

A DIFFERING DECLARATION

Read through the following speeches and highlight, circle, or underline any key phrases or ideas.

Abraham Lincoln, Electric Cord Speech

July 10, 1858

“We hold this annual celebration [July 4th] to remind ourselves of all the good done in this process of time of how it was done and who did it, and how we are historically connected with it; and we go from these meetings in better humor with ourselves – we feel more attached the one to the other, and more firmly bound to the country we inhabit...But after we have done all this we have not yet reached the whole. There is something else connected with it. We have besides these men – descended by blood from our ancestors – among us perhaps half our people who are not descendants at all of these men, they are men who have come from Europe...or whose ancestors have come hither and settled here, finding themselves our equals in all things.

If they look back through this history to trace their connection with those days by blood, they find they have none, they cannot carry themselves back into that glorious epoch and make themselves feel that they are apart of us, but when they look through that old Declaration of Independence they find that those old men say that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,” and then they feel that that moral sentiment taught in that day evidences their relation to those men, that it is the father of all moral principle in them, and that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh of the men who wrote the Declaration, and so they are. That is the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together, that will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists.

Jefferson Davis, Farewell Address to the Senate

January 21, 1861

“...[Mississippi] has heard proclaimed the theory that all men are created free and equal, and this made the basis of an attack upon her social institutions; and the sacred Declaration of Independence has been invoked to maintain the position of the equality of the races. That Declaration of Independence is to be construed by the circumstances and purposes for which it was made. The communities were declaring their independence; the people of those communities were asserting that no man was born--to use the language of Mr. Jefferson--booted and spurred to ride over the rest of mankind; that men were created equal--meaning the men of the political community; that there was no divine right to rule; that no man inherited the right to govern; that there were no classes by which power and place descended to families, but that all stations were equally within the grasp of each member of the body-politic. These were the great principles they announced; these were the purposes for which they made their declaration; these were the ends to which their enunciation was directed.

They have no reference to the slave; else, how happened it that among the items of arraignment made against George III was that he endeavored to do just what the North has been endeavoring of late to do--to stir up insurrection among our slaves? Had the Declaration announced that the negroes were free and

equal, how was the Prince to be arraigned for stirring up insurrection among them? And how was this to be enumerated among the high crimes which caused the colonies to sever their connection with the mother country? When our Constitution was formed, the same idea was rendered more palpable, for there we find provision made for that very class of persons as property; they were not put upon the footing of equality with white men--not even upon that of paupers and convicts; but, so far as representation was concerned, were discriminated against as a lower caste, only to be represented in the numerical proportion of three fifths..."

Summary:

Using what you read and the sections you highlighted, summarize Abraham Lincoln's definition of the Declaration of Independence's purpose and Jefferson Davis's definition.

Abraham Lincoln

Jefferson Davis

DECLARATIONS OF THE 19TH CENTURY



Included in this packet are excerpts from the declarations below. Sections of each document have been highlighted to help students understand the main ideas of the documents and help them connect it to the Declaration of Independence.

Declarations of the 19th Century

- Declaration of Sentiments (1848)
- Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Convention (1833)
- Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union (1860)
- Declaration of the Rights of Women in the United States (1876)
- Working Men's Declaration of Independence (1829)
- Texas Declaration of Independence (1836)
- John Brown's Declaration of Liberty (1859)

Declaration of Sentiments (1848)

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

- He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.
- He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.
- He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men - both natives and foreigners.
- Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.
- He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.
- He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.
- He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes, with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master - the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.
- He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women - the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

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- After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.
 - He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.
 - He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.
 - He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education - all colleges being closed against her.
 - He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.
 - He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.
 - He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.
 - He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation, - in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

Abstract of the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Convention (1833)

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed, since a band of patriots convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The corner-stone upon which they founded the Temple of Freedom was broadly this – “that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness.” At the sound of their trumpet-call, three millions of people rose up as from the sleep of death, and rushed to the strife of blood; deeming it more glorious to die instantly as freemen, than desirable to live one hour as slaves. They were few in number – poor in resources; but the honest conviction that Truth, Justice and Right were on their side, made them invincible...

Their grievances, great as they were, were trifling in comparison with the wrongs and sufferings of those for whom we plead. Our fathers were never slaves – never bought and sold like cattle – never shut out from the light of knowledge and religion – never subjected to the lash of brutal taskmasters.

