

The french revolution assignment

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Due to these causes, each revolution had a unique outcome. Prior to these revolutions there were social ideals and issues. Before the American Revolution, different thoughts and interests were developing and causing distance between Britain and the thirteen colonies (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, “ American Revolution”). Along with growing identities, the colonists were used to a great degree of independence. Unlike the American colonists, the people of France were divided into three social classes, or estates. This social system was called the Old Regime.

The first estate was made up of clergy of the Catholic Church and the second estate was formed by the wealthy nobles who held high positions in the government. The third estate, however, was the lower class, who had no power to influence the government and resented the upper classes (Beck 652). Social inequality became an important factor leading up the French Revolution. Nonetheless, both revolutions were encouraged by enlightenment ideas, such as life, liberty and property (Beck 641 , 652). On both sides of the Atlantic, a just government was sought after, in which an economic being was ensured.

Economic factors also lead to the commencement of both revolutions. After the British government had passed acts, for example the Stamp Act and the Townsend Acts, which required tax stamps on many items and placed taxes on things like glass, paper, and tea. Since Britain was in deep debt after the French and Indian War, it placed acts like such (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, “ American Revolution”). Colonists argued that such taxes violated the colonists’ natural rights and argued that it was “ taxation

without representation”. Since colonists had no representation in parliament, they argued that they could not be taxed.

Like the American colonists, the lower class in France was heavily taxed. As a result of King Louis XVI extravagant spending and helping the American colonists in the American Revolution, France was deep in debt (Beck 653). The people who were in the third estate paid about half their income to nobles, the church, and as taxes to the king. This created resentment towards the upper classes and the government (Beck 652). Economical causes of both revolutions also lead into political issues. In 1773 colonists protested against an import tax on tea and dumped a large load of British EAI into the Boston Harbor and was called the “ Boston Tea Party’.

King George III then closed the Boston port. Colonists formed the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia, on 1774, to protest the treatment of Boston. A similar even happened in France prior to the revolution, the National Assembly. Delegates of the third estate, after voting to establish the national assembly, proclaimed the end of absolute monarchy and begin a representative government. Then the Third Estate Delegates pledged to stay in an indoor court until they had drawn up a new constitution, this came known as the Tennis Court Oath.

In response to these events, Louis called upon his stationary army. People suggested that he would use military force against the National Assembly. People began to gather their own weapons and created a mob which attacked the Bastille (Beck 654). This act became a major symbol of the beginning of the French Revolution. After the end of each revolution, each

had their social outcomes. Once the American Revolution was over, as it was stated in the Declaration of Independence, men were all equal and had rights. However, this did not mean equality for slaves or women in the colonies.

Slaves were still treated as such and women were not given any rights. After the revolutions, in both countries, a man's natural rights were life, liberty, and property. This was claimed in France's Declaration of Rights of Men. There, social classes were also abolished and that was the end to the Old Regime. However, these were not the only outcomes of the revolutions. Although freedoms were gained in these countries, political concerns aroused. A constitution was ratified in 1781 and it was known as the Articles of Confederation which established the United States as a republic.

The Articles, however, created a weak national government that contained just one body of government, the Congress. This did not last long and a new system of government was created with separate branches, legislative, executive, and Judicial (Beck 644). Also a system of checks and balances that allowed each branch to check the actions of the other two. A federal system was set up to divide the power between national and state governments. The leaders in the new country were those prominent either in the council halls or on the field of the Revolution.

In France the bourgeois, people of the middle class, emerged as a dominant power. The Directory and a bicameral legislature was set up by the Convention, but the Directory lost control of the political situation in France. In 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte returned from an expedition in Egypt and with

the support of the army and many government members, he overthrew the Directory and seized power. Social order and contractual relations were strengthened by the Code of Napoleon, which was a comprehensive system of law (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, “ French Revolution”).