A Study Of The American Revolutions Beginnings Essay, Research Paper

Pointing the finger of blame at any one country when speaking of war is a difficult task. Each country must take responsibility in the beginning of the conflict. Although there is never one country responsible for starting warfare there is an opinion that one side is more at fault for it s beginnings. From an early age, children in America are taught that the British were responsible for pushing the colonies to rebel and declare independence from their mother country. When looking at both sides of the argument I still believe the British were to blame for igniting the flames of revolution. Many people will argue that the British were fair in the treatment of the early American Colonists and provided for them as they did for their countrymen remaining in England. In my opinion the colonies were thought of as nothing more than an early day sweat shop. By this, I mean that the colonists were basically used to work the land to provide crops which were normally imported from other countries to England. Since they were considered Englishmen and their lands considered property of the crown, the British could pass laws taking from them their basic rights as men. The British thought of the colonists as their primary asset in their practice of mercantilism, which at times may have been profitable for the colonists. Ultimately it became a primary reason for the beginning of social unrest among the early Americans. The colonists were like children who were told that if they don t disturb their parents they could do anything they wanted. While when it became convenient the parents, Britain, came in and started putting restrictions on them. As many in their position, the colonists rebelled against the new found interest in the societies they labored to build, that for so long went unnoticed. The following paragraphs will explain in detail how Britain s neglect of the American colonies and it s use of them lead to the war.

In order to understand why the colonists felt threatened by British control, we must first know who these early people were and what they looked to accomplish by settling this vast new country. The founders of what we now know as the United States were middle class Englishmen and women. These people took a great risk by leaving the security of their homeland to an uncertain future in the New World . There was no promise of even surviving through their first winter. Regardless of the obstacles facing them, these people pressed forward in search of economic and religious freedom. Freedom from a country, whose Kings and Parliament would often promise changes, then would abuse those changes for personal gain. To escape from this fickle government and to pursue their dreams many fled to the New World to set up their ideal colonies. The primary goal of these voyagers was to setup communities that would provide a place for their religious beliefs to grow and the possibility of making a life for themselves financially.

Britain, like many great powers during this time believed in the practice of mercantilism. Stemming from this belief, the Navigation Acts were established to regulate trade in the favor of the British. For a considerable amount of time, these practices were rarely enforced among the colonists. In fact up until 1963 when the French and Indian war ended the Americans were allowed to develop their colonies with little interference from the mother country. During this time a great precipice was forming between the beliefs of the colonists and that of Britain.

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, signifying the end of the Seven-Year war brought attention back to the colonies. By this time the colonies have been thriving and have become a large supplier of tobacco, rice and sugar, which England normally imported from other countries. Southern plantations began trading with other countries and becoming extremely wealthy in the process. Meanwhile the colonists in the North grew economically as well. The North was an important trading center as well as a supplier of sea harvested goods. Due to the increasing prosperity of the colonies and the fact that France was no longer a threat brought back the unwanted attention of Britain. In the theory of mercantilism, a colony is a primary asset. They can both produce products not found in the mother country and guarantee a market for the country s exported goods. Although some colonists in America benefited from this system many did not. After 1763 the polices pertaining to this practice were enforced vigorously. Virginia tobacco farmers were forced to sell their tobacco only to England where they were promised a monopoly, but over time grew in debt to the same people there were selling to. These once wealthy plantation owners were eventually forced into mortgaging their future tobacco crops in order to get their necessities from England. This led the Virginians north to the New England colonies were the sparks of a revolt were already beginning to blaze. The North suffered as well under the rules brought about in the polices of mercantilism. Since trade was a major industry in the North their economy suffered by not being permitted to trade with other countries. Because the colonies were considered part of Britain essentially they were not supposed to be competition against them. The colonists were enraged that after so many years of being given freedom to council over their people and control their own trade, that Britain would step in like a absent parent to lay down the law.

In order to gain more control over the colonies both politically and financially the British sent over George Grenville. Not known for his finesse, Grenville soon created enemies among the colonists. In 1765, he levied the Stamp Act among the people. This was a revenue law that required all newspapers, pamphlets, legal documents, commercial bills, advertisements, and other papers issued in the colonies to bear a stamp. The monies collected from taxes gathered were to be used for colonial defense. The colonists didn t understand why now, after all these years, a tax was required to pay for protection. Since there was no threat from France, the colonies didn t feel there was a reason for the tax. Most affected by the tax were the lawyers, businessmen, merchants, and other powerful people such as Samuel Adams. To protest the unfair taxation a league was formed called the Sons of Liberty . By threatening a boycott of English goods and by refusing to import English goods the Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766.

Many people were outraged at the fact that Britain could tax the colonies without being represented in the Parliament. Colonists were preaching that there is No taxation without representation , a basic right given to any Englishmen. Since they were thousands of miles away and considered English citizens, there was a belief that they were virtually represented. They were told by the Parliament that they could not give the colonies control over their own taxation. This is exactly what the colonists were doing before the English regained interest in the New World . This turn of events began the colonists thinking about political independence from England.

Within a year of repealing the Stamp Act, the Parliament passed another revenue law by the name of the Townshend Acts. The colonists were again faced with a tax placing duties on imports of glass, lead, paints, paper, and tea. As with the Stamp Act this did not go over well with the colonists. Again the colonists were taxed without representation and reacted as they did before. Boston Merchants again boycotted English goods. The colonists needed the support of one another to battle against this new injustice. To rally the colonists together the Massachusetts Assembly circulated a letter explaining the situation and asking for assistance. Because of this action, the Assembly was dissolved in 1768. To enforce these laws and keep the peace among the irate public, British troops were sent in. Due to rising tensions created by the Britain s new laws the population began to torment the troops. Finally on March 5, 1770 the unthinkable happened. In the streets of Boston, British troops fired into a rioting crowd killing five people and wounding others. Because of the Boston Massacre the people were pushed over the edge. Many who teetered on the between loyalty to the crown and a revolution were now looking to the North for guidance. The colonists were now on their way to revolting against England. It was no longer religious freedom the colonists were seeking; they were now looking to achieve a political freedom from a country that thought of them as nothing more as cows to be milked. Basic rights given to all English countrymen were now being with held from the colonists. In the years to follow, Britain would repeatedly take from the colonists until finally there was nothing more to do but rebel.

To say that Britain was completely at fault for the beginning of the American Revolution is inaccurate. However, in this case it is obvious that Britain was completely na ve for allowing the colonists the freedom to break away from England s political and social structure. Once given that space to experiment the colonists developed their own interests and beliefs. The Americans simply reacted to the new restrictions placed on them, which were completely foreign to what they had become accustom. Had England, from the beginning, taken control of the colonies we would most likely be speaking with British accents. If you raise a child without rules and regulations in the earlier years of their life and then place curfews on them, make them pay rent and tell them who their friends are what do you expect to happen? Revolution. Personally, I would place the blame on the parent.