But those, for whose emancipation we are striving – constituting at the present time at least one-sixth part of our countrymen – are recognized by law, and treated by their fellow-beings, as marketable commodities, as goods and chattels, as brute beasts; are plundered daily of the fruits of their toil without redress; really enjoy no constitutional nor legal protection from licentious and murderous outrages upon their persons; and are ruthlessly torn asunder – the tender babe from the arms of its frantic mother – the heart-broken wife from her weeping husband – at the caprice or pleasure of irresponsible tyrants. For the crime of having a dark complexion, they suffer the pangs of hunger, the infliction of stripes, the ignominy of brutal servitude. They are kept in heathenish darkness by laws expressly enacted to make their instruction a criminal offence.

These are the prominent circumstances in the condition of more than two millions of our people, the proof of which may be found in thousands of indisputable facts, and in the laws of the slaveholding States.

Hence we maintain – that, in view of the civil and religious privileges of this nation, the guilt of its oppression is unequalled by any other on the face of the earth; and, therefore, that it is bound to repent instantly, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free.

We further maintain – that no man has a right to enslave or imbrute his brother – to hold or acknowledge him, for one moment, as a piece of merchandise – to keep back his hire by fraud – or to brutalize his mind, by denying him the means of intellectual, social and moral improvement.

The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it is to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body – to the products of his own labor – to the protection of law – and to the common advantages of society. It is piracy to buy or steal a native African, and subject him to servitude. Surely, the sin is as great to enslave an American as an African.

Therefore we believe and affirm – that there is no difference, in principle, between the African slave trade and American slavery:

That every American citizen, who detains a human being in involuntary bondage as his property, is, according to Scripture, (Ex. xxi. 16,) a man-stealer:

That the slaves ought instantly to be set free, and brought under the protection of law:

...We further believe and affirm – that all persons of color, who possess the qualifications which are

demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, as others; and that the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion.

...We also maintain that there are, at the present time, the highest obligations resting upon the people of the free States to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States. They are now living under a pledge of their tremendous physical force, to fasten the galling fetters of tyranny upon the limbs of millions in the Southern States; they are liable to be called at any moment to suppress a general insurrection of the slaves; they authorize the slave owner to vote for three-fifths of his slaves as property, and thus enable him to perpetuate his oppression; they support a standing army at the South for its protection and they seize the slave, who has escaped into their territories, and send him back to be tortured by an enraged master or a brutal driver. This relation to slavery is criminal, and full of danger: IT MUST BE BROKEN UP.

These are our views and principles – these our designs and measures. With entire confidence in the overruling justice of God, we plant ourselves upon the Declaration of our Independence and the truths of Divine Revelation, as upon the Everlasting Rock.

We shall organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town and village in our land...

We shall encourage the labor of freemen rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions: and

We shall spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to speedy repentance....

Submitting this Declaration to the candid examination of the people of this country, and of the friends of liberty throughout the world, we hereby affix our signatures to it; pledging ourselves that, under the guidance and by the help of Almighty God, we will do all that in us lies, consistently with this Declaration of our principles, to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth; to deliver our land from its deadliest curse; to wipe out the foulest stain which rests upon our national escutcheon; and to secure to the colored population of the United States, all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men, and as Americans – come what may to our persons, our interests, or our reputation – whether we live to witness the triumph of Liberty, Justice and Humanity, or perish untimely as martyrs in this great, benevolent, and holy cause.

Abstract of the Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union (1860)

...And now the State of South Carolina having resumed her separate and equal place among nations, deems it due to herself, to the remaining United States of America, and to the nations of the world, that she should declare the immediate causes which have led to this act.

In the year 1765, that portion of the British Empire embracing Great Britain, undertook to make laws for the government of that portion composed of the thirteen American Colonies. A struggle for the right of self-government ensued, which resulted, on the 4th of July, 1776, in a Declaration, by the Colonies, "that they are, and of right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; and that, as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do."

They further solemnly declared that whenever any "form of government becomes destructive of the ends for which it was established, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government." Deeming the Government of Great Britain to have become destructive of these ends, they declared that the Colonies "are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

In pursuance of this Declaration of Independence, each of the thirteen States proceeded to exercise its separate sovereignty; adopted for itself a Constitution, and appointed officers for the administration of government in all its departments-- Legislative, Executive and Judicial. For purposes of defense, they united their arms and their counsels; and, in 1778, they entered into a League known as the Articles of Confederation, whereby they agreed to entrust the administration of their external relations to a common agent, known as the Congress of the United States, expressly declaring, in the first Article "that each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right which is not, by this Confederation, expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled."

...Thus was established, by compact between the States, a Government with definite objects and powers, limited to the express words of the grant. This limitation left the whole remaining mass of power subject to the clause reserving it to the States or to the people, and rendered unnecessary any specification of reserved rights.

