

DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT 1

Revenues of the King of Spain (1559) anonymous

From these his realms his majesty receives every year an income of five millions of gold in times of peace: one and one-half millions from Spain; a half-million from the Indies; one from Naples and Sicily, and another from Flanders and the Low Countries. But his expenses are six millions, and this excess is covered by extraordinary taxes according to his pleasure, whence it appears that he could control only a small amount of money for special undertakings, since he consumes for his ordinary needs everything that he derives from his realms. But looked at from another point of view, the Emperor, his father, although he had the same burdens, was nevertheless able to carry on extensive wars and enterprises in Italy and outside of Italy, both by land and sea, and the same king was able in these later years to maintain great armies in Flanders, in Piedmont, in Lombardy and in the kingdom, and many soldiers in Africa against the Turk. So that we may calculate that he spent more than ten millions of gold; wherefore it may be put down as a fact that although expenses may exceed income, yet a way is not wanting to great princes, whereby they may find large sums of money in times of great need, particularly in the case of the king of Spain, not so much on account of the mines which are found in Spain and the Indies, of which the Spanish nation, according to its custom, makes no great account, as from the fact that he has so many...

DOCUMENT 2

DESCRIPTION OF VERSAILLES written by DUC DE SAINT-SIMON

As for the King [Louis XIV] himself, nobody ever approached his magnificence. His buildings, who could number them? At the same time, who was there who did not deplore [dislike] the pride ...the bad taste seen in them? He built nothing useful or ornamental [decorative] in Paris, except the Pont Royal, and that simply by necessity; so that ...Paris is inferior to many cities in Europe, St. Germans, a, lovely spot, with a marvelous view, rich forest, terraces, gardens, and water he abandoned for Versailles; dullest and most ungrateful of all places, without prospect, without wood, without water, without soil; for the ground is all shifting sand or swamp, the air accordingly bad.

.....He built at Versailles, on, on, without any general design, the beautiful and the ugly...all jumbled together. His own apartments and those of the Queen are inconvenient to the last degree, dull, close, stinking. The garden astonish by their magnificence, but cause regret by their bad taste.

.....The abundance of water, forced up and gathered together from all parts, is rendered green, thick, muddy; it disseminates [gives off] humidity, unhealthy and evident; and an odor still more so...

But the supply of water for the fountains was...[always inadequate] in spite of those seas of reservoirs which had cost so many millions to establish and to form upon the shifting sand and marsh. Who could have believed it? This defect became the ruin of the infantry which was turned out to do the work.

DOCUMENT 3

These ideas were expressed by King Louis XIV of France in 1660

"The head alone has the right to deliberate and decide, and the functions of all the other members consist only in carrying out the commands given to them...The more you grant...[to the assembled people], the more it claims...The interest of the state must come first."

DOCUMENT 4

Joseph II's Toleration Edict for the Jews of Moravia, 1782 (Austria)

Since coming to power, We have been most particular to ensure that all Our subjects, without distinction of nationality and religion, should share in the public prosperity which We hope to increase by Our care, and that they may enjoy freedom according to the law and find no obstacle to earning their living in every honorable way and contribute to the general industriousness.

Since Our gracious intention can definitely not be reconciled with the existing laws against the Jewish People in Our Patrimonial Margravate of Moravia and the so-called Jewish laws, We wish to modify these by virtue of the present Edict..

DOCUMENT 5

Letters of Austrian Emperor Joseph II on his Reforms

To an Austrian Noble, December 1787

Till now the Protestant religion has been opposed in my states, its adherents have been treated like foreigners, civil rights, possession of estates, titles, and appointments, all were refused to them.

I determined from the very commencement of my reign to adorn my diadem with the love of my people, to act in the administration of affairs according to just, impartial, and liberal principles, consequently, I granted toleration, and removed the yoke which had oppressed the Protestants for centuries.

Fanaticism shall in the future be known in my states only by the contempt I have for it, nobody shall any longer be exposed to hardships on account of his creed, no man shall be compelled in the future to profess the religion of the state...My empire shall not be the scene of abominable intolerance.

DOCUMENT 6

Frederick the Great of Prussia: The Nature of Monarchy, 1787

With respect to the true monarchical government, it is the best or the worst of all others, according to how it is administered.

We have remarked that men granted preeminence to one of their equals, expecting that he should do them certain services. These services consisted in the maintenance of the laws, a strict execution of justice, and employment of his whole powers to prevent any corruption of manners, and defending the state against its enemies...

Princes and monarchs, therefore, are not invested with supreme authority that they may, with impunity, riot in debauchery any voluptuousness. They are not raised by their fellow citizens in order that their pride may pompously display itself, and contemptuously insult simplicity of manners, poverty, and wretchedness...

