

By using the documents and your general knowledge of nineteenth century Europe, assess the validity of the following statement:<sup>1</sup>

*Napoleon Bonaparte stabilized and united French society, yet supported the ideals of the French Revolution.*

### DOCUMENT 1

...Undoubtedly the greatest obstacles have been overcome; but you still have battles to fight, cities to capture, rivers to cross. Is there one among you whose courage is abating?...No,...All of you are consumed with a desire to extend the glory of the French people; all of you long to humiliate those arrogant kings who dare to contemplate placing us in fetters; all of you desire to dictate a glorious peace, one which will indemnify the Patrie for the immense sacrifices it has made; all of you wish to be able to say with pride as you return to your villages, "I was with the victorious army of Italy!"

Friends, I promise you this conquest; but there is one condition you must swear to fulfill--to respect the people whom you liberate, to repress the horrible pillaging committed by the scoundrels incited by our enemies. Otherwise you would not be the liberators of the people; you would be their scourge; ... Plunders will be shot without mercy; already, several have been...Peoples of Italy, the French army comes to break your chains; the French people is the friend of all peoples; approach it with confidence; your property, your religion, and your customs will be respected. We are waging war as generous enemies, and we wish only to crush the tyrants who enslave you.

Napoleon's speech to his troops, 1796

### DOCUMENT 2

...The more I saw of him, the more I observed him, the more firmly I was persuaded that, always under the sway of the moment, he thought of nothing but his own gratification, of magnifying himself and his power without limit and without rest. Irritated by the least obstacle, sacrificing everything to overcome it, and seeking only to establish at every juncture that nothing could resist his might and his will, when he had to choose between present and future he would choose the present, as being more certain and more subject to his control. In short, he was much less concerned to leave behind him a "race," a dynasty, than a name which should have no equal and glory, that could not be surpassed....

"The impossible," he said to me one day, "is a word of purely relative meaning. Every man has his 'impossible,' according to how much or how little he can do. The impossible," he added with a smile, "is the ghost of the diffident and the refuge of the fainthearted. On the lips of power, believe me, it is only a declaration of impotence."...

Count Mole's, a Councilor of State, Minister, and peer of France, remarks on Napoleon, early 19c.

### DOCUMENT 3

...He had some grounds for his belief that he was necessary; France believed it, too; and he even succeeded in persuading foreign sovereigns that he constituted a barrier against republican influences, which, but for him might spread widely. At the moment when Bonaparte placed the imperial crown upon his head there was not a king in Europe who did not believe that he wore his own crown more securely because of that event. Had the new emperor granted a liberal constitution, the peace of nations and kings might really have been forever secured.

---comments from Madame de Remusat, a lady in waiting to Empress Josephine and wife of a Napoleonic official, early nineteenth century

## DOCUMENT 4



**Napoleon Crossing the Alps by Jacques Louis David, 1800**

## DOCUMENT 5

My power proceeds from my reputation, and my reputation from the victories I have won. My power would fail if I were not to support it with more glory and more victories. Conquest has made me what I am; only conquest can maintain me. Friendship is only a word; I love nobody; no, not even my brothers. Perhaps Joseph a little; even then it's a matter of habit, it's because he is my elder. -Duroc? Ah, yes, I love him; but why? His character attracts me: he is cool, dry, severe; and Duroc never sheds tears. As for me, you don't suppose I care; I know perfectly well I have no real friends. As long as I remain what I am, I shall have as many as I need so far as the appearance goes...

**Napoleon's dairy entry on December 30, 1802**

## DOCUMENT 6

**Q: What are the duties of Christians with respect to the princes who govern them, and what in particular are our duties towards Napoleon I, our Emperor?**

**A: Christians owe to the princes who govern them, and we owe in particular to Napoleon I, our Emperor, love, respect, obedience, fidelity, military service and the tributes laid for the preservation and defense of the Empire and of his throne; we also owe to him fervent prayers for his safety and the spiritual and temporal prosperity of the state...**

**Q: Are there not particular reasons which ought to attach us more strongly to Napoleon I, our Emperor?**

**A: Yes; for it is he whom God has raised up under difficult circumstances to re-establish the public worship of the holy religion of our fathers and to be the protector of it. He has restored and preserved public order by his profound and active wisdom; he defends the state by his powerful arm; he has become the anointed of the Lord through the consecration which he received from the sovereign pontiff, head of the universal church.**

**Q: What ought to be thought of those who may be lacking in their duty towards our Emperor?**

**A: According to the apostle Saint Paul, they would be resisting the order established by God himself and would render themselves worthy of eternal damnation.**

**Napoleonic Catechism, 1806**

## DOCUMENT 7

I am concerned for the happiness of your subjects, not only as it affects your reputation, and my own, but also for its influence on the whole European situation...Your throne will never be firmly established except upon the trust and affection of the common people. What German opinion impatiently demands is that men of no rank, but of marked ability, shall have an equal claim upon your favor and your employment, and that every trace of serfdom, or of a feudal hierarchy between the sovereign and the lowest class of his subjects, shall be done away. The benefits of the Code Napoleon, public trial, and the introduction of juries, will be the leading features of your government. And to tell you the truth...I want your subjects to enjoy a higher degree of liberty, equality, and prosperity hitherto unknown to the German people. I want this liberal regime to produce, one way or another, changes which will be of the utmost benefit to the system of the Confederation, and to strengthen your monarchy. Such a method of government will be a strong barrier between you and Prussia than the Elbe [River], the fortress, and the protection of France. What people will want to return to under the arbitrary Prussian rule, once it has tasted the benefits of a wise and liberal administration? In Germany, as in France, Italy, and Spain, people long for equality and liberalism.

**Letter written to Jerome Napoleon, King of Westphalia, by Napoleon on November 15, 1807**

## DOCUMENT 8

To date from the publication of the present decree, feudal rights are abolished in Spain. All personal obligations, all exclusive fishing rights and other rights of similar nature on the coast or on the rivers and streams, all feudal monopolies of ovens, mills and inns are suppressed. It shall be free to everyone who shall conform to the laws to develop his industry without restraint.

The tribunal of the Inquisition is abolished, as inconsistent with the civil sovereignty and authority.

The property of the Inquisition shall be sequestered and fall to the Spanish state, to serve as security for the bonded debt.

Considering that the members of the various monastic orders have increased to an undue degree and that, although a certain number of them are useful in assisting the ministers of the altar in the administration of the sacraments, the existence of too great a number interferes with the prosperity of the state, we have decreed and do decree as follows....

**Napoleon's Imperial Decree at Madrid, December 4, 1808**

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<sup>1</sup> DBQ created by students at Maria Regina H.S. 2004.