

History 3

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Comparison and contrast between the American and the French Revolution

The late 18th century world as a precursor of enlightenment envisaged an alteration the aftermath of which included a series of revolutions across the Atlantic Ocean, namely the American and the French revolution. The two revolutions can be said to be similar in certain aspects, but they can also be judged as dissimilar with respect to their leadership dynamics and their outcome. Analogousness amongst them can be said to be related to their objectives – the attainment of rights to liberty, property and freedom.

Eliminating the preexisting traits

The seeds of radicalism can be said to have been embedded within the American Revolution. America aimed at the reconstitution of society by means of eradicating the existent monarchical society and its basics, which included the robust aspects of kinship, patriarchy, patronage, domination and so on. The eradication was to be accompanied by the substitution of the eradicated aspects with the elements of love, respect, consent, and equality. The dynamic target set by the American Revolution was the establishment of a moral government whose spillover effects would seep around the globe. The primal task of Americans was to introduce the idea of equality with respect to labor. In this respect the statement of Woods bears special significance, and it can be referred to as follows: “ Perhaps nothing separated early-nineteenth-century Americans more from Europeans than their attitude toward labor and their egalitarian sense that everyone must participate in it” (qtd. in Launius).

Divergence trajectory

Divergence between these two revolutions can be related to their political extravaganza. The American political elites were highly experienced in their

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practical political experiences, and the leaders suggested more moral sophistication. In contrast with this, the authority of the then French government trickled down from the court and at the juncture when the French revolutionaries rose to power was driven by their speculations, and in this case the statement of Alexander Hamilton can be mentioned: I dread the reveries of your Philosophic politicians (qtd. in Brookhiser).

The value placed on the national unity can be said to have varied, and with rigorous experimentation they built the government divided into the Republicans and Democrats. In this respect the statement of Governor Morris can be mentioned: “ will act as an outward conscience, and prevent the abuse of power” (Brookhiser). In contrast, the French, who were uncertain about themselves, opted for a unitary state and that of a community of feeling. The National Assembly, which came out of the Third Estate, evaluated them with respect to the nation’s will. The individuals who disrupted the resolutions of the assembly were banished to outer darkness. Their belief was such that there would be two parties: one for the good citizens and the other for the evil ones (Brookhiser).

In the American Revolution, moral sophistication was propounded by the chief thinkers. George Washington emphasized the dressing in a gentleman’s stature as it will inject a habit in the young men – a habit of behaving in a proper and adequate manner. In contrast, authenticity was rooted within the French revolution with simplicity of the soul, which resulted in the suffering of the French literature at that time (Brookhiser).

The Americans were comparatively wealthier than French people and took resort of the policy of modesty after the revolution. But the French were not wealthy, and vigorous bloodshed was encountered in comparison with

minimal bloodshed in America with the establishment of a democratic government. In the Spanish ship Amistad, the slaves were killed brutally by the French, but when they revolted they came to America, where they were arrested and legally tried with every effort made by the jury to save them. It can be said that the French revolution was more liberal than the American Revolution (Brookhiser).

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