



Primary Sources: Words of the Enlightenment c. 1750–1900

Compiled and annotated by Eman M. Elshaikh, additional edits by Terry Haley

It would be a mistake to think that Enlightenment ideas pointed everyone in the same direction. These primary sources show how widely new notions of liberty were interpreted.



Introduction to this collection

You may already be familiar with the term “the Enlightenment”, but does it describe just one thing? There’s actually a pretty complex debate among scholars about the Enlightenment. One part of that debate asks whether the Enlightenment was a unified intellectual and culture movement, or if it is just a label we give to a bunch of different ideas from an assortment thinkers in this period. Another part of the debate is just how unified these ideas and values were across vast distances. Enlightenment ideas proved incredibly portable—and incredibly versatile. They spread pretty rapidly, particularly in the Atlantic world. Yet reality seldom lived up to these ideas and values, whether in Europe or in the colonies. As ideas travelled, they transformed. People who read these ideas frequently reworked and contested them to argue for vastly different things. In these sources, you’ll glimpse these tensions and contestations and see how the Enlightenment was *not* a single movement. Really, it was a new mode of reasoning and a set of ideas that did many different things in many different places.

Note: Enlightenment ideas and Enlightenment *ideals* are not the same thing. *Ideals*, in this context, are ideas aimed at creating a perfect system.

Guiding question to think about as you read the documents: *To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?*

WHP Primary Source Punctuation Key

When you read through these primary source collections, you might notice some unusual punctuation like this: ... and [] and (). Use the table below to help you understand what this punctuation means.

Punctuation	What it means
ELLIPSES words ... words	Something has been <u>removed</u> from the quoted sentences by an editor.
BRACKETS [word] or word[s]	Something has been <u>added or changed</u> by an editor. These edits are to clarify or help readers.
PARENTHESES (words)	The original author of the primary source wanted to clarify, add more detail, or make an additional comment in parentheses.

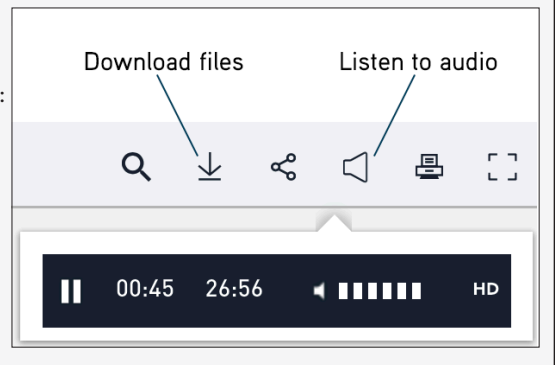
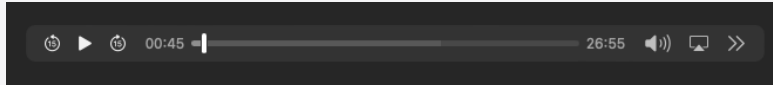
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Source 1 - Locke, The Second Treatise on Government, 1690 (2:10)

Title

The Second Treatise of Civil Government

Source type

Primary source – political treatise

Date and location

1690, England

Author

John Locke (1632–1704)

Description

In Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, he argues that people have natural rights, and that these rights are the basis of a just and organized society. Remember, this is not a translation, but an excerpt of what Locke actually wrote in English over 300 years ago, so take your time.

Key vocabulary

dispose	legislative
promiscuously	commonwealth
faculties	dominion
subordination	prescribes
subjection	arbitrary
divest	

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

TO understand political power right ... we must consider, what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.

A state also of equality ... no one having more than another; there being nothing more evident, than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection. ...

MEN being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent. The only way whereby any one divests himself of his natural liberty, and puts on the bonds of civil society, is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a

community for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any, that are not of it. ...

[The] natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule. The liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it. Freedom then is not ... a liberty for every one to do what he [wants], to live as he pleases, and not to be tied by any laws: but freedom of men under government is, to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power erected in it; a liberty to follow my own will in all things, where the rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man: as freedom of nature is, to be under no other restraint but the law of nature.

Citation

Locke, John. *The Second Treatise of Civil Government: And, A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948.

