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Contrast between the American and French Revolution

Although both the American and the French Revolution are regarded as the struggles for Democracy, yet they are not as similar as they are portrayed in the history books. For one, the Americans did not fight for change in their governmental system. The main objective to gain independence from British colonial rule. The slogan of "No taxation without Representation" can be adequately cited in favor of this argument. The Americans were the pride and joy of the British, so Americans had to fight for their independence on the battleground. They fought for their basic human rights rather than to create a new system of governance and make a new social order. That is where the French come into the discussion. The French did not fight a colonial power for their independence, instead, they fought for the ideals of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity". The French fought for the above-mentioned concepts with their kin. They were delusive and their goals were not as tangible as the American ones.

If we view the second paragraph of the American Declaration of Independence, we can observe that the founding fathers of America did not think about establishing a Union, their main goal was to yoke the American elite together to abolish the British rule (Onuf). They thought that their collective might was needed to banish their overseas masters for good and attain their freedom by blood and sword. Therefore, we can regard the Declaration of Independence as an “Anti-British Rule” document, rather than the declaration of their freedom. It was after banishing the British that they thought of the formation of a government. Instead of ideas, they put their faith in experience, as termed by Alexander Hamilton in his Federalist papers (Wirls).

The French were the polar opposite of the concept, as they relied more on their reason, which began to supersede even religion, which was regarded as the supreme authority in Europe during those times. They began to reason among themselves rather than asking for divine interventions. The name of God was seldom used lesser, unlike in the American Declaration of Independence. But their success was short-lived as they did not have any concrete foundation to stand on. If the reason is not guided by historic experiences then the main objectives are led astray. The lack of the aforementioned failed the French Revolution. The population of France was plunged into a "Reign of Terror" where the government executed anyone they even suspected of mutiny. This resulted in the transaction of the rule in the hands of the dictator, Napoléon Bonaparte, which further changed into another monarchic period after he failed (Ennis)

In terms of violence that was the main aspect of the revolutions, the French are the clear winners. If we quote the Boston Tea Party, we can see the Americans never intended to face the British in an all-out war. They wanted to use non-violent political means to overthrow them from their lands. Contrary to that, the French killed wherever and whenever they would. From the event of the storming of the famous prison castle Bastille to the coronation of Napoléon, the French butchered thousands of their kinsmen, even the reigning King Louis the Sixteenth and his wife Queen Marie Antionette (Crawford).

In short, the rule in America was about freedom where the state was established in the evolutionary process of territorial expansion. The French Revolution was truer to its salt, but as it was unguided, it failed astoundingly. But that does not mean that the Americans are the true fathers of the democratic revolutions. Their struggles can be better justified by the term “War of Independence” rather than the American Revolution.

# Works Cited

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