We hold that the Government thus established is subject to the two great principles asserted in the Declaration of Independence; and we hold further, that the mode of its formation subjects it to a third fundamental principle, namely: the law of compact. We maintain that in every compact between two or more parties, the obligation is mutual; that the failure of one of the contracting parties to perform a material part of the agreement, entirely releases the obligation of the other; and that where no arbiter is provided, each party is remitted to his own judgment to determine the fact of failure, with all its consequences.

In the present case, that fact is established with certainty. We assert that fourteen of the States have deliberately refused, for years past, to fulfill their constitutional obligations, and we refer to their own Statutes for the proof.

The Constitution of the United States, in its fourth Article, provides as follows: "No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

...The same article of the Constitution stipulates also for rendition by the several States of fugitives from justice from the other States.

The General Government, as the common agent, passed laws to carry into effect these stipulations of the States. For many years these laws were executed. But an increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the institution of slavery, has led to a disregard of their obligations, and the laws of the General Government have ceased to effect the objects of the Constitution. The States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, have enacted laws which either nullify the Acts of Congress or render useless any attempt to execute them. In many of these States the fugitive is discharged from service or labor claimed, and in none of them has the State Government complied with the stipulation made in the Constitution...Thus the constituted compact has been deliberately broken and disregarded by the non-slaveholding States, and the consequence follows that South Carolina is released from her obligation.

The ends for which the Constitution was framed are declared by itself to be “to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

These ends it endeavored to accomplish by a Federal Government, in which each State was recognized as an equal, and had separate control over its own institutions. The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them the right to represent, and burthening them with direct taxes for three-fifths of their slaves; by authorizing the importation of slaves for twenty years; and by stipulating for the rendition of fugitives from labor.

We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

...We, therefore, the People of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.

Abstract of the Declaration of the Rights of Women in the United States (1876)

...The history of our country the past hundred years has been a series of assumptions and usurpations of power over woman, in direct opposition to the principles of just government, acknowledged by the United States as its foundation, which are:

First – The natural rights of each individual.

Second – The equality of these rights.

Third – That rights not delegated are retained by the individual.

Fourth – That no person can exercise the rights of others without delegated authority.

Fifth – That the non-use of rights does not destroy them.

And for the violation of these fundamental principles of our government, we arraign our rulers on this Fourth day of July, 1876, - and these are our articles of impeachment:

Bills of attainder have been passed by the introduction of the word “male” into all the State constitutions, denying to women the right of suffrage, and thereby making sex a crime – an exercise of power clearly forbidden in article I, sections 9, 10, of the United States constitution.

The writ of habeas corpus, the only protection against lettres de cachet and all forms of unjust imprisonment, which the constitution declares “shall not be suspended, except when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety demands it.” is held inoperative in every State of the Union, in case of a married woman against her husband – the marital rights of the husband being in all cases primary, and the rights of the wife secondary.

The right of trial by a jury of one’s peers was so jealously guarded that States refused to ratify the original constitution until it was guaranteed by the sixth amendment. And yet the women of this nation have never been allowed a jury of their peers – being tried in all cases by men, native and foreign, educated and ignorant, virtuous and vicious. Young girls have been arraigned in our courts for the crime of infanticide; tried, convicted, hanged – victims, perchance, of judge, jurors, advocates – while no woman’s voice could be heard in their defense. And not only are women denied a jury of their peers, but in some cases, jury trial altogether...

Taxation without representation, the immediate cause of the rebellion of the colonies against Great Britain, is one of the grievous wrongs the women of this country have suffered during the century...And for refusing to pay such unjust taxation, the houses, lands, bonds and stock of women have been seized and sold within the present year, thus proving Lord Coke’s assertion, that “The very act of taxing a man’s property without his consent is, in effect, disfranchising him of every civil right.”

Unequal codes for men and women. Held by law a perpetual minor, deemed incapable of self-protection, even in the industries of the world, woman is denied equality of rights....

Special legislation for woman has placed us in a most anomalous position. Women invested with the rights of citizens in one section – voters, jurors, office-holders – crossing an imaginary line, are subjects in the next...

Universal manhood suffrage, by establishing an aristocracy of sex, imposes upon the women of this nation a more absolute and cruel despotism [sic] than monarchy; in that, woman finds a political master in her father, husband, brother, son....