Source 2 - Rousseau, The Social Contract, 1762 (6:10)

Title

The Social Contract

Source type

Primary source – political treatise

Date and location

1762, France

Author

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778)

Description

In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau writes about the order of society, with the famous opening lines “Man was born free, but everywhere he is in chains.” In this excerpt, Rousseau, like Locke 72 years before him, talks about natural rights and the state of nature.

Key vocabulary

self-preservation

sentiments

stipulation

sovereignty

alienates

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

Man was born free, but everywhere he is in chains. This man believes that he is the master of others, and still he is more of a slave than they are. How did that transformation take place? ...

At a point in the state of nature when the obstacles to human preservation have become greater than each individual with his own strength can cope with ... an adequate combination of forces must be the result of men coming together. Still, each man's power and freedom are his main means of self-preservation. How is he to put them under the control of others without damaging himself ...

The social contract's terms, when they are well understood, can be reduced to a single stipulation: the individual member alienates himself totally to the whole community together with all his rights. ...

In reality, each individual may have one particular will as a man that is different from-or contrary to-the general will which he has as a citizen. His own particular interest may suggest other things to him than the common interest does. ...

Whatever benefits he had in the state of nature but lost in the civil state, a man gains more than enough new ones to make up for them. His capabilities are put to good use and developed; his ideas are enriched, his sentiments made more noble, and his soul elevated. ...

The first and most important conclusion from the principles we have established thus far is that the general will alone may direct the forces of the State to achieve the goal for which it was founded, the common good. ... Sovereignty is indivisible ... and is inalienable. ...

Citation

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Contrat social ou Principes du droit politique*. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1800. Internet Modern History Sourcebook, translated by Henry A. Myers and courtesy of Paul Halsall: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/rousseau-soccon.asp>

Source 3 - Selections from Diderot and d'Alembert's Encyclopedia, 1751–1765 (9:10)

Title

Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers

Source type

Primary source – encyclopedia entries

Date and location

1751–1765, France

Author

Individual entries written by multiple authors; selections below by Denis Diderot (1713–1784) and Louis de Jaucourt (1704–1779).

Description

In these selections from entries from the *Encyclopedia*, one gets a glimpse of Enlightenment philosophies in France in the mid eighteenth century. Across these entries, there is an emphasis on liberty and freedom, equality, and morality. Slavery is important across these entries, both as a metaphor and as a reference to real events, notably the transatlantic slave trade.

Key vocabulary

prolific	arbitrary
cowardice	courtiers
caprice	negotiation
constitution	atrocious

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

On Political authority

No man has received from nature the right to command others. Liberty is a gift from heaven, and each individual of the same species has the right to enjoy it as soon as he enjoys the use of reason ... man must not nor cannot give himself entirely and without reserve to another man, because he has a master superior to everything, to whom he alone belongs in his entire being. It is God, whose power always has a direct bearing on each creature, ...

The observation of laws, the conservation of liberty, and the love of country are the prolific sources of all great things and of all beautiful actions. ... On the contrary, flattery, self-interest, and the spirit of slavery are at the root of all the evils that overpower a state and of all the cowardice that dishonor it. ... If I view France and Turkey from the

same perspective, I perceive on the one hand a society of men united by reason, activated by virtue, and governed by a head of state equally wise and glorious according to the laws of justice; on the other, a herd of animals assembled by habit, driven by the law of the rod, and led by an absolute master according to his caprice.

On Natural Equality

Natural Equality is that which is found among all men solely by the constitution of their nature. This *equality* is the principle and foundation of liberty. *Natural* or *moral equality* is therefore based on the constitution of human nature common to all men, who are born, grow, live, and die in the same way.

Since human nature is the same in all men, it is clear according to natural law that each person must value and treat other people as so many individuals who are naturally equal to himself, that is to say, as men like himself.

... it is the violation of this principle that has established political and civil slavery. The result is that in the countries subject to arbitrary power the princes, the courtiers, the principal ministers, those who control the finances, possess all the riches of the nation, while the rest of the citizens have only the necessaries of life, and the great majority of people groan in poverty.

On the Slave Trade

[The] Slave trade is the purchase of Negroes made by Europeans on the coasts of Africa, who then employ these unfortunate men as slaves in their colonies. This purchase of Negroes to reduce them into slavery is a negotiation that violates all religion, morals, natural law, and human rights.

