

Slavery, the Draft Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution

Read the attached excerpts from the Draft Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America. After reviewing the language, please prepare a typewritten essay in MLA format analyzing and explaining why the language of the Draft Declaration of Independence and the Constitution appear to protect slavery in the United States of America prior to the start of the Civil War. Please use specific language from the excerpts to illustrate and prove your thesis.

Excerpts from the Draft of the Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson, 1776

Note: Italicized words or phrases were omitted in the final draft.

Bracketed words or phrases were added to the original draft and appear in the final draft.

A Declaration by the Representatives
of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in
General Congress assembled.

WHEN in the Course of human Events it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth the separate & equal Station 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 which impel them to the Separation.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident: that all Men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with *inherent and* [certain] inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness: that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, & to institute new government, laying it's foundation on such principles, & organizing it's powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness.

Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & 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 & usurpations *begun at a distinguished period and* pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, & to

provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; & such is now the necessity which constrains them to *expunge* [alter] their former systems of government.

The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of *unremitting* [repeated] injuries & usurpations, *among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest but all have* [all having] in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world *for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.*

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL Powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.

And for the support of this declaration, [with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence] we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, & our sacred honor.

Excerpts from the Constitution of the United States (1787)

Note: Italicized words or phrases were deleted by amendments adopted after 1865.

We the People of the United States, in Order 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, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article. I.

Section 2. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.

Section 9. The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

Article. IV.

Section. 2. The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States. *No Person held to Service or Labour 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 Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.*