

Bryan/College Station Tea Party
Celebrating the Declaration of Independence
Equality - Additional Reading

Why does equality accompany liberty?

“May it be to the world what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the Signal of arousing men to burst the chains, under which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self government. That form which we have substituted restores the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion. All eyes are opened, or opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born, with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them. ...”

Thomas Jefferson in letter to Roger Weightman June 24, 1826 for the 50th Anniversary of American Independence.

Nature does not single out who is to govern and who is to be governed; there is no divine right of kings. Nor are rights a matter of legal privilege or the benevolence of some ruling class. Fundamental rights exist by nature, prior to government and conventional laws. It is because those individual rights are left unsecured that governments are instituted among men.

Edwin Meese III, Forward: The Meaning of the Constitution - Heritage Foundation p.,2 Matthew Spalding, executive editor.

“In ages of equality every man naturally stands alone...[he] has no hereditary friends whose cooperation he may demand - no class upon whose sympathy he may rely.”

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, 1831

“It is on the principle of equality alone that the liberty of man is founded...nor is it likely that revolutions will cease until its establishment be as universal as man.”

James Cheetam, “A Dissertation Concerning Political Equality” (New York, 1800).

Quoted source: Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790's, Joyce Appleby, 1984).

Does the continuation of slavery after the Declaration of man's equality nullify the truth of the principle?

“In [the Founders'] enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity. They erected a beacon to guide their children and their children's children, and the countless myriads who should inhabit the earth in other ages. Wise statesmen as they were, they knew the tendency of prosperity to breed tyrants, and so they established these great self-evident truths, that when in the distant future some man, some faction, some interest, should set up the doctrine that none but rich men, or none but white men, were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, their posterity might look up again to the Declaration of

Independence and take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began — so that truth, and justice, and mercy, and all the humane and Christian virtues might not be extinguished from the land; so that no man would hereafter dare to limit and circumscribe the great principles on which the temple of liberty was being built...”

Abraham Lincoln in Senate campaign address, 1858.

“About the Declaration there is a finality that is exceedingly restful. *It is often asserted that the world has made a great deal of progress since 1776, that we have had new thoughts and new experiences which have given us a great advance over the people of that day, and that we may therefore very well discard their conclusions for something more modern. But that reasoning can not be applied to this great charter. If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people. Those who wish to proceed in that direction can not lay claim to progress. They are reactionary. Their ideas are not more modern but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers.*”

President Calvin Coolidge; 150th Anniversary of Declaration, July 5, 1926

What does the Saul Alinsky method of elimination of opposition — pick the target, isolate the target, eliminate the target through mockery, intimidation, and threats of violence — indicate about the Progressive/Socialist’s acceptance of the self-evident truth of equality?

Can equality be a foundation on which we can depend in debate?

How does equality indicate that good government must be: representational, limited, with balanced powers?