According to an Englishman of today, who is full of enlightenment and humanity, the Negroes did not become slaves by any right of war; nor did they voluntarily sacrifice themselves to slavery. Therefore, their children are not born as slaves. Everyone knows that Negroes are being purchased from their princes, who believe they have the right to own their freedom. Everybody is also aware that merchants transport these Negroes as if they were merchandise, either to their colonies or to America, where they are put on display to be sold.

If a trade of this kind can be justified by a moral principle, then there is absolutely no crime, however atrocious, that cannot be legitimized. Kings, princes, and magistrates are not owners of their subjects; therefore they are not entitled to their subjects' freedom, nor do they have the right to sell anyone into slavery.

Citation

- Diderot, Denis (ascribed by Jacques Proust). "Political authority [abridged]." *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*. Translated by Stephen J. Gendzier. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2009. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.062>. Accessed May 7, 2020. Originally published as "Autorité politique [abridged]." *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 1:898–900. Paris, 1751.
- Jaucourt, Louis, chevalier de. "Natural equality." *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*. Translated by Stephen J. Gendzier. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2009. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.062>. Accessed May 7, 2020. Originally published as "Égalité naturelle." *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 5:415. Paris, 1755.
- Jaucourt, Louis, chevalier de. "Slave trade." *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*. Translated by Stephanie Noble. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2007. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.114>. Accessed May 7, 2020. Originally published as "Traite des nègres." *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 16:532–533. Paris, 1765.

Source 4 - Catherine the Great's Instruction, 1768 (14:50)

Title

The Instructions to the Commissioners for Composing a New Code of Laws (Nakaz)

Source type

Primary source – royal proclamation

Date and location

1768, Russia

Author

Catherine the Great (1729–1796), Empress of Russia

Description

Catherine the Great is often remembered as an “Enlightened monarch”. Unlike some Enlightenment philosophers, however, she defended the power of monarchs, even while also celebrating some Enlightenment ideals. This document is a statement of legal principles. It was meant as a guide for Russian legislators, with the goal of replacing seventeenth-century Muscovite legal codes with a “modern” and “enlightened” legal system.

Key vocabulary

desirous

coincides

summit

rational

tranquility

licentious

repugnant

assemblage

vigour (vigor)

constrained

dominion

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

- [. . .]
- we cannot but suppose, that every honest Man in the Community is, or will be, desirous of seeing his native Country at the very Summit of Happiness, Glory, Safety, and Tranquility.
 - And that every Individual Citizen in particular must wish to see himself protected by Laws, which ... should defend him from all Attempts of others, that are repugnant to this fundamental Rule. ...
 - The Sovereign is absolute; for there is no other authority but that which centers in his single Person, that can act with a Vigour proportionate to the Extent of such a vast Dominion. ...

13. What is the true [*Purpose*] of Monarchy? Not to deprive People of their natural Liberty; but to correct their Actions, in order to attain the supreme Good.
14. The Form of Government, therefore, which best attains this End, and at the same Time sets less Bounds than others to natural Liberty, is that which coincides with the Views and Purposes of rational Creatures. ...
34. The Equality of the Citizens consists in this; that they should all be subject to the same Laws. ...
36. General or political Liberty does not consist in that licentious Notion, That a Man may do whatever he pleases.
37. In a State or Assemblage of People that live together in a Community, where there are Laws, Liberty can only consist in doing that which every One ought to do, and not to be constrained to do that which One ought not to do.
38. A Man ought to form in his own Mind an exact and clear Idea of what Liberty is. Liberty is the Right of doing whatsoever the Laws allow: And if any one Citizen could do what the Laws forbid, there would be no more Liberty; because others would have an equal Power of doing the same.

Citation

Tatishchev, Mikhail, and John George Smyth. *The Grand Instructions to the Commissioners Appointed to Frame a New Code of Laws for the Russian Empire, Composed by Her Imperial Majesty Catherine II, Empress of All the Russias; to Which Is Prefixed a Description of the Manner of Opening the Commission, with the Order and Rule for Electing the Commissioners*. xxiii. London: printed for T. Jeffreys, 1768. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010443256>.

