

Andrea and Overfield,
The Human Record,
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Declaration of the Rights of Man and transformations of the sixteenth century Europe The French revolution of the sixteenth century marked a new era in the modern world. In a continuous sequence of upheaval, the revolution saw the downfall of King Louis XVI and the rise of Robespierre that marked the beginning of terror reign. During this time, thousands were killed for political differences. The radicals in the community saw the Catholic Church as an enemy for their growth and termed it a cult. The revolution emerged in part from the enlightened rationalism that distrusted all the institutions that were established. It inspired fear in Europe.

In the year 1789, the assembly passed the declaration of the rights of man and the citizen. This declaration was a result of the direct consequences of what was taking place in France during this period. This declaration was important during that time since it helped in annulling the right of the nobles to demand tithes, taxes and labor from peasants who were working on their family land. This was a great step in the liberation of man and the fight for human rights. This declaration was partly inspired the revolution that was taking place in America at that time (Andrea and Overfield 254).

Unlike the declaration in America that "all men are equal", the declaration made in France stated, "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. The distinction in society may be founded only upon the general good". This declaration left room for racial prejudice to take place. It stated that despite man being free there will always be a social difference. During this time, the blacks were mistreated for social purposes and were not fully given their rights in the society. Even though they were facing mistreatment from the general French public, the black French population had the right to resist the

oppressions as this was provided by the declaration.

The period of revolution and declaration of the right of man was volatile/ most of the churches were closed and priests were being hunted down.

Politics at this time had taken a different twist and idea of persecution of the Catholics as well as the Protestants began. Several churches were closed, and others converted to temples for fear of persecution. The church was not safe no more. In respect to human rights and dignity, there was the abolishment of the water wheel and introduction of the guillotine.

It is no coincidence that the universal declarations of the rights of humans, the European Convention for the human rights protection and the first treaty of the communities in Europe have their origins within a few years of one another. They all sprung from revulsion of generation at the experience of war. This had impaired the rights of humans seriously like no other. The war denied humanity of the entire groups of the population.

This is why the leaders of postwar felt that there was a need to demonstrate and affirm the humanity to their people in a world where the values and dignity of humans were so quickly rejected and put aside. The declaration of the rights of humans was representing the first international recognition that fundamental human rights and freedom apply to every human being. This later became a foundation and inspiration for a great body of human right treaties and the basis of international human rights law.

Works cited

Andrea A. J. And Overfield J. H. The Human Record: Sources of Global History, Volume II: Since 1500, 4th Edition, (2001): 254