

AN UNFINISHED PROMISE

**The Declaration of Independence Through a
Mexican Critical Perspective**

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WHY WAS THE DECLARATION REVOLUTIONARY?

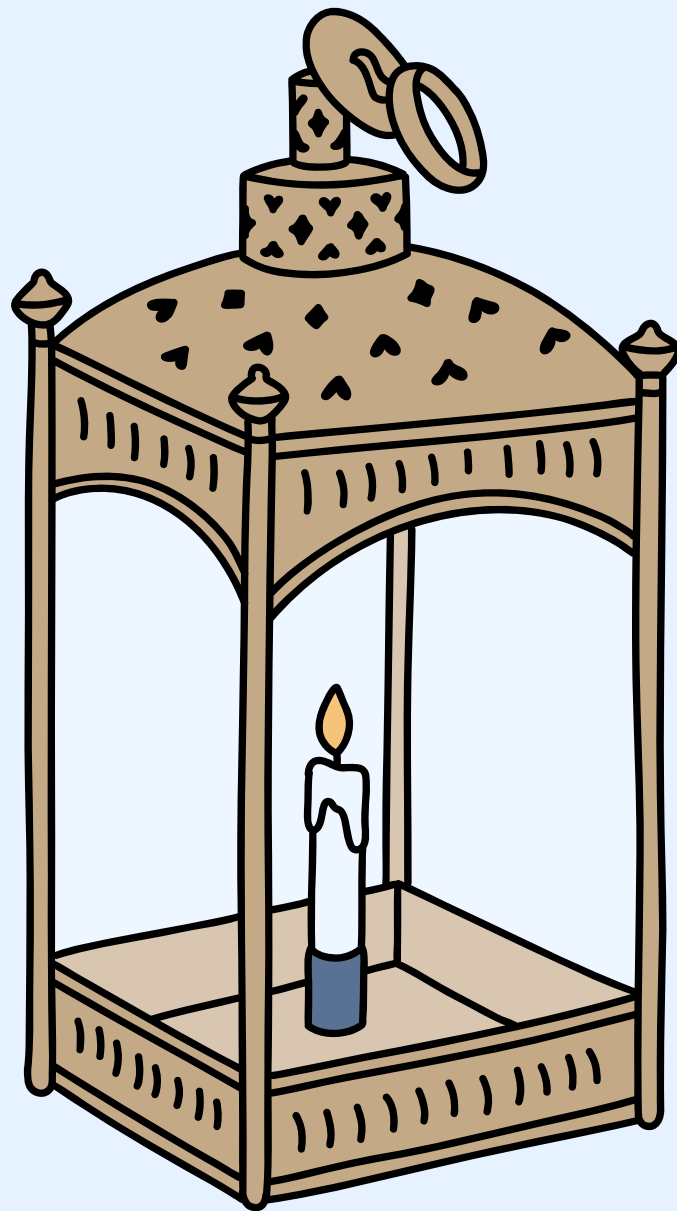
MAIN PURPOSE:
To justify the
separation of the
thirteen colonies
from Great Britain.



**REVOLUTIONARY
PRINCIPLES:**

- Equality
- Natural Rights
- Government by Consent

NATURAL RIGHTS AND POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY



NATURAL RIGHTS

- Life
- Liberty
- The Pursuit of Happiness

"ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL."

RIGHT TO REVOLUTION

People have the right to alter or abolish governments that fail to protect their rights.

INSPIRING REVOLUTIONS

**THE DECLARATION'S INFLUENCE BEYOND
THE UNITED STATES,**

IT DEMONSTRATED THAT:

- ✓ Colonial populations could defeat imperial powers.
- ✓ Legitimate governments derive their authority from the people, not from divine monarchy.
- ✓ Independence and self-government were achievable.



IN MEXICO

- Enlightenment and Jeffersonian ideas resonated with those dissatisfied with the Spanish colonial caste system.
- The American example showed that colonial rule could be challenged.
- Mexican leaders embraced principles of popular sovereignty and representative government.

A KEY DIFFERENCE

Unlike the United States in 1776, early Mexican independence leaders such as Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos advocated the abolition of slavery and the dismantling of the colonial caste system.



