

Simon bolivar, "jamaican letter essay



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Simon Bolivar, "Jamaican Letter" Captivation or being restrained due to certain circumstances that prevents free choice is usually one of many great reasons to form revolutionary ideas. To get from captivation to liberation, one must consider change, a major component needed in order to gain freedom after enslavement. Latin America, in the eighteenth century, sought the need for change due to the resentment of the Spanish rule.

Simon Bolivar, the revolutionary leader of Latin America, will seek independence from Spain. It was in Jamaica where Bolivar wrote a letter known as the "Jamaican Letter", one of Bolivar's greatest proposals. The letter emphasizes his thoughts and meanings of the revolution while envisioning a variety of governmental structures, of the New World, that could one day be recognized. Bolivar illustrates the relationship between the Spanish American colonies and Spain. The relationship could be described as bitter, at least in the eyes of the Spanish colonies.

Inferiority led the Spanish colonies to the ideas of revolution. Although their rights come from the Europeans, they do not acknowledge themselves as Europeans or Indians. The people of the Spanish colonies claim to be, according to Bolivar, "[...] a species midway between the legitimate proprietors of [America] and the Spanish usurper" (411). "Usurpers" meaning a position that is held by forces which entails an unwanted or uninvited relationship. It is because of the Europeans, as stated by Bolivar, that "we have to assert [European] rights against the rights of the natives, and at the same time we must defend ourselves against invaders [which] places us in a most extraordinary and involved situation" (411).

This is also evidence of a bitter relationship toward Spain; however, the affiliations that Spain imposes on the colonies are for their personal gains such as the intense labor they receive for the sake of trade privileges. The relationship between Spain's colonies and Spain was indeed a benefit to Spain and a burden to the Spanish colonies. Bolivar viewed the Americans under the Spanish system as those with lower status than that of slaves. He felt, in relation to the letter, that they are "destined for labor, or at best they have no more status than that of mere consumers" (412). Their low position comes with annoying limitations, such as being prohibited to produce European crops, accumulate goods that are of noble control, or create factories not owned by Spain which adds trade benefits.

Bolivar had an issue with this stating that while Spain is enjoying their gains, the Spanish Americans lot in life is to cultivate "the fields of indigo, grain, coffee, sugar cane, cacao and cotton; cattle raising on the broad plains; hunting wild game in the jungles; digging in the earth to mine its gold—but even these limitations could never satisfy the greed of Spain" (412). This concerned Bolivar while he resents the Spanish rule. Their ruling caused the Spanish Americans to feel unimportant and inferior with having to acknowledge the subjection of authority. They were never ones who govern their country, appoint someone to conduct official negotiations, handle financial matters or trade, which is all scandalous and inconsistent with their institutions.

Having to accept being enslaved was indeed an issue that Bolivar was not willing to accept of the Spanish rule. As Montesquieu has written, "It is harder to release a nation from servitude than to enslave a free nation. This

is proven by the annals of all times, which reveal the most free nations have been put under the yoke, but very few enslaved nations have recovered their liberty” (412). Bolivar acknowledges reasons why states are slaves. They are slaves due to the content or abuse of their constitution; the government immoral practices that violates on the citizens.

This is usually seen under the rule of absolutism; no acknowledge restrictions to governmental authority. The fate of tyrannical leaders is the highest rule that have a well thought-out structure of exercising their power in a troublesome, harsh, or unfair approach. To the slaves they are assigned, in relation to the letter, “ the administration of civil, military, political, religions, and tax matters” (411). These types of rulers were the Persians, Turks, and the Tartars which, as Bolivar announce, “ How different is our situation! ” (411). It was this same behavior that has placed the Spanish Americans in a form of eternal immaturity.

Bolivar’s idea of governance for Latin America was that of a perfect one. He denies the reality that “ the New World, at the moment, be organized as a great republic” (412). He doe not want government or the head of the state to be monarch. He wants the supreme power to rest in the body of the citizens. He feels that “ American states need the care of paternal governments to heal the sores and wounds of despotism and war [but] for a single government to infuse life into the New World [...] that government would have to possess the authority of a god, much less the knowledge and virtues of mankind” (412).

He believes the mistakes and wrongdoings can not be corrected and their freedom would be “ fruitless” (412). It is too extravagant of an idea to presume thoughts of the New World being one nation. He is not in support of a federal system or monarchy. Bolivar states that “ these opposition extremes would wreck us on similar reefs of misfortune and dishonor; hence, we musk seek a mean between them. I say: Do not adopt the best system of government, but the one that is most likely to succeed. ” (413).

In summary, captivation leads to ideas of change. Simon Bolivar incorporated his ideas and thoughts into a letter called, “ The Jamaican Letter. ” He illustrates the relationship between Spanish America and Spain. The relationship was a forced and had many negative aspects proving to be a burden to the Spanish colonies and a gain to Spain. He also viewed the Americans that were under the Spanish rule as serfs.

Serfs are classified as a member of the lowest feudal class with a status so low that it makes it harder to gain freedom. Bolivar does not agree with absolutism which he feels is another form of slavery. His idea of governance for Latin America is one that is “ organized as a great republic”, but he sees this as impossible. Bolivar expresses that it would be nice to have “ an august assembly of representatives of republics, kingdoms, and empires to deliberate upon high interest of peace and war with the nations of the other three-quarters of the globe.

This type of organization may come to pass in some happier period of our regeneration” (413). Works Cited Baird, Michele, Staudt, Maureen and

Stranz, Michael, eds. Envisioning World Civilization. Mississippi: Thomson, 2006.