Source 5 - Henri Grégoire's Letter to the Citizens of Color and Free Negroes of Saint-Domingue, 1791 (18:35)

Title

Letter to the Citizens of Color and Free Negroes of Saint-Domingue

Source type

Primary source – letter

Date and location

1791, France

Author

Henri Grégoire (1750–1831)

Description

Gregoire was part of the Society of the Friends of the Blacks (*Société des amis des Noirs* or *Amis des noirs*), a group of mostly white French men and women who called for the abolition of slavery, particularly in the French colonies of the Caribbean and North America. The Society was created in Paris in 1788 and continued until 1793, after the time of the French Revolution. In this letter, Gregoire mobilizes Enlightenment rhetoric and ideals to call upon the non-white residents of Saint-Domingue to lead a revolution and attain freedom and true citizenship.

Key vocabulary

plenitude	contempt
rendered	absurd
despots / despotism	prejudices
humiliated	subaltern
dignity	tyrants
inalienable	perpetuate
exile	vexation

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

Friends:

You were men; you are now citizens and reintegrated to the plenitude of your rights. From this day forward you will participate in the sovereignty of the people. The decree that the National Assembly rendered in your regard on this subject is not a *favor*, for a *favor* is a *privilege*, and a *privilege* is an *injustice*, and these words must never again

soil the Code of the French. In assuring you the exercise of political rights we have paid a debt. To fail in this would have been a crime on our part and a stain on the constitution. Could the legislators of a free nation do less for you than our former despots? ...

Citizens, raise your humiliated faces. To the dignity of men, associate courage and the pride of a free people. May 15, the day upon which you re-conquered your rights, should be forever memorable to you and your children. ...

You finally have a fatherland, and from this day forward you will only see the law above you. The advantage of participating in its creation will assure you the inalienable right of all peoples, that of only obeying yourselves.

You have a fatherland, and it will doubtless no longer be a land of exile in which you recognize only masters or companions in misfortune, the former distributing, the latter receiving contempt and insults. ...

It is thus that philosophy expands its horizons in the New World, and soon absurd prejudices will have as its only followers subaltern tyrants, who want to perpetuate in America the reign of despotism that was crushed in France. And what would they have said if the men of color had attempted to tear from whites the enjoyment of political advantages? With what force would they not have cried out against this vexation! ...

How their hearts will be moved when, taking them to your shores, you will point their gaze towards France, saying to them: over there is the motherland. It is from there that liberty, justice, and happiness came among you. There are our fellow citizens, our brothers and our friends. We have sworn them eternal friendship. Heirs of our sentiments, of our affections, may your hearts and your mouths repeat our vows. Live to love them and, if need be, die to defend them.

Signed, Grégoire

Paris June 8, 1791

Citation

Grégoire, Henri. *Henri Grégoire, Lettre aux citoyens de couleur et nègres libres de Saint-Domingue et des autres isles françoises de l'Amerique*. Paris: Imprimerie du Patriote Français, 1791. Translated by Mitchell Abidor. Marxists.org, 2006.
<https://www.marxists.org/history/haiti/1791/gregoire.htm>

Source 6 - Constitution of Saint-Domingue, 1801 (23:15)

Title

Haitian Constitution of 1801

Source type

Primary source – political document

Date and location

1801, Haiti

Author

Constitutional Assembly led by Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803)

Description

This document was the first constitution of Haiti. It abolished slavery and racial discrimination in employment. However, it did not extend political rights to sovereign citizens. Toussaint retained a strong hold on power, and governments were not based on democratic elections. It also upheld certain labor restrictions. This constitution banned free assembly, religions other than Catholicism, and foreign imports.

Key vocabulary

servitude	inviolable
abolished	infringes
distinctions	renders
functionary	

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

...

Article 3 — There can be no slaves on this territory; servitude has been forever abolished. All men are born, live and die there free and French.

Article 4 — All men can work at all forms of employment, whatever their color.

Article 5 — No other distinctions exist than those of virtues and talents, nor any other superiority than that granted by the law in the exercise of a public charge. The law is the same for all, whether it punishes or protects. ...

