

The Economic Factor Of The War Of 1812

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Abstract

After the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte realized the difficulty of achieving a military victory over Britain on land. He turned to the sea to blockade Britain, disrupt its commercial activity, and weaken its power. The British Navy was constantly subjected to a large number of American merchant ships. The Navy searched American ships under the pretext of searching for fugitives from conscription (impressments). The British Conscription Act was supposed to apply to British sailors, but the British did not differentiate between British fugitives and Americans. The number of Americans captured by the British Navy reached 6,000. They were forced to serve in the British Navy and were subjected to harsh treatment by the British. Through the Berlin Decrees, Napoleon closed off the European continent to Britain, preventing other countries from dealing with it, and imposing a blockade on the European continent against Britain and its trade. He also declared that all British subjects in countries allied with France were considered prisoners, and ordered the confiscation of British goods wherever they were found. Thus, Napoleon launched his economic war against Britain, closing European markets to British products to counter the naval blockade imposed by Britain. He required European countries to implement this policy. American ships and trade suffered significant damage through inspections and confiscation as a result of the continental blockade imposed by both France and Britain. The Berlin Decrees and the orders of the British Parliament made American neutrality impossible, as no ship could travel anywhere in Europe without violating French or British orders. This exposed them to confiscation and arrest by the British or French navy, which harmed American trade. It was considered a copy of the aforementioned Jay Treaty because Jefferson refused to approve this treaty and refused to submit it to the Senate. Because it neglected to discuss the issue of conscription. The year 1807 witnessed a period of prosperity in the United States, which was making strides toward restoring American shipping and export trade. However, the Embargo Act of 1807 halted this period of growth and prosperity. This law was an attempt to persuade Britain and France to refrain from seizing neutral American ships by prohibiting trade between the United States and other countries. The law remained in effect from December 1807 to March 1809. On January 9, 1808, the U.S. Congress passed a supplement to the Embargo Act of 1807, requiring coasters and fishing vessels to provide bonds for their shipments back to the United States. On March 12, 1808, the provisions of this law extended the bonds to all American vessels, both large and small. The American measures and embargoes had significant consequences for the American economy. First, a severe economic depression, which was believed to be punishing Britain, but in reality, it was helping it impose a blockade on all of Europe and monopolize world trade. The Republicans in Salem launched a major campaign against the mistreatment of ships and trade by pirates and foreign warships. They also believed that Britain could not survive without American trade. Over time, it became clear that the embargo had benefited Britain more than it had destroyed it.

INTRODUCTION

European events took a dangerous turn, with Berlin falling to Napoleon on October 27, 1806. As a result, Britain declared a blockade of the European coast from the Elbe to Brest. Napoleon responded to the British decision by issuing the Berlin Decree on November 21, 1806, which declared a blockade of all British Isles, prohibited all European countries from trading with Britain, and closed their ports to British ships. After the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte realized the difficulty of achieving a military victory over Britain on land. He turned to the sea to blockade Britain by sea, disrupt its commercial activity, and weaken its power.

economic factor

After the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte realized the difficulty of achieving a military victory over Britain on land, so he turned to the sea to besiege it by sea, obstruct its commercial activity, and weaken its power. ⁽¹⁾. Britain had more than 700 warships with (150) thousand sailors and marines on board; therefore, Britain was safe and maintained its contact with its colonies and trade, but it was giving the naval men low wages and poor food, and treating them badly, which led some of them

