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Declaration of Independence

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### Declaration of Independence

This paper analyzes the declaration of independence document by Thomas Jefferson. It outlines the meanings of different phrases and statements mentioned in the document. To begin with, the paper explains whether Jefferson included all men, women and children or just white men and their property in his “all men were created equal” statement. The paper goes further to explain what Jefferson meant by “certain unalienable rights”. Finally, the paper addresses how the declaration documents falls in line with the Jefferson’s anti-federalist ideology.

In the declaration document, it is not proven that Jefferson was talking about all men, women and children. Only white women, women and children were considered equal but people of color were not treated the same. Slavery was the big issue of the time and Jefferson himself benefited directly from slavery. From this statement, it can be resolved that Jefferson only meant what he said in words but not in practice. ‘All men were created equal’ only worked for the whites because people of color continued to be enslaved and their rights denied.<sup>1</sup> As such, this statement can be said to not include all men, but only white men and their property. However, it is important to acknowledge that there were different interpretations of this statement. There is a

<sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. The declaration of independence (1776). Spark Publishing, 2014.

perspective that when Jefferson said “all men were created equal”, it did not refer to individual equality. Rather, it meant <sup>3</sup> American colonists as a people have the same rights to self-governance as a country. It would be prudent to argue that every generation has had a different interpretation of these words. However, regardless of any interpretation, the words do not seem to include all races, but only white men, women, children and their properties.

When Jefferson wrote the “certain unalienable rights” he meant rights that could not be given and taken away. He meant being free in a society where no oppressive forces or restriction hinder any one’s way of life. By “certain unalienable rights” Jefferson referred to rights such as <sup>1</sup> life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Jefferson considered these rights inherent in all people. These are roughly what are considered as human rights today. The ‘certain unalienable rights’ mentioned by Jefferson are those rights that should remain intact and not swayed by any circumstance or situation<sup>2</sup>. As to whether the bill of rights is an indirect existence of the declaration of independent, the answer is no. It is worth noting that the declaration of Independence was crafted to justify breaking away from administration. The Bill of Rights on the other hand was created to launch a regime. The declaration stands alone and on its own. Unlike the bill of rights, it has never been revised while the constitution has been modified 27 times.

As to whether this document is in line with the anti-federalist political ideals and beliefs, the answer is yes. The document emphasizes on the people’s rights and a central power. This is contrary to the federalists who wanted a strong central government. Jefferson talked about equality in his statement <sup>1</sup> that “All men were created equal” and “certain alienable rights”. Jefferson referred to rights that cannot be taken away such as <sup>1</sup> life, liberty and pursuit of

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<sup>2</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. The declaration of independence (1776). Spark Publishing, 2014.

happiness when he talked about “certain alienable rights”, and also emphasized about individual and state equality when he talked about “All men were created equal”<sup>3</sup>He was clearly concerned about people’s rights and equality, contrary to federalists who concentrated on a strong central government.

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<sup>3</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. The declaration of independence (1776). Spark Publishing, 2014.

Bibliography

Jefferson, Thomas. *The declaration of independence (1776)*. Spark Publishing, 2014.

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