The judiciary above the nation has proved itself but the echo of the party in power, by upholding and enforcing laws that are opposed to the spirit and letter of the constitution. When the slave power was dominant, the Supreme Court decided that a black man was not a citizen, because he had not the right to vote; and when the constitution was so amended as to make all persons citizens, the same high tribunal decided that a woman, though a citizen, had not the right to vote. Such vacillating interpretations of constitutional law unsettle our faith in judicial authority, and undermine the liberties of the whole people.

These articles of impeachment against our rulers we now submit to the impartial judgment of the people. To all these wrongs and oppressions woman has not submitted in silence and resignation. From the beginning of the century, when Abigail Adams, the wife of one president and mother of another, said, "We will not hold ourselves bound to obey laws in which we have no voice or representation," until now, woman's discontent has been steadily increasing, culminating nearly thirty years ago in a simultaneous movement among the women of the nation, demanding the right of suffrage. In making our just demands, a higher motive than the pride of sex inspires us; we feel that national safety and stability depend on the complete recognition of the broad principles of our government. Woman's degraded, helpless position is the weak point in our institutions to-day; a disturbing force everywhere, severing family ties, filling our asylums with the deaf, the dumb, the blind; our prisons with criminals, our cities with drunkenness and prostitution; our homes with disease and death. It was the boast of the founders of the republic, that the rights for which they contended were the rights of human nature. If these rights are ignored in the case of one-half the people, the nation is surely preparing for its downfall. Governments try themselves. The recognition of a governing and a governed class is incompatible with the first principles of freedom. Woman has not been a heedless spectator of the events of this century, nor a dull listener to the grand arguments for the equal rights of humanity. From the earliest history of our country woman has shown equal devotion with man to the cause of freedom, and has stood firmly by his side in its defense. Together, they have made this country what it is. Woman's wealth, thought and labor have cemented the stones of every monument man has raised to liberty.

And now, at the close of a hundred years, as the hour-hand of the great clock that marks the centuries points to 1876, we declare our faith in the principles of self-government; our full equality with man in natural rights; that woman was made first for her own happiness, with the absolute right to herself - to all the opportunities and advantages life affords for her complete development...We ask of our rulers, at this hour, no special favors, no special privileges, no special legislation. We ask justice, we ask equality, we ask that all the civil and political rights that belong to citizens of the United States, be guaranteed to us and our daughters forever.

Working Men's Declaration of Independence (1829)

"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary" for one class of a community to assert their natural and unalienable rights in opposition to other classes of their fellow men, "and to assume among" them a political "station of equality to which the laws of nature and of nature's God," as well as the principles of their political compact "entitle them; a decent respect to the opinions of mankind," and the more paramount duty they owe to their own fellow citizens, "requires that they should declare the causes which impel them" to adopt so painful, yet so necessary, a measure.

"We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights" against the undue influence of other classes of society, prudence, as well as the claims of self defence, dictates the necessity of the organization of a party, who shall, by their representatives, prevent dangerous combinations to subvert these indefeasible and fundamental privileges. "All experience hath shown, that mankind" in general, and we as a class in particular, "are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves," by an opposition which the pride and self interest of unprincipled political aspirants, with more unprincipled zeal or religious bigotry, will willfully misrepresent. "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations" take place, all invariably tending to the oppression and degradation of one class of society, and to the unnatural and iniquitous exaltation of another by political leaders, "it is their right it is their due ' to use every constitutional means to reform the abuses of such a government and to provide new guards for their future security. The history of the political parties in this state, is a history of political iniquities, all tending to the enacting and enforcing oppressive and unequal laws. To prove this, let facts be submitted to the candid and impartial of our fellow citizens of all parties.

The laws for levying taxes are all based on erroneous principles, in consequence of their operating most oppressively on one of society, and being scarcely felt by the other.

The laws regarding the duties of jurors, witnesses, and militia trainings, are still more unequal and oppressive.

The laws for private incorporations are all partial in their operations; favoring one class of society to the expense of the other, who have no equal participation.

The laws incorporating religious societies have a pernicious tendency, by promoting the erection of magnificent places of public worship, by the rich, excluding others, and which others cannot imitate; consequently engendering spiritual pride in the clergy and people, and thereby creating odious distinctions in society, destructive to its social peace and happiness.

The laws establishing and patronizing seminaries of learning are unequal, favoring the rich, and perpetuating imparity, which natural causes have produced, and which judicious laws ought, and can, remedy.

The laws and municipal ordinances and regulations, generally, besides those specially enumerated, have heretofore been ordained on such principles, as have deprived nine tenths of the members of the body politic, who are not wealthy, of the equal means to enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" which the rich enjoy exclusively; but the federative compact intended to secure to all, indiscriminately. The lien law in favor of landlords against tenants, and all other honest creditors, is one illustration among innumerable others which can be adduced to prove the truth of these allegations.