**BUT IF THESE IDEALS WERE
SO REVOLUTIONARY AND
INFLUENTIAL, WHY DO I
DESCRIBE THE DECLARATION
AS AN UNFINISHED
PROMISE?**

THE 1619 PROJECT

(CREATED BY NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES AND THE
NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE)

CENTRAL ARGUMENT

**THE PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY AND EQUALITY PROCLAIMED IN 1776 COEXISTED
WITH SLAVERY AND RACIAL INEQUALITY.**

Historical Context

- In 1619, enslaved Africans arrived in the English colonies.
- Slavery remained legal in the United States until 1865.
- Millions of African Americans were excluded from the promises of equality proclaimed in the Declaration.



EXCLUDED FROM THE PROMISE

(INSPIRED BY ROXANNE DUNBAR-ORTIZ,
AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF
THE UNITED STATES)*

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Indigenous sovereignty was often ignored.
- Native communities experienced the nation's expansion very differently from the traditional narrative.



MANIFEST DESTINY

- The belief that the United States was destined to expand across the continent.
- Expansion frequently resulted in the displacement of Indigenous nations.
- The promise of liberty and self-government was not extended equally to all peoples.

**AT THIS POINT, AN IMPORTANT QUESTION EMERGES: IF
THE DECLARATION EXCLUDED SO MANY PEOPLE,
SHOULD WE REJECT ITS IDEALS ALTOGETHER?**

I WOULD ARGUE NO.

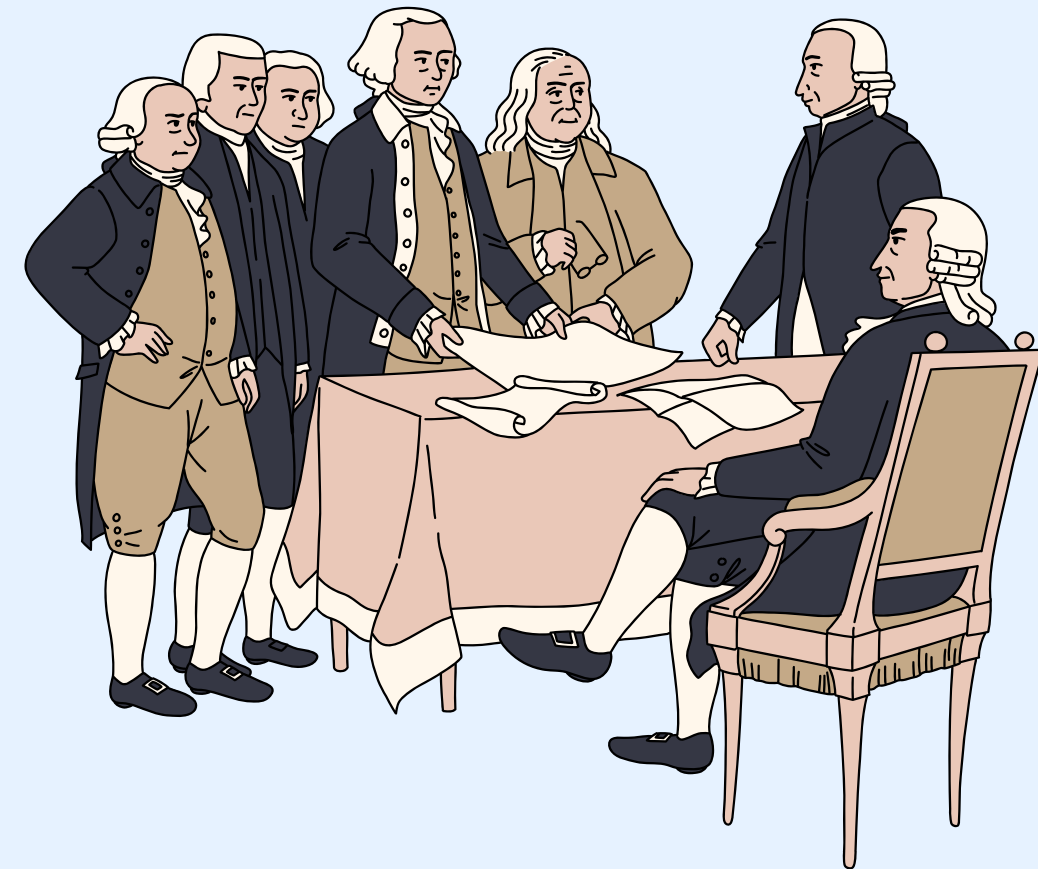
DEMOCRACY AS AN ONGOING PROJECT

(INSPIRED BY ROBERT BELLAH, THE BROKEN COVENANT)