Article 12 — The Constitution guarantees individual freedom and safety. No one can be arrested except by virtue of a formally expressed order, issued by a functionary who the law gives the right to arrest and detain in a publicly designated place.

Article 13 — Property is sacred and inviolable. Every person, either by himself or his representatives, has the free disposal and administration of that which is recognized as belonging to him. Whoever infringes upon this right renders himself criminal towards society and responsible as concerns the person troubled in his property.

Citation

“Constitution of 1801.” Translated by Mitchell Abidor. *Marxists.org*. <https://www.marxists.org/history/haiti/1801/constitution.htm>

Source 7 - Haitian Declaration of Independence, 1804 (25:55)

Title

The Declaration of Independence

Source type

Primary source – political document

Date and location

1 January 1804, Haiti

Author

Louis Boisrond Tonnerre (1776–1806)

Description

Many declarations of independence looked like those of France and the United States and focused on rights. This, by contrast, does not focus on rights. Instead, it insists on freedom without using the language of rights. It points to the fact that the French ideals, however eloquent, are hypocritical, and calls upon citizens to fight enslavement in any form. It establishes Haiti as a state, *not* as a republic.

Key vocabulary

figment

eloquence

reign

proclamations

humiliating

avenging

thralldom

cherish

gullibility

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

To The People of Haiti

Citizens, it is not enough to have driven out of your country the barbarians who have bloodied it for two centuries. It is not enough to have put an end to the persistent factions that, one after the other, made sport with the figment of freedom that France dangled before your eyes. With one final act of national authority, we must ensure forever the reign of liberty in the land where it was born. We must deny the inhuman government that for long has held our minds in humiliating thralldom any hope of reenslaving us. In short, we must live independent or die. ...

For fourteen years we have been the victims of our own gullibility and tolerance, defeated not by French arms but by the pitiful eloquence of their official proclamations. ... What do we have in common with this murderous nation? Its cruelty compared to our evident moderation, its color unlike our own, the wide seas that separate us, our avenging climate, all tell us that they are not our brothers and never will be. ...

... you shall be the defender of the freedom that you cherish and the support of the leader who commands you. Take therefore from my hands the oath to live free and independent, and to prefer death to anything that might tend to reenslave you.

Citation

Geggus, David Patrick. *The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2014.

Source 8 - Calhoun, Union and Liberty, 1811 (28:50)

Title

Union and Liberty

Source type

Primary source – political treatise

Date and location

1811, United States of America

Author

John C. Calhoun (1782–1850)

Description

In this document, Calhoun defends the rights of individuals and states against the federal government. Part of this is a defense of slavery. Calhoun is speaking to Enlightenment thinkers using Enlightenment language and modes of argument. Yet he comes to strikingly different conclusions about slavery.

Key vocabulary

utterly	agitation
subordinate	ingulf
proposition	woes

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

Man, for the purpose of reasoning, may be regarded in three different states: in a state of individuality; that is, living by himself apart from the rest of his species. In the social; that is, living in society, associated with others of his species. And in the political; that is, being under government. We may reason as to what would be his rights and duties in either, without taking into consideration whether he could exist in it or not. It is certain, that in the first, the very supposition [belief] that he lived apart and separated from all others, would make him free and equal. No one in such a state could have the right to command or control another. Every man would be his own master, and might do just as he pleased. But it is equally clear, that man cannot exist in such a state. ...

... government has no right to control individual liberty beyond what is necessary to the safety and well-being of society. Such is the boundary which separates the power of government and the liberty of the citizen or subject in the political state, which ... is the natural state of man—the only one in which his race can exist, and the one in which he is born, lives, and dies.

It follows from all this that ... [the] liberty on that of individuals, instead of being equal in all cases, must necessarily be very unequal among different people, according to their different conditions. For just in proportion as a people

are ignorant, stupid, debased, corrupt, exposed to violence within and danger from without, the power necessary for government to possess ... becomes greater and greater, and individual liberty less and less. So, on the contrary, just as a people rise in the scale of intelligence, virtue, and patriotism the power necessary for government becomes less and less, and individual liberty greater and greater.