We have trusted to the influence of the justice and good sense of our political leaders, to prevent the continuance of these abuses, which destroy the natural bands of equality so essential to the attainment of

moral happiness, “but they have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.”

Therefore, we, the working class of society, of the city of New York, “appealing to the supreme judge of the world,” and to the reason, and consciences of the impartial of all parties, “for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the spirit, and by the authority of that political liberty which has been promised to us equally with our fellow men, solemnly publish and declare, and invite all under like pecuniary circumstances, together with every liberal mind, to join us in the declaration, “tha t we are, & of right ought to be,” entitled to equal means to obtain equal moral happiness, and social enjoyment, and that all lawful and constitutional measures ought to be adopted to the attainment of those objects. “And for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other” our faithful aid to the end of our lives.

Texas Declaration of Independence (1836)

When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people, from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happiness it was instituted, and so far from being a guarantee for the enjoyment of those inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers for their oppression.

When the Federal Republican Constitution of their country, which they have sworn to support, no longer has a substantial existence, and the whole nature of their government has been forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism, in which every interest is disregarded but that of the army and the priesthood, both the eternal enemies of civil liberty, the everready minions of power, and the usual instruments of tyrants.

When, long after the spirit of the constitution has departed, moderation is at length so far lost by those in power, that even the semblance of freedom is removed, and the forms themselves of the constitution discontinued, and so far from their petitions and remonstrances being regarded, the agents who bear them are thrown into dungeons, and mercenary armies sent forth to force a new government upon them at the point of the bayonet.

When, in consequence of such acts of malfeasance and abdication on the part of the government, anarchy prevails, and civil society is dissolved into its original elements. In such a crisis, the first law of nature, the right of self-preservation, the inherent and inalienable rights of the people to appeal to first principles, and take their political affairs into their own hands in extreme cases, enjoins it as a right towards themselves, and a sacred obligation to their posterity, to abolish such government, and create another in its stead, calculated to rescue them from impending dangers, and to secure their future welfare and happiness.

Nations, as well as individuals, are amenable for their acts to the public opinion of mankind. A statement of a part of our grievances is therefore submitted to an impartial world, in justification of the hazardous but unavoidable step now taken, of severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the nations of the earth.

The Mexican government, by its colonization laws, invited and induced the Anglo-American population of Texas to colonize its wilderness under the pledged faith of a written constitution, that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America.

In this expectation they have been cruelly disappointed, inasmuch as the Mexican nation has acquiesced in the late changes made in the government by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who having overturned the constitution of his country, now offers us the cruel alternative, either to abandon our homes, acquired by so many privations, or submit to the most intolerable of all tyranny, the combined despotism of the sword and the priesthood.

It has sacrificed our welfare to the state of Coahuila, by which our interests have been continually depressed through a jealous and partial course of legislation, carried on at a far distant seat of government, by a hostile majority, in an unknown tongue, and this too, notwithstanding we have petitioned in the humblest terms for the establishment of a separate state government, and have, in accordance with the provisions of the national constitution, presented to the general Congress a republican constitution, which was, without just cause, contemptuously rejected.

It incarcerated in a dungeon, for a long time, one of our citizens, for no other cause but a zealous endeavor to procure the acceptance of our constitution, and the establishment of a state government.

It has failed and refused to secure, on a firm basis, the right of trial by jury, that palladium of civil liberty, and only safe guarantee for the life, liberty, and property of the citizen.

It has failed to establish any public system of education, although possessed of almost boundless resources, (the public domain,) and although it is an axiom in political science, that unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty, or the capacity for self government.

It has suffered the military commandants, stationed among us, to exercise arbitrary acts of oppression and tyranny, thus trampling upon the most sacred rights of the citizens, and rendering the military superior to the civil power.

It has dissolved, by force of arms, the state Congress of Coahuila and Texas, and obliged our representatives to fly for their lives from the seat of government, thus depriving us of the fundamental political right of representation.

It has demanded the surrender of a number of our citizens, and ordered military detachments to seize and carry them into the Interior for trial, in contempt of the civil authorities, and in defiance of the laws and the constitution.

It has made piratical attacks upon our commerce, by commissioning foreign desperadoes, and authorizing them to seize our vessels, and convey the property of our citizens to far distant ports for confiscation.

It denies us the right of worshipping the Almighty according to the dictates of our own conscience, by the support of a national religion, calculated to promote the temporal interest of its human functionaries, rather than the glory of the true and living God.

