

Comparison Between The American And Haitian Revolutions

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Comparative Foundations of the American and Haitian Revolutions

Most historians who have researched extensively on the great revolutions in the 18th century are likely inclined to agree that there are numerous similarities between the Haitian Revolution of 1791 and the 1776 American Revolution. Additionally, any individual can conclude that the two revolutions have some conflicting interests and beliefs that describe them but still connect them in the revolutionary spirit and the need and necessity of change. This essay is aimed at researching the two revolutions and obtaining any necessary information that can help compare and contrast the two for a better grasp of what took place.

Resistance to Imperial Oppression

One of the notable things is that each revolution was a well-plotted rebellion against their oppressors, who were mostly the foreign superpowers across the Atlantic. For instance, the American Revolution was a rebellion against Great Britain, which was then a superpower. The Haitian Revolution, on the other hand, was a revolt staged against the French power. However, one may imagine a case where a colony or colonies gang up against a nation to attain independence. Both states of Britain and France were significantly challenged by the financial debts they had incurred due to the French and Indian conflict in Britain and The French Revolution in France (McIlwain, 2010).

Havoc reigned in France during the French Revolution, where many citizens were murdered even with the slight suspicion of treason. Due to the conflict, economic advancement came to a standstill, resulting in a weak economic growth rate and substantial debts. Similarly, the British during the Indian and French War suffered considerable expenses to cater for the war leaving them crippled and deep in debt. If these challenges were not present in both revolutions, there would be a higher chance that the revolts would not succeed (Albrecht, 2013).

It took an incredible combination and connection to bring the colony together and declare war on the European superpower. In both conflicts, it is evident that each Revolution had a leader who rallied unity and supported driving their colonies to Independence. In the American Revolution, the dominant figure was George Washington, a general for the Continental Army. It was he who had total control over the handling of war efforts. The Haitian Revolution was led by Toussaint Louverture, who also

served as a commander in the army. Slaves played a very significant role in both colonies despite the fact they were denied rights. They joined whichever forces offered freedom, and most of the time, they made good soldiers since they were fighting for their freedom and lives (Gates, 2011).

Causes, Mobilization, and Revolutionary Leadership

The outbreak of both the Haitian and American Revolutions can be attributed to many reasons. In the case of the Haitian Revolution, the rebellion of the slaves against their wealthy landowners led to the conflict. The leading cause of the conflict was legislation passed as a bill which denied the blacks their rights. The free black slaves enjoyed the opportunity to have rights and vote under the courtesy of the French Constituent Assembly formed by Vincent Oge. People rejected him, after which he led a small raid in Haiti, resulting in his capture and execution. This resulted in an uprising, and tension grew tenser. This became yet another compelling aspect that led to the August 1791 rebellion (Nwankwo, 2014).

The hatred between the French and the black slaves consistently rose until August 21, 1791. The Saint Domingue slaves rebelled against their landowner. This sent the nation to a state of rebellion and civil war. Consequently, one can see how the American people were mistreated and then forced to rebel against their superiors. Despite not working as slaves, the colonialists suffered substantial financial losses as Britain tried to recover the costs incurred in the French and Indian Conflict through heavy taxation of the colonies. Gradually, Britain began enacting Acts with ridiculously high taxes on the colonies. These Acts were Navigation Acts, Stamp Acts, Quartering Acts, Declaratory Acts and Intolerable Acts. This angered the colonialists more and more until they could show signs of rebellion (Kastor & Weil, 2009).

The first indicator of a revolt was after the imposition of the Tea Act. A group of colonialists known as The Sons of Liberty rallied together to fight with an aim to win the war. They dressed like Native Americans and got on board an English ship, dumping all the tea that was on board in Boston harbour. This led to the closure of Boston Harbour. Another indicator came when the Boston Massacre took place. Soldiers had opened fire at a group of colonialists, resulting in the death of five. This angered the colonialists, which led to them believing that the British were not good and should be gotten rid of. More support and contributions were acquired through the efforts of the writings of individuals such as John Locke and Thomas Paine. The pamphlet [Common Sense by Thomas Paine](#) circulated everywhere, stating, "And he hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he or is he not, a proper person to say to these colonies, 'you shall make no laws but what I please!'" this led to the belief among the colonialists that Britain was an enemy of liberty for the slaves and that they should not pass laws and bills that the slaves do not desire (Dash, 2005).

Independence, Outcomes, and Comparative Success

The two revolutions succeeded permanently and obtained and kept their independence. Haitian independence was announced as a free state, becoming the first republic to gain freedom in Latin America. France had granted them independence and the rights for each, which included slaves so that they lived freely as well. On the contrary, in the American Revolution, only men had access to various powers. This was a choice made by the founding fathers and was not only an ideal being forced upon them. The last war of the American Revolution was the conflict of Yorktown, where the Continental Army under General George Washington captured General Cornwallis. General George later became the first president of America. The formal conclusion of the war was done by signing the Treaty of Paris, which granted all land in the south of the Great Lakes to the east of the Mississippi River to the colonialists. However, Florida was not included (McIlwain, 2010).

The revolution in Haiti greatly influenced and impacted the American rebellions. Most of the Haitian individuals visited the United States and came up with ideas and concepts of revolution and freedom. These individuals drove America to the door of civil conflict as the war began against the North and South. The Haitian Revolution also resulted in substantial expenses incurred by the French Napoleon. He had lost his colony and was now compelled to derive other means of income, making him sell out the Louisiana territory. It was not only the French who experienced financial challenges. Early America was suffering war debts that had accumulated much more than they could handle. The total amount they owed France was about \$12 million, which was borrowed for war objectives. The money owed to the citizens by the national government amounted to over \$40 million, while the state governments owed their people over \$25 million. A treasure was established in 1790 with the primary objective of assisting in raising money to cater for all the debts that had been incurred and that required to be paid off (Gates, 2011).

Regarding which revolution successfully identified a definite challenge and overcame it, in my humble opinion, I would say the American Revolution was more successful in comparison to the Haitian Revolution. They had tried to resolve and fix the ailing concerns peacefully but were compelled to finally revolt and fight for their independence from Great Britain. As the saying goes, it is the obligation and duty of the citizens to abolish their current governments when they become ineffective and destructive and establish new forms. What exactly happened was that they believed in their rights and came to the conclusion that that was the right step to take. To the whole world, they established a belief that they had the potential to fight against the world's mightiest militaries and defeat them. Soon after the attainment of their independence, America's founding fathers formulated a law and established a system that could help avoid what had happened in Britain, where one man had too much power at his disposal. They came up with a system of checks and balances, which was a high pillar for their future (Kastor & Weil, 2009).

Conclusion

Conclusively, it is evident that the two revolutions shared some similarities as well as differences which linked them. The most excellent analogy was that the two revolutions were planned with the aim of fighting for justice. Both also suffered financial challenges and were plunged into massive debts. However, apart from the period and year in which the revolution took place, another fundamental difference between the two is that they took place on different continents and against differing superpowers. The revolutionary movements had their leaders whom they rallied behind. Both revolutions were successful and won their nation's independence and human rights.

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