to flee to America, and work on American ships, which they considered safer and more comfortable for them in war conditions; for this reason, British officers searched American ships to look for fleeing British sailors, arrest them, and force them to serve in the British Navy. Britain considered this procedure legal, and these procedures were not limited to the British only, but British officers captured thousands of Americans and forced them to work in the British Navy.⁽²⁾ The British believed that abandoning the inspection procedures would, in their view, lead to the failure of the British blockade proposed to France, which would expose them to danger. France was waiting for these procedures with the same British vision. This issue was considered difficult for the United States of America and was the direct cause of the Anglo-American War of 1812.⁽³⁾ The British Navy was constantly exposed to a large number of American merchant ships, as it searched American ships under the pretext of searching for fugitives from compulsory service (Impressments). The British compulsory recruitment law was supposed to be applied to British sailors, but the British did not differentiate between the British fugitive and the American of origin. The number of Americans captured by the British Navy reached 6,000 American sailors. They were forced to serve in the British Navy, in addition to being subjected to harsh treatment by the British.⁽⁴⁾ Unlike the laws of the United States of America, which assert that any foreigner residing in its territory for a period of five years, and subject to several procedures, is considered a citizen like any citizen born in America. Britain insisted on its right to search for fugitives, inspect all neutral ships, and confiscate contraband. The United States of America resisted this claim and asserted that its merchant ships would not be subjected to any harassment under any pretext. The British conscription law, through which American sailors and merchants were forcibly arrested, was a law that was unfair to Americans.⁽⁵⁾ In addition, British naval officers who intercepted American merchant ships were the ones who determined whether a sailor was a British or American citizen, and they were the ones who made the decision. These procedures were a trial for citizens of the United States of America, caused by the British conscription system, which was one of the causes of the War of 1812. European events developed dangerously, and Berlin fell to Napoleon on October 27, 1806. As a result, Britain declared a blockade of the European coast from the Elbe to Brest. Napoleon responded to the British decision by announcing the Berlin Decree on November 21, 1806, in which he declared a blockade of all the British Isles, preventing all European countries from trading with Britain, and closing their ports to British ships.⁽⁶⁾ Through the Berlin Decrees, Napoleon closed the European continent to Britain, preventing other countries from dealing with it, and imposed a blockade on the European continent against Britain and its trade. He also declared that all British subjects in countries allied with France were considered prisoners, and ordered the confiscation of British goods wherever they were found. Thus, Napoleon launched his economic war against Britain, closing European markets to British products; to confront the naval blockade that Britain had imposed on him, and he was required to force European countries to implement this policy.⁽⁷⁾ In response to the Berlin Decree, the British Parliament issued a resolution on January 7, 1807, prohibiting all types of neutral trade. Any ship that did not comply with this resolution was to be confiscated and considered the property of the British government. Britain considered French ports and the ports of the countries allied with it to be under British blockade, and exempted neutral ships from this if they entered British ports and were granted permission. After granting permission, they were allowed to enter French ports.⁽⁸⁾ Britain issued another decree on November 11, 1807, which stated that all French ports, as well as those of its allies, were in a state of war with Britain if they did not fly the British flag. Every ship that did not fly the British flag and traded to and from France and its colonies, regardless of the goods and commodities it carried, would be confiscated and captured. The British Navy would implement this decree against French ships, as well as ships of countries allied with France.⁽⁹⁾ American ships and trade were thus severely damaged by search and seizure as a result of the continental blockade imposed by France and Britain. The Berlin Decrees and the British Parliamentary Orders made American neutrality impossible, because no ship could move anywhere in Europe without violating French or British orders, and thus be subject to seizure and arrest by the British or French navies, which harmed American trade.⁽¹⁰⁾ On December 17, 1807, Napoleon issued the Milan Decree, which complemented the Berlin Decree. By this decree, any ship subject to British inspection, or forced to pay tribute to the British government, and the voyage to it was considered the property of France, regardless of its nationality. Through these decisions, Napoleon wanted to control maritime trade and take revenge on the British Navy after it