It has demanded us to deliver up our arms, which are essential to our defence, the rightful property of freemen, and formidable only to tyrannical governments.

It has invaded our country both by sea and by land, with intent to lay waste our territory, and drive us from our homes; and has now a large mercenary army advancing, to carry on against us a war of extermination.

It has, through its emissaries, incited the merciless savage, with the tomahawk and scalping knife, to massacre the inhabitants of our defenseless frontiers.

It hath been, during the whole time of our connection with it, the contemptible sport and victim of successive military revolutions, and hath continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government.

These, and other grievances, were patiently borne by the people of Texas, untill they reached that point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. We then took up arms in defence of the national constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for assistance. Our appeal has been made in vain. Though months have elapsed, no sympathetic response has yet been heard from the Interior. We are, therefore, forced to the melancholy conclusion, that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty, and the substitution therfor of a military government; that they are unfit to be free, and incapable of self government.

The necessity of self-preservation, therefore, now decrees our eternal political separation.

We, therefore, the delegates with plenary powers of the people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare, that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, Sovereign, and independent republic, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations.

Abstract of John Brown's Declaration of Liberty (July 4, 1859)

Spelling errors have been corrected from the original text.

A Declaration of Liberty

By the Representatives of the slave Population of the United States of America

"When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary" for an Oppressed People to Rise, and assert their Natural Rights, as Human Beings, as Native & mutual Citizens of a free Republic, and break that odious Yoke of oppression, which is so unjustly laid upon them by their fellow Countrymen, "and to assume among the powers of Earth the same equal privileges to which the Laws of Nature, & nature's God entitle them; A moderate respect for the opinions of Mankind, requires that they should declare the causes which incite them to this just & worthy action.

We hold these truths to be Self Evident; That All Men are Created Equal; That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. That among these are Life, Liberty; & the pursuit of happiness. That Nature hath freely given to all Men, a full Supply of Air, Water, & Land; for their sustenance, & mutual happiness, That No Man has any right to deprive his fellow Man, of these Inherent rights, except in punishment of Crime. That to secure these rights governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That when any form of Government, becomes destructive to these ends, It is the right of the People, to alter, Amend, or Remodel it, Laying its foundation on Such Principles, & organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect the safety, & happiness" of the Human Race, To secure equal rights, privileges, & justice to all; Irrespective of Sex; or Nation; To Secure Fraternal Kindness to all Friends of Equal Moral privileges, to all who honestly abandon their Despotic oppressive rule. We hold this truth to be self evident; That it is the highest Privilege, & Plain Duty of Man; to strive in every reasonable way, to promote the Happiness, Mental, Moral, & Physical, elevation of his fellow Man. And that People, or Clanish Oppressors; who wickedly violate this sacred principle; oppressing th their fellow Men, Will bring upon themselves that certain & fearful retribution, which is the Natural, and Necessary penalty of evil Doing. "Prudence, indeed will dictate, that Governments long established, should not be changed for light & transient causes; But when a long train of abuses, & usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object; evinces a design to perpetuate an absolute Despotism; and most cruel bondage; It is their Right, it is their Duty to resist & change such Government, & provide safeguards for their future Liberty" Such has been the patient sufferance of the slaves of the United States, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to brush this foul system of oppression, The history of Slavery in the United States, is a history of injustice & Cruelties inflicted upon the Slave in every conceivable way, & in barbarity not surpassed by the most Savage Tribes. It is the embodiment of all that is Evil, and ruinous to a Nation; and subversive of all Good. "In proof of which; facts innumerable have been submitted to the People, and have received the Verdict & condemnation of a candid & Impartial World." Our Servants; Members of Congress; & other Servants of the People, who receive exorbitant wages, from the People ask in return for; for their unjust Rule, have refused to pass Laws the most wholesome & necessary for public good, they have refused to pass laws for the accommodation of large districts of People, unless that People, would relinquish the right of representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only. Our President & other Leeches have called together Legislative, or treasonable Bodies, at places unusual, uncomfortable, & distant from the depository of our public records; for the sole purpose of fatiguing us into compliance with their measures. They have dissolved Representative houses, for opposing with Manly firmness, their invasions on the rights of the people.