There is but one general good, which is that of the state...The sovereign represents the state, he and his people form but one body, which can only be happy as far as united by concord. The prince is to the nation he governs what the head is to the man, it is his duty to see, to think, and act for the whole community, so that he may procure it every advantage of which it is capable.

DOCUMENT 7

Frederick the Great of Prussia, 1752

Politics is the science of always using the most convenient means in accord with one's own interests. In order to act in conformity with one's interests, one must know what these interests are, and in order to gain this knowledge, one must study their history and application. One must attempt, above all, to know the special genius of the people which one wants to govern in order to know if one must treat them leniently or severely, if they are inclined to revolt . . . to intrigue . . .

[The Prussian nobility] has sacrificed its life and goods for the service of the state; its loyalty and merit have earned it the protection of all its rulers, and it is one of the duties [of the ruler] to aid those noble families which have become impoverished in order to keep them in possession of their lands; for they are to be regarded as the pedestals and the pillars of the state. In such a state no factions or rebellions need be feared . . . it is one goal of the policy of this state to preserve the nobility.

Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, Jews and other Christian sects live in this state, and live together in peace. If the sovereign, actuated by a mistaken zeal, declares himself for one religion or another, parties spring up, heated disputes ensue, little by little persecutions will commence and, in the end, the religion persecuted will leave the fatherland, and millions of subjects will enrich our neighbors by their skill and industry.

DOCUMENT 8

From Catherine the Great of Russia, *Proposals for a New Law Code 1767*

9. The Sovereign is absolute; for there is no other Authority but that which centers in his single Person. It is better to be subject to the Laws under one Master, than to be subservient to many. The Intention and the End (goal) of Monarchy, is the Glory of the Citizens, of the State, and of the Sovereign.

33. The Laws ought to be so framed, as to secure the Safety of every Citizen as much as possible. The Equality of the Citizens consists in this; that they should all be subject to the same Laws.

123. The Usage of Torture is contrary to all the Dictates of Nature and Reason; even Mankind itself cries out against it, and demands loudly the total Abolition of it.

180. That Law, therefore, is highly beneficial to the Community where it is established, which ordains that every Man shall be judged by his Peers and Equals. For when the Fate of a Citizen is in Question, all Prejudices arising from the Difference of Rank or Fortune should be stifled; because they ought to have no Influence between the Judges and the Parties accused.

253. And therefore, to shun all Occasions of reducing People to a State of Slavery, except the *utmost* Necessity should *inevitably* oblige us to do it; in that Case, it ought not to be done for our own Benefit; but for the Interest of the State: Yet even that Case is extremely uncommon.

270. It is highly necessary that the Law should prescribe a Rule to the Lords, for a more judicious Method of raising their Revenues; and oblige them to levy *such* a Tax, as *tends least* to separate the Peasant from his House and Family; this would be the Means by which Agriculture would become more extensive, and Population be more increased in the Empire.

DOCUMENT 9

Emancipation of the Serfs, 1774

Peter III, by the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of All Russia:

This is given for nationwide information. By this personal decree, which our monarchical and fatherly love, we grant freedom to everyone who formerly was in serfdom or in any other obligation to the nobility...while to the serfs we restore for eternity their freedoms and liberties; we terminate the military recruiting system, cancel personal and other monetary taxes, abolish without compensation the ownership of land, forest, pastures, fisheries, and salt deposits, and we free everyone from all taxes and obligations which the thievish nobles and extortionist city judges have imposed on the peasantry and the rest of the population. We pray for the salvation of your souls and wish you a happy and peaceful life.

DOCUMENT 10

King James I of England in 1609

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth; for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by god Himself they are called gods...Kings are justly called gods, for that they exercise a divine power upon earth...God hath power to create or destroy, make or unmake at His pleasure, to give life or sent death, to judge all and to be judged nor accountable to none, to raise low things and to make high things low at His pleasure...And the like power have kings...

DOCUMENT 11

John Wilkes: Reform of Parliament, 1776

All wise governments, and well-regulated states, have been careful to mark and correct the various abuses, which a considerable length of time almost necessarily creates. Among these, one of the most striking and important in our country is the present unfair and inadequate representation of the people of England in Parliament...

No less than 22 towns sent members of the Parliament of Edward I in the 13th century, which have long ceased to be represented. The names of some of them are scarcely known to us any longer...What a happy fate has attended the boroughs of Gatton and Old Sarum, of which, although they are now deserted ruins; the clerk regularly calls them over, and four respectable gentlemen represent them...Cornwall county still sends as many members as the whole kingdom of Scotland...great abuses, contrary to the primary ideas of the English constitution, were committed by our former princes, in giving the right of representation to several paltry boroughs...