***The Reasons We Went to War***

The British philosopher John Locke said that all men have the right to life, liberty, and property. {Copyright} In the period leading up to the revolution, the Colonists began to question whether the British believed what Locke had to say is true. This was the true beginning of the American Revolution. The foundation of the American Revolution was primarily political and economic; however social and intellectual reasons played a major role.

One significant political driver was taxation without representation. Specifically, the Colonists were not participants in the governing system of the British government, in stark contrast to British citizens on British soil. Yet the system of taxation of the Colonists was felt to be onerous or inconsistent with the benefits or services provided by the Government. The Colonists had a saying to express their position, “No taxation without representation.” There were three main acts declared by Britain that angered the Colonists. The first was the Stamp Act. This forced the Colonists to buy stamps for all legal documents. While the costs of the stamps were not a lot, that was not the point. It appeared to be nothing more than a means to raise revenue. The revenue generated from this Act exceeded by more than ten times the annual revenue generated from the Colonists before 1763.

The second Act was called the Quartering Act. This Act mandated that the Colonists lodge and outfit the British troops on Colonist soil. The Colonists were not generally opposed to housing the troops or supplying them; in fact the Colonists were doing this before the Act was passed. What infuriated them was that it was now mandatory to house and supply the troops. They believed that once again the British were using this as a means to tax the Colonists.

The third Act that angered the Colonists was called the Sugar Act. This act had two parts, the first was that it raised the duty on sugar and lowered the duty on molasses. The provision was designed to eliminate illegal sugar trade between the colonies and the French and Spanish West Indies. But it badly harmed the Colonist’s economy. The Colonists viewed this as another means for Colonial control. The second part of the Act established vice-admiralty courts as a means to eliminate smuggling by trying the accused smugglers. These courts replaced the local juries used for such trials and thereby eliminated any possible sympathy of the local juries. More local smugglers were convicted and this was viewed as another act of oppression by the British. Once again the Colonists were angered with the British oppression. These measures as well as the new forms of taxation were major factors in the beginning of the American Revolution.

The second major factor in beginning war was the economy. British actions were viewed as destroying the colonies’ economies. There were three specific instances that this happened. One mentioned above was the Sugar Act. The increase in costs on a basic staple resulting from the tax was destructive to their way of life.

A second economic instance was when the British closed the Port of Boston. The port was closed because the Colonists refused to pay for the tea that they dumped off the three ships in the Boston Tea Party. This significantly harmed Boston’s economy since no ship could enter or exit the port anymore. Without these ships, Boston could not trade with other countries or even other colonies creating additional resistance to British rule. It angered the Colonists and women started mobilizing and enforcing the boycott by finding substitutes for tea, textiles, and other items.

A third instance of economic impact was when the British eliminated the tax on the East India Tea Company. Without the tea tax the East India Tea Company was able to undersell the colonial merchants and monopolize tea trade in the colonies. There were multiple reasons that this infuriated the Colonists. The Colonists were angered once again about taxation without representation. It also forced normally well respected merchants to fear going bankrupt because they could not compete with the East India Tea Company. Making matters worse yet the East India Tea Company gave franchise rights to certain colonial merchants. The ones who were not sold these rights were enraged that they could not fairly compete with the franchise merchants. This significantly hurt the colonial economy because tea was one of the major commodities for the Colonies. These three instances of British oppression and their impact on the American economy were big reasons for ultimate revolt.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL

While economic and political reasons were the main factors behind the rebellion, intellectual reasons, while less significant, were also motivating. One reason that the intellectual reason had so much influence was the argument by John Locke that if a government should persist in exceeding its rightful powers, the people would be free not only from their obligation to obey any particular law, but their obligation to obey the government. The Colonists took this to heart. They believed that the government had abused its power, which it had, and that they had a right to rebel, which they did. They believed this so much that when the Colonists finally drafted a Declaration of Independence they included many of Locke’s ideas. Another reason that influenced the colonist’s was the idea of virtual representation verses actual representation. The British were using a form of virtual representation. The Colonists had no representative in the government and so they were not being represented as British citizens. The Colonists wanted actual representation. They believed that this would make it so that they had a say in the government actions impacting their day to day lives. With the England and the king so far away, there was no appreciation for local needs and issues such as the impact of new taxes or the changes in a right to be tried by a jury of your peers. The Colonists believed that these were basic rights deserved by all people. Clearly the British thought different. The primary British concern was revenue and seemed to do that by any means necessary, even at the expense of colonist’s rights. These are just a handfull of intellectual reasons that started the American Revolution.

A final major reason behind the revolt was social conditions. The British did not respect the Colonists. One example of this is when George Washington unsuccessfully attempted to join the British army. The reason that he did not switch was that they were not going to respect his rank. The British were going to demote Washington if he joined despite his greater experience than many of his British counterparts. To him this was unacceptable and thankfully he did not join the British. Another social reason for revolt was the King himself. King George III had social and intellectual problems. He suffered from a disease that produced bouts of insanity and appeared to become more insane with age. This made the government appear very unstable. The Colonists could not see why they should let a lunatic like the king impose his irrational power on their daily lives. They also started to believe that any government that can produce a king like George III must not be fit to appropriately rule anyone. Hence, they needed to make a better government through any means necessary including revolt.

*In conclusion, the American Revolution was a decision not taken lightly. There were many factors that went into the decisions leading to war. These factors were primarily political and economic; however social and intellectual reasons also played a major role*.

**SOME OF THE CHANTS FROM THE WARS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| First | Last | Sex | Age | Dept | Kids |  |
| Tom | Smith | M | 45 | Military | 2 |  |
| Jon | Blacksmith | M | 58 | Cook | 0 |  |
| Mary | Hospice | F | 47 | Medical | 2 |  |
| Laura | Green | F | 35 | Medical | 3 |  |

# Major Wars

WWI

The world’s first global conflict, the “Great War” pitted the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire against the Allied forces of Great Britain, the United States, France, Russia, Italy and Japan. The introduction of modern technology to warfare resulted in unprecedented carnage and destruction, with more than 9 million soldiers killed by the end of the war in November 1918.

WWII

Coming just two decades after the last great global conflict, the Second World War was the most widespread and deadliest war in history, involving more than 30 countries and resulting in more than 50 million military and civilian deaths (with some estimates as high as 85 million dead). Sparked by Adolf Hitler’s invasion of Poland in 1939, the war would drag on for six deadly years until the final Allied defeat of both Nazi Germany and Japan in 1945.

VIETNAM

The Vietnam War was a long, costly armed conflict that pitted the communist regime of North Vietnam and its southern allies, known as the Viet Cong, against South Vietnam and its principal ally, the United States. The divisive war, increasingly unpopular at home, ended with the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1973 and the unification of Vietnam under Communist control two years later. More than 3 million people, including 58,000 Americans, were killed in the conflict.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WAR** | **START** | **END** | **CASUALITIES** |
| WWI | 1914 | 1918 | 9 million |
| WWII | 1939 | 1945 | 50 million |
| VIETNAM | 1955 | 1973 | 3 million |

**Generals in the War**

WWI

**John Monash**

**Erich Ludendorff**

WWII

Omar Bradley

Douglas MacArthur

George S. Patton

VIETNAM

Paul Harkins

John McCain

**Some of the presidents during the major wars**

Andrew Jackson WWI

Robert Wilson WWI

George Bush, JR Vietnam

Henry Fordson WWII

Thomas Jefferson WWII

How war Affects families

Broken families

Psychological issues

Financial Issues

School issues for children



3 things we are grateful for:

Family

Kids

Mom

Dad

Military

Navy

Marines

Coast Guard

Service Personnel

Police

Fireman

Teachers