They have refused to grant Petitions presented by numerous & respectable Citizens, asking redress of grievances imposed upon us, demanding our Liberty & natural rights. With Contempt, they Spurn and our humble petitions; and have failed to pass Laws for our relief. They have prevented in all possible ways, the administration of justice to the slave, They have made judges Taney dependent on their will alone, for the tenure of their offices, & the amount & payment of their salaries, They have erected a Multitude of new offices, & sent on swarms of Blood Suckers, & Moths, to harass the People, & eat out their substance, They have effected to render the Military, independent of, & superior to the power & wishes of the People (the Civil power.) Claiming that knowledge is power, they have, (for their own safety) kept us in total darkness, & Ignorance, inflicting base cruelties, for any attempt on our part to obtain knowledge “They have protected base Men, Pirates (engaged in a most Inhuman traffic; The Foreign; & Domestic, Slave Trade.) by mock trials, from punishment, for unprovoked murders which they have committed upon us, & free citizens of the States. They have prevented by law, our having any Traffick or deal with our fellow Men; Regardless of our wishes, they declare themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. They have abdicated government among us, by declaring us out of their protection, & waging a worse than most cruel war upon us continually.

“The welfare of the People; Is the first Great Law” The fact, & a full description of the enormous Sin of Slavery, may be found in the General History of American Slavery, which is a history of repeated injuries, of base hypocrisy; A cursed treasonable, Despotism usurpation; The most abominable provoking atrocities; Which are but a mockery of all that is just, or worthy of any people. Such cruelty, tyranny, & perfidy, has hardly a parallel, in the history of the most barbarous ages, Our Servants, or Law makers; are totally unworthy the name of Half Civilized Men. All their National acts, (which apply to Slavery,) are false, to the words spirit, & intention, of the Constitution of the United States, & the Declaration of Independence. They say by word & Act, That their own Children, or any faithful Citizen, may be Legally robbed of every Natural & Sacred Right, & that we, have no rights whatever. They are a Blot upon the Character, the honor, of any Nation, which Claims to have the least shadow or spark of Civilization above the lowest, most inferior Cannibal Races. This is a slight though brief recital, of some of the enormous atrocities, of these Idle, haughty, tyrannical, Arrogant Land Monopolists; Slave holders our lords, & masters, From which, Good Lord Deliver us. These are some of the facts, which we now, (after the lapse of 83 years, since the writing & signing of that Sacred Instrument, Honored & Adored by our Fathers, which declares that it is Self Evident that all Men are Created Equal, Endowed by their Creator with certain inherent rights &c”) submit to the Decision of all candid; true Republican, Friends of Universal Freedom, & Natural Equality of Rights. All We Demand; is our Liberty, & the Natural rights & immunities of faithful Citizens of the United States. We will Obtain these rights or Die in the struggle to obtain them...”

SARAH P. REMOND IN THE NEWS



Articles from the *New York Times*

Colored Persons and Passports

A curious instance of that cheap Pharisaism which is so common all the world over, and which leads the British Abolitionist to look down with a sort of contemptuous compassion upon his benighted American brother as a covenanter with hell, just as it leads the American demagogue to pity his British kinsman as a serf of the “spangled aristocracy,” has just occurred in London. Miss Sarah Lenox Remond, a colored young lady of Massachusetts, who devotes a good deal of her time to the pleasing task of teaching the English idea of freedom to shoot envenomed arrows of scorn at the American fact of Slavery, found herself the other day in the British Capital on her way to Paris, and sent or took her passport to the American Legation for a visa in form. The passport appears to have been regularly issued from the office of the Secretary of State at Washington, and describes Miss Remond as a “citizen of the United States.” On the face of the passport there could be no question as to the right of Miss Remond to demand a visa from the American representative. But the Secretary at the Legation seems to have been instructed to take his cue from the face of the bearer rather than from that of the document, and be accordingly refused to affix the official certificate to the paper in question. In this refusal he was sustained by his chief, who informed Miss Remond that it was impossible for him to comply with her demand, without violating injunctions received from the American Government, July 8, 1856. It is sufficiently plain that the American Legation at London really did nothing more than its duty in this case, although it may well be a question whether the Secretary of State has a right to throw the responsibility of criticising and correcting passports signed by himself, upon his representatives abroad. A certificate of citizenship issued in this solemn form by the American Premier, ought not to expose persons who have left their homes, relying up its validity, to such annoyances as overlook Miss Remond in London.

But the feature of this story which most deserves our attention is the complacency with which an “English barrister,” to whom Miss Remond communicated her troubles, holds the American Minister up to the reprobation of all Britian for refusing Miss Remond her passport “on the sole ground that she is a person of color,” or, in other words, for obeying the orders of his own Government, by which he has been distinctly instructed that such persons are not citizens of the United States, and consequently not entitled to passports of citizens!~ Could the force of moral self-sufficiency further go than this?

Originally Published January 24, 1860

Disabilities of American Persons of Color.

CASE OF MISS SARAH P. REMOND.

