History French And British Essay, Research Paper

Free-Response Essay

There is no American history separate from the history of Europe. The truth in

this statement can be widely examined, with one taking a justifiable position that American

history greatly derives from the history of Europe. This opinion can be supported by

considering the impact of European events on the domestic policies of the United States

from 1789-1815.

In 1789, the French Revolution erupted, with war breaking out four years later

between France and Great Britain and most of the rest of Europe. Because of the Alliance

of 1778, American authorities felt somewhat obligated to defend the French West Indies

forever against all other powers. However, no statesman urged such a policy. Having

troops on both sides of its borders, the nation would be greatly endangered in threat of a

war.

Meanwhile, France had sent Edmond Charles Genet to the United States, enlisting

American vessels to operate as privateers against British shipping and granting French

military commissions in order to mount expeditions against British forces in Europe. This

affair, although recalled by Washington, led to attacks on American shipping by both

forces. Each power captured American vessels headed for the other s ports.

These attacks revived hatreds that had been growing on American grounds.

Washington sent Chief Justice John Jay to London to seek a settlement with the British.

The British reacted genuinely, and the two countries decided on the terms of Jay s Treaty.

Jay also submitted to the Rule of 1756 , a regulation stating that neutrals could not trade

in wartime with ports normally closed to them by mercantilistic restrictions in times of

peace. Among other terms, the United States were committed to paying their

pre-Revolutionary debt to Britain and conceded to an arrangement that prevented the

United States from imposing discriminatory taxes on British goods.

These decisions and peace treaties were significantly important to the history of

America,enabling the country to solve its problems on the southeastern frontier and

improving foreign relations. These terms of American history was derived from the

presence of the French Revolution, a European event, and the effect it had on the

domestic policies.

In 1798, out of irritation of the Jay Treaty, French attacks on American shipping

began. Hoping to stop them, Adams sent three commissioners to negotiate a settlement,

but returned no results. The French foreign minister, Talleyrand, sent three agents

(X,Y,Z) to demand a huge bribe to the Americans. Releasing the commissioners reports

caused a sensation, with Congress unilaterally abrogating the French Alliance and creating

a Navy Department.

Many Federalists expected the Republicans to side with France if war broke out.

This fear created the need for Congress to push the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798,

reducing the rights of aliens. Again, the domestic policies tied back to the European

influence on American society.

Between 1803 and 1807, the British and French warring powers seized over 700

ships, leaving Americans hopeless. After the Chesapeake-Leopard incident, where 3

American sailors were killed, the American press clamored for war. Jefferson, however,

contented to ordering warships out of American waters, but was determined to stop

indignities being heaped by the countries. The result-The Embargo Act of 1807, which

prohibited all exports. As a result, few ships would come to the United States, injuring

the economy.

In conclusion, it can be proven through the impact of European events on the

domestic policies of the United States that the history of Europe and America are

ultimately intertwined from the time period of 1789 to 1815. Several European events

greatly affected American policy, basing mostly on the French Revolution.