destroyed the French fleet in the Battle of Abu Qir on August 1, 1798, during Napoleon's campaign to control Egypt.⁽¹¹⁾ The United States responded to the British decisions and French decrees on March 22, 1806, with a retaliatory response by the US Congress issuing the Embargo Act, which prohibited all foreign trade. This law went into effect in November 1806.⁽¹²⁾ This law caused great damage to American maritime trade, and prices collapsed in New York State. This decision aroused great discontent among southern farmers, who were unable to ship their surplus produce. American exports fell to a fifth of what they had been before the law. This law did not lead to starving Britain into changing its policy towards the United States, but it had a great impact on America.⁽¹³⁾ The two sides tried in a new round of negotiations to put an end to these serious problems, so the United States of America sent William Plinkney to London to join his colleague James Mozzo) James Monroe(⁽¹⁴⁾ The American Minister in Britain formed a four-member committee to sign a treaty between the two countries that would preserve the interests of both parties. Negotiations began between the two sides and the two parties continued to provide for the signing of the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty in September 1806. It was considered a copy of the aforementioned Jay Treaty because Jefferson refused to approve this treaty, and refused to submit it to the Senate because it neglected to discuss the issue of conscription.⁽¹⁵⁾ However, Britain did not consider this negligence, because the issue of conscription was a fateful issue for Britain, and abandoning it meant abandoning a siege of France, and meant surrender and death. Despite this treaty's emphasis on respecting all American rights, and Britain's pledge to issue special orders to prevent attacks on American citizens, under any circumstances, after losing the treaty, British-American relations deteriorated.⁽¹⁶⁾ While the value of exports was clearly growing and steadily increasing, imports declined in the export trade in 1808 due to measures taken by the United States government in retaliation for French decrees and British orders regarding American merchant ships. This critical situation prompted US President Thomas Jefferson to convene a meeting on October 25, 1807, and issue the Embargo Act on December 18 of the same year. This Act prohibited trade with all foreign countries in general, and Britain in particular, and established a policy of non-importation from Britain. The US Congress discussed this issue in a secret session, and the bill was passed on December 22, 1807. This law prohibited all American ships from sailing to foreign ports and from cooperating with foreign ships in removing goods. All coastal vessels were required to provide a pledge to unload their cargoes in the United States. The Embargo Act, which decimated American trade, resulted in significant losses for the United States, even greater than those incurred by Britain and France.⁽¹⁷⁾ The French decrees and British orders imposed restrictions or heavy losses on the trade of neutral countries and the United States of America to take measures to counter those restrictions imposed by both France and Britain, and the goal of positive change with the growth of American industry, and the American government asked its citizens to sacrifice goods and services in order to support American international policy⁽¹⁸⁾.

First: The Embargo Act of 1807 The year 1807 witnessed a period of prosperity in the United States, which was moving towards restoring American shipping and export trade. However, the Embargo Act of 1807 halted this period of growth and prosperity. This law was an attempt to persuade Britain and France to refrain from seizing neutral American ships by prohibiting trade between the United States and other countries. The law remained in effect from December 1807 until March 1809.⁽¹⁹⁾ Following the issuance of British orders and French decrees, President Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) announced on July 2, 1807, a resolution ordering British armed ships to leave American ports, and asked Congress to enact a law prohibiting American ships from leaving US ports.⁽²⁰⁾ Foreign trade was strictly prohibited in order to prevent the United States from being drawn into European conflicts, which angered merchants and shipping interests. Farmers also protested because it prevented them from selling their products, so this law was repealed.⁽²¹⁾

Second: Law of January 9, 1808 and March 12, 1808 : On January 9, 1808, the US Congress passed a supplement to the Embargo Act of 1807, requiring coasters and fishing vessels to give bonds for their cargoes to be returned to the United States. On March 12, 1808, the provisions of this law included all small and large American vessels to give bonds.⁽²²⁾

This law was announced on January 17, 1808, and the new embargo was considered a fatal decision for American economic activity. This law was delivered to the Custom House, and William Gray was