To the Editor of the London Daily News:

Sir: I beg to forward to you a correspondence which has recently taken place between Miss S. P. Remond, a free-born American lady of color, with whom I have the honor to be acquainted, and Mr. Dallas, the American Minister to this country. I add a copy of her passport.

You will observe that a visa to Miss Remond's passport is refused by the American Minister, on the sole ground that she is a person of color. – I am, &c.,

London, Dec. 29.

A. Barrister.

No. 6 Grenville-Street, Brunswick-square, W.C., Dec. 12, 1859. }

Sir: I beg to inform you that a short time since I went to the office of the American Embassy to have my passport visaed for France.

I should remark that my passport is an American one, granted to me in the United States, and signed by the Minister in due form. It states what is the fact, that I am a citizen of the United States. I was born in Massachusetts.

Upon my asking to have my passport visaed at the American Embassy, the person in the office refused to affix the visa, on the ground that I am a person of color.

Being a citizen of the United States, I respectfully demand as my right that my passport be visaed by the Minister of my country.

As I am desirous of starting for the Continent, I must request an answer at your earliest convenience. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sarah P. Remond.

The Hon. –. Dallas, American Minister, No. 24 Portland-place.

Legislation of the United States, London, Dec. 14, '59.

Miss Sarah P. Remond. – I am directed by the minister to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 12th instant, and to say in reply, he must, of course, be sorry if any of his countrywomen, irrespective of color or extraction, should think him frivolously disposed to withhold from them facilities in his power to grant for traveling on the Continent of Europe, but when the indispensable qualification for an American passport, that of "United States Citizenship," does not exist; when, indeed it is manifestly an impossibility by law that it should exist, a just sense of his official obligations under instructions received from his government as long ago as the 8th July, 1856, and since then strictly conformed to, constrains him to say that the demand of Miss Sarah P. Remond cannot be complied with. Respectfully your obedient servant,

Bejm. Moran, Assistant Secretary of Legation.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date.

The purport of your communication is most extraordinary. You now lay down the rule that persons free-born in the United States, and who have been subjected all their lives to the taxation and other burdens imposed upon American citizens, are to be deprived of their rights as such merely because their complexions happen to be dark, and that they are to be refused the aid of the Ministers of their country, whose salaries they contribute to pay.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sarah P. Remond

Passport. – I, the undersigned Secretary of the States of the United States of American, hereby request all whom it may concern, to permit safely and freely to pass Sarah. P. Remond, a citizen of the United States, and in case of need to give her all lawful aid and protection.

Given under my hand and the impression of my seal of the Department of State of the City of Washington, the 10th day of December, A.D., 1858, in the 83rd year of the Independence of these United States.

Lewis Cass.

Department of State.

Originally Published January 24, 1860

The Question of Passports.

The question of passports for colored persons, inhabitants of the United States, which has just been brought up in a practical way by the correspondence of Miss Sarah Lenox Remond with the American Legation at London, deserves the serious attention of the Department of State. As we yesterday observed, in commenting upon this case, it is equally unjust to persons bearing official passports from the Secretary of State and leaving their homes on the faith of such documents, that they should find themselves met at the first American Legation to which they apply abroad, with an invalidation of their papers; and unfair to our diplomatic agents abroad that they should be required to assume to odium of doing a very unpleasant duty, which need never have been thrust upon them at all, had the Home Government attended properly to its own affairs.

Whether citizens or not, "colored persons," native and inhabitants of the United States, are entitled to some such form of certificate from the Government whose laws they are compelled when at home to obey as shall secure them against falling into the position of Miss Remond at London. Here is a young woman born in America, free, entitled to move about from place to place, without let or hindrance, as a respectable, well-behaved member of society. She finds herself in London, an unquestioned American. Wishing to pass over to the Continent from England she finds herself arrested by the want of a visé, and we must confess we do not well see how she is to get out of the difficulty.

When one considers that a passport is simply a declaration on the part of the authorities of the country to which the holder belongs, that his name is Brown or Smith, and that he is not a fugitive from justice, this solemn refusal on the part of a great nation to grant a valid document of this kind to an unprotected colored female on her travels, is something not only very unjust, but very ridiculous. We do not, in the present temper of the Government, and a large portion of the members of Congress, with regard to the negro race, anticipate a very favorable hearing for even the mildest request for the relief of any member of this unfortunate race from the meanest, pettiest and most absurd persecution, but we cannot help saying that the national dignity and national reputation do require some such change in our passport regulations, as shall at least give colored people, guilty of no crime, a certificate of good behavior when they go abroad...

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