

Declaration of Independence

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Patriots

support independence

Loyalists

remain British

Neutrals: not sure

2nd Continental Congress: Dec. of Ind.

Thomas Jefferson and the Committee of Five: authors of the Dec.

Based on the Enlightenment ideas of John Locke

Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence

What the Excerpt Means

• "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another...a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

The colonies had already begun to separate from Britain

• "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."

All people have Natural Rights

• "To secure these [basic] rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The power to rule should come from the people

• "That whenever any form of government becomes destructive [in protecting rights and responding to the people], it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government."

The people should be able to overthrow a destructive government

• "The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having, in direct object, the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States."

The King has clearly mistreated the colonies

• "To prove [that England has interfered with colonial rights], let the facts be submitted to a candid world: He has refused to assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good."

The King refused to consider the Colonists when making laws

• "In every state of these oppressions, we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people."

Previous attempts to protest laws were not heeded by the British government

• "We, therefore...solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states..."

Declaring Independence

Dear King George,