appointed) William Gray⁽²³⁾ Under the new law, no import from the South could be made without his signature, which made him very popular. Under this decision, no one could bring a piece of meat from the markets without Gray's signature.⁽²⁴⁾ The Newburyport Herald of August 26, 1808, commented that Mr. Gray possessed an immense fortune in France and the French-controlled countries, and was in favor of the policy of maintaining peace with Napoleon. He had a large stock of Indian, Russian, and Italian goods and merchandise, and his wealth was daily increased by the embargo. The greatest beneficiaries of the embargo were the men of great capital, who owned large quantities of foreign goods when the embargo was imposed, which caused prices to rise greatly. Mr. Gray made great profits from this.⁽²⁵⁾ This law left no choice but one of two things: either a civil war or accepting the continuation of slavery. The Republicans emphasized either prohibition or war with Britain, while the Federalists wanted to preserve national honor because attacking the British naval force, which was strong and sufficient to flay the United States, and they opposed the policy of deviation from France, which lied to the United States of America and seized its ships without warning or prior notice.⁽²⁶⁾ The supplemental legislation made the ban applicable to vessels engaged in coastal trade and to fishing vessels as well. Any violation would subject both parties to the forfeiture of the vessel and its cargo, or to a fine equal to twice the value of the cargo. Any captain of a vessel or other person knowingly involved in a prohibited foreign voyage would be subject to fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000. In addition, owners of vessels violating the ban would be deprived of all credit for duties payable to the United States. The Second Supplemental Act placed the ban on small, unregistered vessels and on any land or sea export. This law required merchants to document the return of their goods to any American port by obtaining a certificate from the customs collector at that port. Congress responded to complaints from merchants abroad by granting the president authority to make only one voyage for the purpose of retrieving those goods.⁽²⁷⁾ As a result of this law, Napoleon issued the Bayonne Decree on April 17, 1808, which referred to the confiscation of all American ships in French ports, or arriving there, under the pretext that no American ship could be in the ocean under the embargo. American ships that evaded the embargo often used forged British papers and records.⁽²⁸⁾

Third, the Enforcement Act of January 1809

President Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) sought to take new measures to avoid war. He presented new proposals to Congress, which passed another law in 1809. This law allowed trade with all foreign countries except Britain and France, and included a statement promising to continue trade with one of the warring parties on the condition that American ships would not be attacked.⁽²⁹⁾ On March 1, 1809, the US Congress passed a new law, the Non-Intercourse Act, directed against Britain and France. This law was enacted to regulate the trade of the United States, preserve its interests, and try to keep the United States out of the circle of war. It also stipulated the possibility of suspending its implementation in the event that Britain and France ceased their attacks on American merchant ships.⁽³⁰⁾ This was followed by another decision on June 1, 1810, prohibiting all British and French armed vessels from approaching American ports for any reason, whether for maintenance or provisioning, or carrying mail for the United States. The United States could rescind this decision within three months if both Britain and France rescinded all naval blockades and ship inspections.⁽³¹⁾ Napoleon subsequently announced in 1810 the cancellation of his measures against American ships, and he was not sincere in them, but America believed him and limited its measures to preventing commercial dealings with Britain.⁽³²⁾

It is worth noting that the exports of the United States of America in 1807 reached (108) million dollars, but they decreased in 1808 to 22 million US dollars, and this is what the economy was exposed to within one year; due to the Franco-British War.⁽³³⁾ Napoleon did not object to the embargo because it was directed against Britain, and more than half of British cotton came from the United States, which had a trade balance of nearly 8 million pounds in Britain's favor. Because of the embargo laws, which directly affected American citizens, the prices of grain, tobacco, cotton, and other goods rose, and America suffered more than Britain because it was deprived of its trade with everyone, and Britain was deprived of its trade with America only.⁽³⁴⁾ From an early period, the tobacco and grain trade was the main pillar of prosperity in the state of Maryland, whose citizens made great efforts to raise the level of production. During the early period of the European wars that sterilized the French Revolution, the demand for

advanced products in the field of maritime shipping increased, which led to an increase in the management of these exports, as shown in the table below.

Table No. (1) shows the value of revenues from goods exported from the state of Maryland according to fiscal years. ⁽³⁵⁾.

