

Q The American Revolution was the child of Enlightenment. Comment?

1) Introduction

There is always a question on the minds of contemporary Americans that if British government had lowered the prices of on imported goods than what was the reason behind the American revolution. For example, the sugar act cut taxes in half and even the tea, famously dumped into Boston Harbor in 1773, saw significant reduction in prices. If the British government was being generous, albeit not to much extent, why the Americans came together to fight against their Britisher masters. It is obvious, there was something else other than taxes. These were enlightenment enlightenment ideas of natural laws, reason, and liberty that truly fueled this fire. So, not denying the role of exploitation, the ideology of Enlightenment era was the triggering force behind it.

2) why the American Revolution was the child of Enlightenment?

Thomas Paine's Pamphlet "Common Sense" was a remarkable example of utilizing the Intellectual ideas of Enlightenment to advocate for revolutionary change. By emphasizing reason and natural rights, Paine effectively argued that the American Revolution was deeply rooted in the Enlightenment principles of liberty, equality, and self-determination.

2.1) Geographical Rationale for

American Independence: Thomas

Paine's argument that nature and geography supported American Independence was a compelling one. By saying so he was pointing towards the vast distance, represented by miles of ocean, that separated Americans from the British Isles. This geographical barrier, ~~made~~ he argued, made it impractical for British government to exert control over its American colonies effectively. Paine's reasoning emphasized that nature itself, through the physical

separation of the continents; provided a strong case for the independence of the American colonies, as it made governing from afar a challenging task for the British government when the British Parliament passed the Proclamation of 1763, aiming to limit colonial settlement west of the ~~Appa~~ Appalachian Mountains, it was ineffective. Early Americans, with an entire continent waiting to be explored, couldn't be expected to obey a law created across an ocean. Thomas Paine linked this situation to the natural order, where satellites (colonies) should not be larger than their primary planet (Britain). He argued that England's treatment of America reversed this natural order. Similarly, he pointed ~~out~~ to the relationship between mother and child ~~that~~ to describe the situation between America and its parent company. He argued that, in the natural world, infant mammals are initially nourished with milk but are eventually allowed to consume meat as

they grow. However, Paine asserted that England was behaving differently. Rather than fostering the natural growth of its fledgling colonies, England was impeding their progress by imposing limitations on their trade and commerce. This analogy illustrated his belief that England's actions were hindering the colonies' ability to mature and develop naturally and independently.

2.2) Enlightenment theme of the necessity of a government;

Both Thomas Hobbes and Thomas Paine, influenced by Enlightenment ideas, addressed the necessity of government. While Hobbes believed that without governance life would be chaotic and brutal, Paine also saw the need for government, albeit as a "necessary evil". Paine did not agree with all that Hobbes said, and he upheld his belief that representative government arises from man's natural want to society, while Hobbes viewed man as inherently competitive, Paine found them inherently cooperative.

Both Paine and Hobbes used similar reasoning to support their revolutionary beliefs. Paine also criticized the British Monarchy, arguing that there was no logical or natural reason for the separation between royalty and subjects. An Enlighten thinker would call this illogical, especially with regard to hereditary succession. Obviously, being cannot pass down personality traits whereas a representative system searches for the best leaders. Additionally, he logically said that even though Britain had a Constitutional monarchy with checks and balances, it had significant problems. He found it annoying that Parliament could keep information from the king, even though the king had to make the final decisions. "The state of a king shuts him from the world," he said, "yet the business of the a king requires him to know it." This argument against the irrationality of England provides evidence of the

Enlightened American mindset in the 1770s, with such words and sentiments, Paine and the revolutionaries waged a fiery war of reason, not just against England, but against monarchy itself.

2.3) Enlightenment theme of Natural

Rights: The Enlightenment greatly influenced the American Revolution, particularly through the concept of natural rights. English philosopher John Locke argued that all people had inherent rights to life, liberty, and property. This idea became the foundation of the American quest for independence. Thomas Paine in "Common Sense," accused King George of violating these natural laws of rights. Paine's powerful argument highlighted the contradictions between Britain's actions and Enlightenment values. Paine claimed that British policies and actions, such as deploying military forces and the Quartering Act of 1765, were endangering the lives of American colonists. British interference in

Colonial affairs such as restricting trade and oppressive laws, like Stamp Act of 1765, Enumerated Act of 1660, and Staple Act of 1663, curtailed the liberty of the American colonists to govern themselves and make their own decisions.

3) Conclusion

In conclusion, the influence of the Enlightenment on the American Revolution is evident through historical events and key documents. In 1772, in Boston, Samuel Adams ignited colonial fervor with his "Rights of the Colonists," which was deeply influenced by the ideas of John Locke. Perhaps most notably, the Declaration of Independence, the cornerstone of American freedom, pays homage to the great Enlightenment principles. Thomas Jefferson, its author, invoked Locke's philosophy when proclaiming unalienable rights, including "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." This declaration was a powerful statement

to England, affirming that America
was indeed the rightful heir of
Enlightenment ideals.