

Natural Rights and Natural Law:

An individual enters society with certain basic rights and no government can deny those rights.

Classic Expressions of Natural Rights:

- English Bill of Rights (1689)
- American Declaration of Independence (1776)
- French Declaration Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789)
- The Bill of Rights (1791)
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights-United Nations (1948)

Individualism and Natural Rights:

- Growth of individualism during the 17th century is seen in natural beings, who have rights that cannot be violated by anyone or by any society.
- Rousseau attempted to reconcile the natural rights of the individual with the need for social unity and cooperation through the idea of the social contract.
- The most important elaboration of the idea of natural rights came with the writings of Jefferson, Paine and Samuel Adams who made the theory a justification for revolution.

Rousseau's (1712-1778) Social Contract (1762):

- Locke's version emphasized a contract between the governors and the governed
- Rousseau, possibly most profound and influential writer of the Age of Enlightenment:
 - Man would be much better off in a "state of nature" (civilization was source of much evil)
 - Feared by the churches and condemned in Catholic France and Protestant Geneva
 - An early and influential critic of the Enlightenment.
- Rousseau's contract—perhaps more profound than Locke's, was between all members of society, and basically replaced natural rights as the basis for human claims.
- People fused their individual wills into a combined "General Will" and agreed to accept the rulings of this "General Will" as final.
- The "General Will" was sovereign and Government was secondary.
 - Rousseau's comments on Natural Rights and Government
- "Man was born free, but everywhere he is in chains..."
- "People always desire what is good, but they do not always see what is good."
- "You can never corrupt the people, but you can often fool them, and that is the only time that the people appear to "will" something bad..."
- "The government's power is only the public power vested in it."
- "Any law that the people have not ratified in person is void, it is not a law at all."
- Significance of Rousseau: he craved a state in which all persons had a sense of belonging and participation. THEREFORE, he became the prophet of "both democracy and nationalism."
- His was a direct link to the French Revolution in that his writings and ideas estranged many of the French upper classes "from their own mode of life. His thoughts were a force which led to a new sense of human equality."