Fiscal Year Value of Exported Goods in Dollars	Fiscal Year Value of Exported Goods in Dollars	Fiscal Year Value of Exported Goods in Dollars
1 1800 12,198,000 USD	1 1800 12,198,000 USD	1 1800 12,198,000 USD
2 1801 12,264,331 USD	2 1801 12,264,331 USD	2 1801 12,264,331 USD
3 1804 13,151,939 USD	3 1804 13,151,939 USD	3 1804 13,151,939 USD
4 1807 14,298,984 USD	4 1807 14,298,984 USD	4 1807 14,298,984 USD
5 1808 2,720,106 USD	5 1808 2,720,106 USD	5 1808 2,720,106 USD

This table shows the value of exports, which was constantly increasing, but the decrease in imports in the export trade during 1808 was due to actions taken by the American government in response to British orders and French decrees. ⁽³⁶⁾.

Fourth: The impact of American measures on the American economy and society ::The American measures and embargoes had significant consequences for the American economy. First, a severe economic depression, which was believed to be punishing Britain, but in reality, it was helping it impose a blockade on all European countries and monopolize world trade. The Republicans in Salem launched a major campaign related to the mistreatment of ships and trade by pirates and foreign warships. They also believed that Britain could not survive without American trade. As time went on, it became clear that Britain benefited from the embargo more than it destroyed it. ⁽³⁷⁾.Smuggling operations increased to a large level between the United States of America and other countries. There were many violations of the embargo, and great sympathy for the violators along the Canadian border. Some New Yorkers were against the embargo. Smuggling operations between New York and Canada, during which large quantities of potash, flour, pork and timber were transported to the Canadian border - for the small boat - and the trade was profitable. The Americans took advantage of the low price of goods, especially flour, in America and the high prices in British possessions; to smuggle goods across the American border. ⁽³⁸⁾.The embargo played a major role in the expansion and prosperity of domestic manufacturing, which was the starting point for the United States of America towards self-sufficiency. In addition, it was viewed with fear of the secession of the states and the outbreak of a civil war. ⁽³⁹⁾.

CONCLUSION

1. After the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte realized the difficulty of achieving a military victory over Britain on land. He turned to the sea to blockade it by sea, obstruct its commercial activity, and weaken its power.
2. Britain possessed more than 700 warships manned by (150) thousand sailors and marines; therefore, Britain was safe and maintained contact with its colonies and trade.

3. European events developed dangerously, and Berlin fell to Napoleon on October 27, 1806.
4. American ships and trade suffered significant damage through inspection and confiscation as a result of the Continental Blockade policy imposed by both France and Britain.
5. The year 1807 witnessed a period of prosperity in the United States, which was taking steps toward restoring American shipping and export trade. However, the Trade Embargo Act of 1807 halted this period of growth and prosperity.
6. The tobacco and grain trade was, from an early period, the main pillar of prosperity in the state of Maryland, whose citizens made great efforts to raise the level of production. During the first period of the European wars that sterilized the French Revolution, the demand for products increased

Footnotes

1(Sabry Faleh Al-Hamdi, the previous source, page 116.

2(Allah Nevins, Henry Steele, The pocket History of the United States, New york, 1951, p. 152.

3(William wood, Ibid, p.5.

4(Donald R. Hickey, The war of 1812, A short history, university of Illinois press, Chicago, U.S.A, 1995.p.7.

(5) Theodore Roosevelt, The Naval War, Fifth edition, G.P. Putnam's sons, New york, 1894, p. 22.

6(Will Durant, The Story of Civilization: The Age of Napoleon, translated by Dr. Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al-Sheikh, Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, 2002, p. 95

7(Zainab Ismat Rashid, Modern European History in the Nineteenth Century, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, Cairo 2000, 303.

8(Gales and Seaton, American State papers, foreign Relations, 6 vols, Washington, D .C, 1834, p. 111.

9(Comager, Henry Steel, Documents of American History, 7th ed, New york, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963, p. 2000

10(Sahar Ahmed Naji Al-Dulaimi, Britain's Foreign Policy Towards France in Europe (1756-1815), First Edition 2019, p. 378.

11(Sabah Ahmed Al-Bayya, The United States of America's Position on the Continental Blockade (1807-1812), The Egyptian Historical Journal, Issue 57, 2023, p. 510.

12(statpapers and public Documents of the United states For the Accession of George Washington to the presidency Exhibiting a complete view of our foreign Relations since that Times 8 vols, Boston, TB, Wait & son, 1815 VI 74.

