

Congress and Human Trafficking in 1812

Worksheet 3

Reflection Questions

Instructions: Working in your previously assigned small group, read the following excerpt from the War Manifesto, issued by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the brink of declaring war against Great Britain on June 3, 1812. Discuss the manifesto and then collaboratively answer the questions below.

“Your committee, believing that the free-born sons of America are worthy to enjoy the liberty which their fathers purchased at the price of so much blood and treasure, and seeing in the measures adopted by Great Britain, a course commenced and persisted in, which must lead to a loss of national character and independence, feel no hesitation in advising resistance by force; in which the Americans of the present day will prove to the enemy and to the world, that we have not only inherited that liberty which our fathers gave us, but also the will and power to maintain it. Relying on the patriotism of the nation, and confidently trusting that the Lord of Hosts will go with us to battle in a righteous cause, and crown our efforts with success, your committee recommend an immediate appeal to arms.”

Draw from your reading to answer the following reflection questions:

1. How did the authors of the War Manifesto use the idea of liberty to justify national action?
2. How did the threats to liberty posed by the British differ from the threats faced by free people of color?
3. How did Congress’s response to threats against the liberty of free people of color contrast with its response to threats to liberty posed by the British?