

Nattawat Dejthanapraserj

5504640771

Thomas Jefferson

844 words

Centuries ago, it was not common when someone said all men are created equally. Most countries used monarch system to rule. This is because in early 18th century, the ideas of liberty, freedom and equality were not popular. For Instance, British colonies in America was depended and taxed to motherland.¹ Moreover, slavery was legal and commonly used. However, there were many thinkers and politicians who believed in liberty and disseminated it. One of them is the third president of United State of America, Thomas Jefferson. He played an important role as politician and thinker. Without him, liberty would not be here as fast as it was. Thomas Jefferson has greatly promoted the ideas of liberalism.

Firstly, Thomas Jefferson is the principal author of the Declaration of Independence which contained many liberal ideas. After England established colonies in North America, people immigrated to the new world with their hopes.² However, when time pass, England did not let the colonies participate in political, and the colonies could not vote in elections in motherland. Moreover, tax rate was highly increased. This situation caused great tension between 12 Britain's colonies and colonial England. Therefore, the twelve colonies established their own Continental Congress, and the congress appointed Thomas Jefferson and four other men to write

¹ "Declaration of Independence" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012.
<<http://www.history.com/topics/declaration-of-independence>>

² "United States Immigration Before 1965" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012.
<<http://www.history.com/topics/united-states-immigration-to-1965>>

the Declaration of Independence³, which officially announced 12 colonies would no longer rule by Great Britain. In the declaration, it contained many liberal philosophies as the right to revolution. The first one is the nature of man. Thomas believed men are naturally equal, freedom, independent and have their own right. With the nature of men being equal and independent, the nature of government was developed. Government is selected by individuals who are equal and free to choose, so governments have authorization to protect man's right and freedom. In contrast, if created governments failed to protect people's right, man has the right of revolution.⁴ Inspired by these three ideas, the revolutions were expanded across Europe including French Revolution.⁵

Next, Thomas Jefferson himself opposed slavery system. Slavery is one of the cruelest stories in creating the US. Thousands of enslaved African, including male and female, were transferred from their homeland to North America.⁶ Many of them die, others worked hard without holidays. This evidently contradicts to Jefferson's idea of liberalism. Accordingly, he had been making many efforts to end slavery, but sadly, slavery was not completely end in his life time. The first attempt was in 1784. He presented that slavery should be ban in new states by 1800, but congress refused it.⁷ In 1803, when he was the president of USA, Ohio officially joined the state of onion,

³ "American Revolution" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012. < <http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution> >

⁴ Garrett Ward Sheldon. *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*. 1993. P.42-43

⁵ "French Revolution" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012. < <http://www.history.com/topics/french-revolution> >

⁶ "United States Immigration Before 1965" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012. <<http://www.history.com/topics/united-states-immigration-to-1965>>

⁷ "The Thomas Jefferson Timeline: 1743 - 1827." *The Libraby of Congress, American Memory*. 16 Sep 2012. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/mtjtime3a.html>

and became the first state which slavery was banned.⁸ In 1807, the law which prohibits oversea trading slave was finally passed the congress, and Jefferson signed it on March 3, 1807; however, the law had effect on January 1, 1808.⁹

Last but not least, Thomas Jefferson together with his friend, James Madison, established Democratic-Republican Party and expanded Jefferson's political philosopher.¹⁰ One of the first two political parties in the US is Federalist Party¹¹, which believed that people's right should be controlled by government, so it is evidently contrast to Thomas Jefferson's idea.¹² Consequently, he instituted the new party to oppose Federalist Party. His new party was received political ideas from him. He supported civil liberties, right and freedom. In his ideas, government must not interfere people's freedom, and people are natural social being, so participatory republic, which will protect people's right and freedom itself, is made. In addition, Jefferson not only support freedom in politic but also in religion, not because he do not believe in Christianity, but he trusted that the freedom to choose is the best thing for man. Next idea is about democracy. He preferred consist of small republics, so people are easily communicate to each other. Since liberalism think people prefer common good including their rulers, they will choose the good one. However, education and opportunities must be provided because without knowledge man does not know what good rulers are, so he also established University of Virginia. The last idea is about right, people have right to protect their own life, liberty and property. In

⁸ "Key Events in the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson." *Miller Center, University of Virginia*. 16 Sep 2012. <<http://millercenter.org/president/keyevents/jefferson>>

⁹ Robert McNamara. "Importation of Slaves Outlawed by 1807 Act of Congress." *About.com*. 16 Sep 2012. <<http://history1800s.about.com/od/slaveryinamerica/a/1807slaveact.htm>>

¹⁰ "Thomas Jefferson" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012. <<http://www.history.com/topics/thomas-jefferson>>

¹¹ "Federalist Party" *History.com*. 16 Sep. 2012. <<http://www.history.com/topics/federalist-party>>

¹² "Democratic-Republican Party." *Social Studies for Kids*. 16 Sep 2012.

<<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/www/us/demorepubpartydef.htm>>

addition, free speech must be allowed, because free discussion is important factor of real democracy. These political notions of Thomas Jefferson had greatly effected on the United State of America for a long time.¹³

To conclude, in early 18th century when liberalism was just starting popular, Thomas Jefferson was very first person who would like to adapt it, and he also significantly developed and expanded liberal idea to individuals across the new land. In addition, dominated by British crown for a long time, people in USA were also waiting for freedom, liberty and equity, so the US citizens willingly acquired the ideas. Thus, when Declaration of Independence was published, it is not just the declaration which free the US from Great Britain, but it was contained the meaning of right, freedom and liberty. For over 200 years, the ideas were expanded across the world, and still have strong effect until today.

¹³ Garrett Ward Sheldon. *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*. 1993. P.141-147