(13) Commager, Henry Steele, ed. Documents of American History, 7th ed, New Yorks Appleton-century, Crofts, 1963.p.202-203.

14(William Pinkney) was born in Annapolis, Maryland, USA, on March 17, 1764. He lived in poverty and destitution due to his father's conservative sentiments. He received a formal education and studied law with the help of friends in 1783. He began practicing law in Harford County at the age of 22. He was elected to Congress in 1788, left in 1792, and returned to practice law. In the same year, he served on the State Executive Council. In 1795, he was elected to the State Legislative Council. Because of his legal expertise, he gained the attention of George Washington, who appointed him in 1796 to a committee charged with resolving the outstanding issues between the United States and Britain. William Pinkney died on February 25, 1822, in Washington. For more details, see: Donald R. Hickey, op, Cit. 359-360

(15) Donald R. Hickey, op, Cit, p.9.

(16) William Wood, op, Cit, p.10.

17(John Thomas Scharf, The Chronicles of Baltimore Being A complete History of Baltimore Town and Baltimore city, vol. 2. p. 508.

18(Sabah Ahmed Al-Bayya', the previous source, p. 518.

19(Fanster maker J, van & Filer John E, The U.S Embargo Act of 1807, Its impact New England money, Banking, and Economic Activity, in Economic Inquiry, Jan, 1990, p.163.

20(ibid, p.164.

21(Sabry Faleh Al-Hamdi, the previous source, p. 116.

22(Sabah, Hamad Al-Bayya', previous source, p. 525

23(Born on July 8, 1750, Gray was a prominent American merchant from Massachusetts. He was a prominent Federalist and strongly supported Prohibition. Although he acknowledged that Prohibition was a devastating measure for the American

economy, he claimed that it was a constitutional measure and considered it necessary. He was widely accused by Federalists and others who opposed Prohibition of reaping enormous profits from the law. He responded to these accusations by stating that he was willing to disclose his financial situation and prove that his wealth had decreased by 10% as a result of the Prohibition Act. For more details, see:

Edward Gray, William Gray of salem ,Merchant, A Biographical Sketch by Edward Gray with Portra stais and other illustrations, , Houghton Mifflin company, Boston, New York, July, 1914, P.41-42

(24) Illid, p. 44.

)25(philips James Duncan, Jefferson's wicked Tyrannical Embargo, The New England Quarterly, Vol+18,No ,1945 P. 473 ,1945 ,4P. 473

(26) ibid, p, 474.

)27(Sabah Ahmed Al-Bayya, the previous source, 528.

)28(Sahar Ahmed Naji Al-Dulaimi, the previous source, p. 384.

)29(Farhat Ziada and Ibrahim Friji, previous source, p. 104

)30(Alan Nevins, Henry Steel Commager, op. cit., p. 162.

)31(Henry steel, commagersed.Documents of American History. 7th ed. New yorks Appleton-century. Crofts,1963,p.204 .

)32(Alan Nevins, Henry Steel Commager, op. cit., p. 163

)33(James Hannay, op.cit, p.11.

(34) Wolford Thorp Lanier, Democratic Republican Reaction in massachusetts to the Embargo of 1807- The New England Quarterly, Vol.15, No, 1, 1942, p. 40.

)35(The table was prepared by the researcher based on.335: P :Johan Thomas Seharf.op.cit

) 36(Harbert B. Adams Editor, Fconomic History Maryland And the southe Baltimore, 1899, p. 116.

(37) Philips James Duncan, Op. Cit, p. 469.

)38(Sabah Ahmed Al-Bayya, the previous source, p. 559.

(39) Philips James Duncan, Op Cit, p. 470.

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1. Allah Nevins, Henry Steele, The pocket History of the United States, New york, 1951.
2. Comager, Henry Steel, Documents of Americans History, 7thed, New york, Appleton-Century-crofts, 1963.
3. Commager, HenrySteele, ed. Documents of American History, 7thed, New yorks Appleton-century, Crofts, 1963.
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