

# Philosophical influences: declaration of independence



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The Declaration of Independence's importance matured greatly throughout history, especially the second sentence, an extensive proclamation of human rights: " 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." This single sentence of proclaiming human rights has been noted as " one of the best-known sentences in the English language" and the most potent and consequential words in American history." This passage alone has been utilized in many aspects to support the rights of various groups, as well as symbolizing for people a just and honorable standard in which the United States should endeavor. Continuing this important part of the Declaration, "... - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." This section of the Declaration that includes these specific words written by Thomas Jefferson were commemorated by the accomplishment of the American Revolution. However, these words were not exactly written of all originality on July 4, 1776. They were in fact not even fashioned out of Jefferson's own novelty or creativeness. It is unquestionably factual that the draft of the Declaration written by Jefferson was intuitive principally from his own perceptive ideas pertaining to government and its foundations, however, he did not assert to be the resource of insight for the ideas and thoughts he wrote on paper. Following the Revolution, and to which Jefferson admitted to, John Adams found fault in the idea that Jefferson had not written anything new for the Declaration.

It was Thomas Jefferson's pen that wrote the Declaration of Independence, but who were its authors? The original Declaration was actually signed by fifty delegates to the Continental Congress, however, the document had greater influence past these signers. It is even wondered whether or not the Declaration of Independence contains original ideas. Jefferson describes it instead to be a statement of sentiments widely shared by supporters of the American Revolution. In 1825 Jefferson stated: " Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the America mind, and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion." " TO HENRY LEE - Thomas Jefferson The Works, vol. 12 (Correspondence and Papers 1816-1826; 1905)". The Online Library of Liberty. May 8, 1825.

..... The Declaration cannot be classified as having a single author, but more of having various influences.

Thomas Jefferson, one of the principal authors of the Declaration of Independence was the third President of the United States and he was one of the most influential Founding Fathers for his encouragement of the principles of republicanism in the United States. He foresaw America as the power behind a great " Empire of Liberty" that would support republicanism and oppose the imperialism of the British Empire. Jefferson was attained distinction for numerous things including a horticulturist, political leader, architect, archaeologist, paleontologist, inventor, and founder of the University of Virginia. He was a very honored man due to all of his accomplishments. When John F. Kennedy welcomed 49 Nobel Prize winners to the White House in 1962 he said, " I think this is the most extraordinary

collection of talent and of human knowledge that has ever been gathered together at the White House-with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.”.....

Thomas Jefferson favored the individual and their individual rights over the government and big businesses. His vision for American virtue included an agricultural nation of yeoman farmers minding their own affairs. His agrarianism was contrasting to the vision of Alexander Hamilton, who envisioned a nation of commerce and manufacturing, which Jefferson believed offered too many temptations for corruption. Jefferson’s profound confidence in the individuality, uniqueness, and the potential of America made him the father of American exceptionalism. He was particularly convinced that an under-populated America could avoid what he thought to be the horrors of class-divided, industrialized Europe. Jefferson strongly believed the idea in which each individual has “ certain inalienable rights.” This meaning, these rights exist with or without government, and man cannot create, take, or give these rights away. Jefferson is most noteworthy for enlightening the right of “ liberty.” “ Rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add ‘ within the limits of the law,’ because law is often but the tyrant’s will, and always so when it violates the rights of the individual.”..... Consequently, for Jefferson, although government cannot create a right to liberty, it can indeed violate it. The limit of an individual’s rightful liberty is not what law says it is but is simply a matter of stopping short of prohibiting other individuals from having the same liberty. Jefferson believed a proper government to be one that not only prohibits individuals in

society from infringing on the liberty of other individuals, but also restrains itself from diminishing individual liberty. His commitment to equality was articulated in his successful efforts to abolish primogeniture in Virginia, the rule by which the first born son inherited all the land. Jefferson believed that individuals have an innate sense of morality that prescribes right from wrong when dealing with other individuals, that whether they choose to restrain themselves or not, they have an innate sense of natural rights of others. He even believed that moral sense to be reliable enough that an anarchist society could function well, provided that it was reasonably small. In several instances, he conveyed admiration for the tribal, communal way of living of Native Americans. In a letter to Colonel Carrington he said: “ I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government, enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under the European governments.”..... For this reason, he did support government for the American stretch provided that it exists by “ consent of the governed.”