**DEMOCRACIES ARE NEVER
FINISHED**

- Ideals and reality are rarely perfectly aligned.
- Nations must continually renew their commitment to justice and equality.
- A healthy democracy requires self-criticism and civil discourse.

**THE CHALLENGE IS NOT
PERFECTION, BUT PROGRESS.**



CONCLUSION

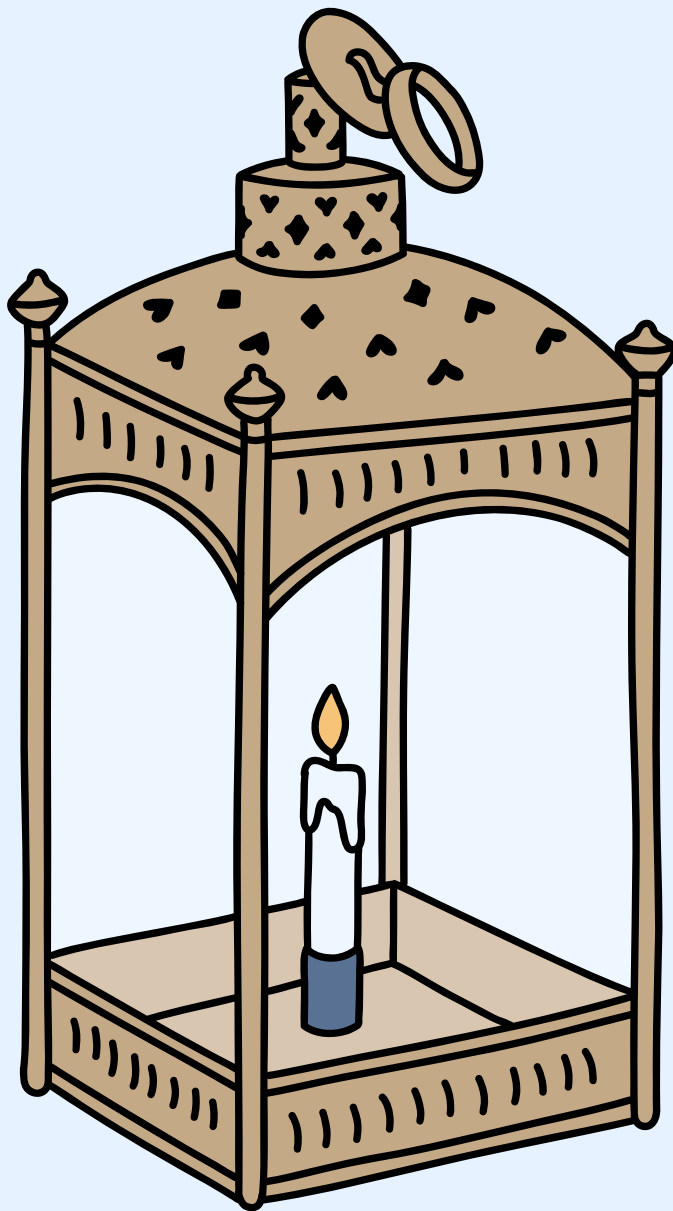
THE DECLARATION'S GREATEST STRENGTH LIES NOT IN ITS PERFECTION, BUT IN THE ENDURING POWER OF ITS IDEALS.

Liberty

Equality

Self-
Government

Justice



"THE PURSUIT OF A MORE PERFECT DEMOCRACY BEGINS NOT BY IGNORING OUR CONTRADICTIONS, BUT BY CONFRONTING THEM THROUGH CIVIL DISCOURSE."

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION.**

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