

A.P. UNITED STATES HISTORY rev: 4/2014

#2 “Despite the view of some historians that the conflict between England and the 13 North American Colonies was economic in origin, in fact the American Revolution had its roots in politics and other areas of American life”.

assess the validity of this statement

The conflict was in part caused by economic circumstances

- trade regulations (Navigation Acts - Mercantilism)
- land restrictions (Proclamation Act 1763)
- tax burdens (Sugar 64', Stamp 65', Townsend Acts 67')
- Writs of Assistance (search and seizure warrants)
- Quartering Act (colonies pay for stationing/billeting troops)

However the origins of the American Revolution go back to politics, ideologies and ways of life.

- Original settlers were religious dissenters, the Puritans hoped to preserve their religious community/freedoms and build the ideal colony free of outside interference.
- Democracy - From the beginning a more democratic system was established. First settlers set up a system of “direct democracy”
 - Town Hall Meetings allowed a voice in local affairs
 - each settler cast one vote in local decisions.
- Benign Neglect - England left the colonies to solve their own problems, colonial legislatures resented later intrusions by Parliament and Royal Governors.
- Separation - Because England was unable or unwilling to politically regulate the colonies, over time a slow separation took place. It was not revolutionary action by the colonies which allowed them to rule themselves, it was England’s inability or unwillingness which made this possible. (3000 miles of ocean)
- Population Diversity - By the 1750’s, the colonies had a distinctively “less British” flavor. Scotch-Irish, Germans, and French immigrants were not inspired by British institutions. Diverse religions, lifestyles and places of origin made us “Americans” not British subjects.
- French and Indian War 1754-1763 - removed the French threat and therefore the need for British protection.

- Virtual Representation - Parliament claimed that all members of Parliament represented all the subjects of the Empire. This was unacceptable to the Colonists.
- King George III - In the process of reviving royal executive power and rejected attempts at compromise by the Colonies. George's Mom told her son, "George, be King!"
- American Public Opinion - Controlled by the Merchants, Bankers and Manufacturing classes. (those who stood to gain by the removal of their British counterparts)

It was not the issue of taxation without representation or who would "economically" control the colonies, it was a political question, "who will govern the colonies?"

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, (from John Lockes Theory of Contract Government) "governments derive their power from the consent of the people." and "people are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The relationship of the Mother Country to the Colonies like that of parent to child. "The parents failed to recognize that the child had grown" Theodore Roosevelt

What if ? Would there have been an American Revolution if France had maintained a foothold in North America? (French and Indian War a stalemate)

some historians say NO ! ????????????????