Jefferson’s Declaration and Paine’s Pamphlet Comparative Analysis

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I. Introduction:

American history witnessed a turning point in the form of the American Revolutionary War when thirteen colonies sought independence from British rule. At that particular time, two significant documents came out that later played a concrete role in shaping the ideological aspirations of American nationals. These documents include the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine‘s pamphlet. Thomas Jefferson’s document in 1776 provided the legal and philosophical foundation of the separated colonies by assuring the fundamental rights of people along with a strong justification for the revolution. Thomas Paine’s pamphlet “Common Sense” challenged the monarchy system and urged the general public to support independence in an appealing manner. There exist some similar values and certain differences in these documents in several dimensions. To grasp such insights into these works, a comprehensive analysis revolving around the multiple aspects is mandatory. However, this paper will provide a compare and contrast analysis of two documents by exploring their backgrounds, similarities, differences, and influence on politico-legal thoughts in alliance with their overall effectiveness in the lives of American nationals.

II. Background of both the Historical Documents:

Thomas Jefferson, better known as a statesman and philosopher, shaped American history through his wisdom and dedication. He articulated the fundamental principles in the form of the Declaration of Independence, which paved the way towards the lasting independence of a nation. He carved individual rights, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with such eloquence that the assertion of man’s inherent rights became a maxim around the globe. His powerful notion and message, encompassed with potent words, inspired the whole nation towards freedom, high self-esteem and determination. Similarly, Thomas Paine, an activist and political figure, published his influential “Common Sense” pamphlet advocating immediate freedom from the British. He is probably the primary personality who urged the general public of America to be governed by their representatives instead of the British monarch. His document deeply revolves around the igniting wave of revolutionary values along with matchless support for freedom. This pamphlet galvanized the general public opinion for sovereignty and autonomous authority for the colonies along with a unity-driven impact on the masses.

III. Similarities between the Declaration of Independence and Paine's Pamphlet:

The comparison of these two historical documents bears many similarities which paved the struggle for freedom towards success. For example, the foremost similarity is the belief among the general masses about the necessity of independence. Jefferson had crystal-clear views that Americans should break political ties with Britain, and for that purpose, he highlighted oppressive, tragic and cruel policies of the monarch. Similarly, Paine declared the notion of independence as logical, rational, and a need of the time. He emphasized that the unity of the American people lies in solidified and determined independence that would open new horizons of progress and development (Jefferson, T., 2019).

Additionally, another similarity of both documents is the security of the inherent rights of individuals with the emergence of a legitimate government. Both personalities considered these rights as unalienable values and attributes of society. The Declaration of Independence expresses these as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" while "Common Sense" named them as natural rights of individuals fulfilled by government quarters. Another similarity is the highlighting and rigorous criticism of monarchy and its abuses. The monarch's decisions, such as imposing unjust policies and taxes, usurping power, violating fundamental rights, and mounting oppression, were highly criticized in both documents.

IV. Differences between the Declaration of Independence and Paine's Pamphlet:

Contrary to similarities, there are certain differences between both documents in several dimensions. For example, the purpose and audience of these historical documents are different. The Declaration of Independence announced the thirteen colonies' final decision to break ties with Britain and declared them to be a new independent nation. In other words, it was a unanimous address to the world countries to acquire international recognition. In contrast, Paine targeted the general public of America to persuade them to support independence and revolutionary change. Similarly, another difference lies in the style and tone of these documents. Jefferson's tone is more formal, grave, momentous, eloquent, and serious in declaring independence. In addition, his style bears legal rhetoric, enlightened ideals, and dignified language. However, Paine's tone is urgent, emotional, and charged with rational argumentation accompanied by direct language. Another difference lies in the philosophical underpinnings, where Jefferson's work revolves around thinkers like John Locke, while Paine's work appeals to readers through questions and radical ideals (Lounissi, C., 2016).

V. Analysis regarding Effectiveness:

The effectiveness demonstrates that both documents had a profound impact on the Revolutionary War. Jefferson's Declaration enabled the colonies to unite while garnering international support. It inspired and encouraged the soldiers on the battlefield on the one hand while fostering national identity and integrity on the other hand. Jefferson's work showed the nation the very path to maintain independence and gain prosperity in the future on the international stage. Similarly, Paine's "Common Sense" aroused and mobilized the very sentiment of the general public for freedom, melted the colonial mindset and augmented the revolutionary powers for achieving democratic ideals. However, the impact of these documents lingered in political ideologies and improved philosophical notions, helping to establish democratic governance and inspire global liberty and individual rights. Their collective effect fueled rational, logical and radical political philosophy, which later contributed to the development of democratic institutions. Moreover, these documents have gained contemporary relevance in securing American identity and civil rights and in activating citizens to shape modern democratic governments.

VI. Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that both documents played pivotal roles in diversified dimensions like shaping principles, the Revolutionary War, prevailing democratic ideals and self-determination, etc. Both reveal shared beliefs regarding the necessity of independence, awareness among the masses, fundamental rights and criticism of the British monarchy. However, the differences encompass tone, style, purpose, audience and philosophical foundations. The analysis shows that both documents left lasting impressions on American history concerning the continued struggle for equality, justice, transparency and fair play among the masses. Hence, their common message is applicable to the modern world as well to anchor the foundations of democracy and freedom.

References

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