**Immediate sources of Influence for the Declaration of Independence include Jefferson's own draft of the preamble of the Constitution of Virginia and George Mason's draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Both ideas and phrases from both of these documents appear in the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson also looked at the English Declaration of Rights as a model of how to end the reign of an unjust king. Through this statement of natural rights Jefferson meant to release the idea that men are free by nature, are equal beings and should be free to pursue their dreams in life. This statement, however, was in disagreement with a majority of the thinking and reasoning of this time period, in that it was a ruler of a country, either king or an emperor, who passed down any rights given to the people of his kingdom. Thomas Jefferson disputed that it was nature that gave man rights, not people in power.**

**Jefferson was exceptionally knowing of previous documents holding comparable ideas when he was writing the Declaration, including the treatise by Samuel Adams noted as “ Rights of the Colonists.” Most of the political leaders during the Revolution had similar thoughts and ideas pertaining to the self-evident truths of the Declaration. Furthermore, the ideas articulated in the Declaration were common among many of the colonists of the period. The Declaration was vigilantly articulated for the reason of expressing the vision and thoughts of the colonists in broad-spectrum, as well for gaining their loyalty for the upcoming struggle in which they were to experience. It may be questioned how such claims were regarded by colonists in general and what the beginning of these thoughts were. In what previous documents to the Declaration were these beliefs presented as self-evident truths? In 1772, four preceding the signing of the Declaration, Samuel Adams penned a short essay known as “ Rights of the Colonists as Men”. His words included the following: Among the natural rights of the Colonists are these:**

**“ First, a right to life; Secondly, to liberty; Thirdly, to property;**

**together with the right to support and defend them in the best manner they can. These are evident branches of, rather than deductions from, the duty of self-preservation, commonly called the first law of nature. All men have a right to remain in a state of nature as long as they please; and in case of intolerable oppression, civil or religious,**

**to leave the society they belong to, and enter into another.  
When men enter into society, it is by voluntary consent....  
Every natural right not expressly given up, or, from the  
nature of a social compact, necessarily ceded, remains.  
All positive and civil laws should conform, as far as possible,  
to the law of natural reason and equity. As neither reason  
requires  
nor religion permits the contrary, every man living in or out  
of  
a state of civil society has a right peaceably and quietly  
to worship God according to the dictates of his  
conscience.” .....**

Samuel Adams wrote “ The Rights of the Colonists” when he was at the age of 50, as an element of assemblies in Massachusetts in 1772, subsequent to the Governor having liquified the colony’s Colonial Assembly. Three hundred townspeople congregated and voted to employ a board of communication, as well as having this committee outline a proclamation of the colonist’s rights. The accountability for arranging the initial draft was allocated to Samuel Adams. Passages from the end result, as previously quoted, were in quintessence consumed in a document entitled the “ Declaration of Rights”, written by the Continental Congress in 1774 and as a final point in the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

One of the manipulates on Adams’ idea is candidly affirmed by his personal thoughts in the “ Rights of the Colonists” pertaining to religious toleration: “