... the dangerous error I have attempted to expose, that all men are born free and equal, as if those high qualities belonged to man without effort to acquire them, and to all equally alike, regardless of their intellectual and moral condition. ... It had strong hold on the mind of Mr. Jefferson, the author of [the Declaration of Independence], which caused him to take an utterly false view of the subordinate relation of the black to the white race in the South; and to hold, in consequence, that the former, though utterly unqualified to possess liberty, were as fully entitled to both liberty and equality as the latter; and that to deprive them of it was unjust and immoral. To this error, his proposition to exclude slavery from the territory northwest of the Ohio may be traced, and to that the ordinance of '87, and through it the deep and dangerous agitation which now threatens to engulf, and will certainly engulf, if not speedily settled, our political institutions, and involve the country in countless woes.

Citation

Calhoun, John C. *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*. Edited by Ross M. Lence. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992. <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/683>

Source 9 - Bolivar in Venezuela, 1813–1819 (33:20)

Title

1813 Proclamation and 1819 Speech

Source type

Primary source – political document

Date and location

1813–1819, Venezuela

Author

Simón Bolivar (1783–1830)

Description

Simón Bolivar was a Latin American revolutionary. He was born in South America but had European heritage. He often argued for Enlightenment ideals of freedom and sovereignty from the Spaniards. Here, he calls Venezuelans to arms to fight off Spanish occupation (1813) and addresses the legislature after independence (1819).

Key vocabulary

oppressors

Divine Providence

tribunals

profusion

servitude

vices

shackle

eloquent

emblem

legitimate

Guiding question

To what extent did Enlightenment philosophy inspire revolutionary thinking?

Excerpt

1813 Proclamation

Venezuelans: An Army of your brothers, sent by the Sovereign Congress of New Granada¹ has come to liberate you. Having expelled the oppressors from the provinces of Mérida and Trujillo, it is now among you.

We are sent to destroy the Spaniards, to protect the Americans, and to reestablish the republican governments that once formed the Confederation of Venezuela. The states defended by our arms are again governed by their former constitutions and tribunals, in full enjoyment of their liberty and independence, for our mission is designed only to break the chains of servitude which still shackle some of our towns. ...

¹ Modern-day Colombia

1819 Speech

Fortunate is the citizen, who, under the emblem of his command, has [convened] this assembly of the national sovereignty so that it may exercise its absolute will! I, therefore, place myself among those most favored by Divine Providence, for I have had the honor of uniting the representatives of the people of Venezuela in this august [respected] Congress, the source of legitimate authority, the custodian of the sovereign will, and the arbiter [judge] of the Nation's destiny. ...

Passing from ancient to modern times, we find England and France attracting the attention of all nations and affording them a variety of lessons in matters of government. The revolution of these two great peoples, like a flaming meteor, has flooded the world with such a profusion of political enlightenment that today every thinking person is aware of the rights and duties of man and the nature of the virtues and vices of governments. ...

Here, Legislators, is the place to repeat what the eloquent Volney says in the preface of his *Ruins to Palmyra*: "To the newborn peoples of the Spanish Indies, to the generous leaders who guide them toward freedom: may the mistakes and misfortunes of the Old World teach wisdom and happiness to the New." May the teachings of experience be not lost; and may the schools of Greece, Rome, France, England, and North America instruct us in the difficult science of creating and preserving nations through laws that are proper, just, legitimate, and, above all, useful.

Citation

Stearns, Peter N. *World History in Documents: A Comparative Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Eman M. Elshaikh

Eman M. Elshaikh is a writer, researcher, and teacher who has taught K-12 and undergraduates in the United States and in the Middle East and written for many different audiences. She teaches writing at the University of Chicago, where she also completed her master's in social sciences and is currently pursuing her PhD. She was previously a World History Fellow at Khan Academy, where she worked closely with the College Board to develop curriculum for AP World History.

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OER PROJECT

OER Project aims to empower teachers by offering free and fully supported history courses for middle- and high-school students. Your account is the key to accessing our standards-aligned courses that are designed with built-in supports like leveled readings, audio recordings of texts, video transcripts, and more. Offerings include a variety of materials, from full-year, standards-based courses to shorter course extensions, all of which build upon foundational historical thinking skills in preparation for AP, college, and beyond.

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