenges, Taxation.

1) France was already in a lot of national debt and was unable to get enough money from the taxes to pay it off. Therefore, the king decided to impose more taxes, especially on the people of the third estate. The nobles did not have to pay taxes, and the sudden increase of taxes for the poor just pulled the different estates further apart.

This is proven in Arthur Young Travel during the years 1787, 1788, and 1789.

In this document, the English traveler wrote all about the spread of taxes and the separation of estates. His document explains how “The abuses attending the levy of taxes were heavy and universal.” He also writes how the corvees (a type of tax) were annually the ruin of hundreds of farmers that were reduced to beggars. This shows how bad the taxation problem really was and why the French people were desperate for change.

2) In 1764, ministry announced plans to institute a stamp tax, to go into effect on November 1, 1765, to make the colonists pay part of the cost of stationing troops in America. This act required the colonists to pay a tax, represented by a stamp, on newspapers, playing cards, diplomas, and legal documents. Violations of the stamp act would also be tried in court. The reactions of the stamp act from the colonists, however, included riots and many people making fun of goods.

This Print shows the masthead for The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser with a skull and crossbones representation of the official stamp required by the Stamp Act of 1765. Skulls are very commonly a symbol of death. There is also a note on the top right-hand corner of the article that says: 'The TIMES are Dreadful, Dismal, Doleful, Dolorous, and Dollar-less.' This is article and skull was made to protest the passage of the stamp act and it represents the death of the free press resulting from the passage of the act.

Even though America and France both had Economic problems, they weren't quite the same. In the American Revolution, Britain was economically dependent on the colonies and therefore would constantly tax them. Unlike the French, the colonists were not disturbed that they had to pay the taxes however, they were angry because they felt that they received no benefits from their taxes. This was also known as taxation without representation.

The course of the revolutions

The course of the revolutions were both filled with acts of violence and revolt

During the course of the American Revolution, there were many acts of revolt and violence such as the battle of Lexington and Concord, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Tea Party along with several other battles.

The French revolution was known for its violence and bloodshed. The American Revolution was nothing compared to the horrors that happened in the course of the French revolution using the death machine known as the guillotine. The storming of the Bastille and the reign of terror were the main events of violence in the French revolution

This is a text written by Edmund Burke about the death of Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France. He describes how the people of France longed for her death and the horror of getting killed by her own people. According to critic, the violence of this revolution has caused the glory of Europe to be extinguished forever. That's how bad the bloodshed was.

Conclusion

A revolution is an act to forcibly overthrow a government or social order. Both the French and American Revolution had the same goals to overthrow the government, but their reasons were much different. France had a revolution to get rid of unjust rules and government whereas America had a revolution to gain independence from. Despite these differences, America and France had very similar causes that kicked off their revolutions, mainly Economical problems, and Taxes. Finally, the American and French revolutions both experienced a lot of violence and revolt. Even though this is a similarity, there is also a huge difference between the violence in the two revolutions. The French revolution was much more brutal. In conclusion, both revolutions are very similar, and both had a huge impact on the modern world.