Insomuch that Mr. Locke has asserted and proved, beyond the possibility of contradiction on any solid ground, that such toleration ought to be extended to all whose doctrines are not subversive of society.” The connection involving Adams and John Locke is established multiple times in Adams’ writings. In 1771, in a journal in the Boston Gazette, he commenced his prime focus with the expressions “ Mr. Locke, in his treatise on government.” English political theorist John Locke is often cited as a primary influence on the Declaration. Many of the phrases evident in the Declaration follow closely to certain sentences in Locke’s Second Treatise on Government. Locke’s classical liberalism greatly influenced republicanism. Hence, to the slightest, the political attitude and beliefs of John Locke was one of the fundamentals of the Declaration of Independence, and examination gives evidence for the idea that the formation of inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness owe a great deal to John Locke’s Second Treatise of Government that came into print in 1690. The responsibility to Locke is exposed by the subsequent passage from his Second Treatise. The title page articulates of the second treatise, “ The latter is an essay concerning the true original extent and end of civil government.” The commencing lines concern the Biblical Adam and to his “ private dominion and parental jurisdiction,” prearranged to him by God, which undoubtedly inscribes the production as founded eventually on Scripture, God’s Holy and Written Word. In sections 4, 6, and 13, Locke expresses his thoughts that:

**“(A)ll men are naturally in...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 ... A state of liberty, yet it is not a state of licence....**

**The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions:**

**for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another’s pleasure...**

**Every one...may not, unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another.”**

In précis regarding these passages that came from Locke's treatise, there is a evidently identifiable formation of the rights of life, liberty, and property that subsists. Locke overtly preserves the idea that these human rights were fundamental and elemental rights of man, certain by God the Creator. These rights are undeniable due to the fact that they are recognized as an element of the God-given law of nature, and as a result are apparent in life itself. In his recurrent employment of the phrase law of nature, Locke positioned himself in a prosperous and time-privileged custom looking through history to the Bible itself. It is undoubtedly that Locke had the idea in his head a vision that centered around the bible, of the nature of man as created by God. One of the itemized rights evident in the Declaration, pursuit of happiness, is not initiated by Locke, who made use of the word happiness merely three times in the Second Treatise, in fairly limited frameworks. Locke focused as an alternative on the rights of property. The right to pursue happiness, which is thought to be much extensive in possibility, is distinguishable through the Federalist Papers written John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, influenced by the assumed name Publius. Ultimately, the comprehensiveness of happiness as a conception may be evident in the copious life guaranteed to man by Jesus Christ.

Any one discussion pertaining to the suitable function of government may progress and advance through a glance back to the thoughts wherein our nation was established. In the Declaration of Independence, conceivably the most succinct articulation of those exact thoughts and principles may be discovered. The Declaration is perceptible in the idea that the Founders trusted in the beliefs that individual liberty, identified by the right to life,

liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, protected by a government constructed for that intention, gaining its justifiable power from the consent of the governed. The arrangement of the words in the Declaration is very significant. By vigilantly examining the Declaration, one may come across the idea that there is no reference of government to the point that the moral order of the world in which the Founders foresaw is presented. Their attitudes embark on a “state of nature,” in which no government has so far been fashioned by man. It is not until following the moral order is instituted that the political order -which is derived from this moral order-converted.

“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. – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” This very quote from the Declaration proves very important in both its order and meaning. “We hold these truths to be Self-evident.” In this section of the passage, as the first line, the authors allow the people to understand that reason offers the foundation of the proposal to come next. They declare the truths that are subsequent are self-evident, which provides for the idea that they are deductible by reason. This idea designates that the Founders are functioning contained by theoretical and idealistic tradition of natural rights. This perspective gives that there is a superior law of right and wrong that may be utilized to develop moral laws..... finish talking about each line of quote and its meaning? Or talk about the drafts and popular culture?

The Declaration of Independence provides for an abundance of interpretation and sources by scholarly inquiry. This formal document declared the independence of the United States of America from Great Britain by giving the colonial grievances of King George III, declaring natural rights, one of those being the right of revolution. The Declaration was originally disregarded after the American Revolution, having provided its primary intention in declaring independence.

This sentence in which most Americans live by was significantly influenced by Abraham Lincoln, who thought of the Declaration as being the underpinning of his political philosophy, and encouraged the proposal that the Declaration of Independence be a proclamation of standards through which the United States Constitution should be construed.

[http://www. freedomworks. org/publications/the-declaration-of-independence-a-look-at-the-mean](http://www.freedomworks.org/publications/the-declaration-of-independence-a-look-at-the-mean)

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