

## ACTIVITY THREE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESOURCE CARD 1

#### Thomas Hobbes, British Philosopher

Thomas Hobbes argued that humans were naturally cruel, greedy, and selfish. If not strictly controlled, they would fight, rob, and oppress one another. Life in a “state of nature” – without laws or other controls – would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” To escape that “brutish” life, people enter into a social contract with a ruler, giving the ruler absolute power in order to prevent anarchy.

#### Leviathan (1651)

...if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies...Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man...

It followeth that in such a condition every man has a right to every thing, even to one another's body. And therefore, as long as this natural right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man, how strong or wise soever he be, of living out the time which nature ordinarily alloweth men to live. And consequently it is a precept, or general rule of reason: that every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war...

From this fundamental law of nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour peace, is derived this second law: that a man be willing...to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself. For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing anything he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right, as well as he, then there is no reason for anyone to divest himself of his: for that were to expose himself to prey, which no man is bound to, rather than to dispose himself to peace. This is that law of the gospel: Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them...

Thomas Hobbes  
*Leviathan*  
(1651)



People are driven by selfishness and greed. To avoid chaos, they give up their freedom to a government that will ensure order. Such a government must be strong and able to suppress rebellion.

“The condition of man [in the state of nature] ... is a condition of war of everyone against everyone.”

Hobbes's ideas have been used to justify absolute power. To some people today, Hobbes presents a bleak but true view of how people and governments behave.



## ACTIVITY THREE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESOURCE CARD 2

#### John Locke, British Philosopher

John Locke thought that people were basically reasonable and moral. He argued that man had certain inalienable rights that no government could deny. These included the right to life, liberty, and property. According to Locke, the best kind of government had limited power and was accepted by all citizens. Locke rejected the idea of absolute monarchy. He believed that if a government attempted to deny people their natural rights, then the people had the right to replace the government.

#### Second Treatise of Civil Government (1690)

Wherever, therefore, any number of men so unite into one society as to quit every one his executive power of the law of Nature, and to resign it to the public, there and there only is a political or **civil society**. And this is done wherever any number of men, in the state of Nature, enter into society to make one people one body politic under one supreme government: or else when any one joins himself to, and incorporates with any government already made. For hereby he authorises the society, or ... the legislative thereof, to make laws for him as the public good of the society shall require... And this puts men out of a state of Nature into that of a commonwealth, by setting up a judge on earth with authority to determine all the controversies and redress the injuries that may happen to any member of the commonwealth, which judge is the legislative or magistrates appointed by it. And wherever there are any number of men, however associated, that have no such decisive power to appeal to, there they are still in the state of Nature...

And hence it is evident that absolute monarchy, which by some men is counted for the only government in the world, is indeed inconsistent with civil society, and so can be not form of civil government at all...

These are the bounds which the trust that is put in them by the society and the law of God and Nature have set to the legislative power of every commonwealth, in all forms of government. *First:* They are to govern by...established laws, not to be varied in particular cases, but to have one rule for rich and poor... *Secondly:* These laws also ought to be designed for ... the good of the people. *Thirdly:* They must not raise taxes on the property of the people without the consent of the people given by themselves or their deputies. ...*Fourthly:* Legislative neither must nor can transfer the power of making laws to anybody else, or place it anywhere but where the people have.

John Locke  
*Two Treatises of  
Government*  
(1690)



People have a natural right to life, liberty, and property. Rulers have a responsibility to protect those rights. People have the right to change a government that fails to do so.

"Men being . . . by nature all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent."

Locke's ideas influenced authors of U.S. Declaration of Independence and French revolutionaries in the 1790s. Later, people extended his ideas to include equality for women and others.



## ACTIVITY THREE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESOURCE CARD 3

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Swiss Philosopher

Rousseau believed that people were basically good but were corrupted by society. In an ideal society, people would make the laws and would obey them willingly. Rousseau put his faith in the "general will" – the will of the majority. According to Rousseau, the problem of government was that too few people had control over the masses.

#### The Social Contract (1762)

The passage from the **state of nature** to the **civil state** produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations. Although, in this state, he deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it for ever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man...

We might, over and above all this, add, to what man acquires in the civil state, moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty ...

Laws are, properly speaking, only the conditions of civil association. The people, being subject to the laws, should be the authors of them. The rules of society should be set solely by its members. But how will they be determined? Will it be by a common agreement or by a sudden inspiration? Has the body politic an organ for expressing its will? Who will give it the foresight necessary to frame its acts and publish them in advance? Or how shall it declare them in the hour of need? How would a blind multitude, which often does not know what it wants (because it rarely knows what is good for it) carry out all by itself an enterprise as great and as difficult as a system of legislation? Left to itself, the people always desires what is good, but it does not always understand what that means. The general will is always right, but the judgment which guides it is not always enlightened...

Jean-Jacques Rousseau  
*The Social Contract*  
(1762)



People are basically good but become corrupted by society. In an ideal society, people would make the laws and would obey them willingly.

"Only the general will can direct the energies of the state in a manner appropriate to the end for which it was founded, i.e., the common good."

Rousseau has been hailed as a champion of democracy for his idea that political authority lies with the people. But dictators have used his ideas about the "general will" to justify their programs.

#### DEMOCRATIC IDEALS

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## ACTIVITY THREE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESOURCE CARD 4

#### Baron de Montesquieu, French Philosopher

Charles-Louis de Secondat, the Baron de Montesquieu, studied politics throughout his life and wrote a huge and exhaustive study of government. One of his key views was that authority should be divided. He believed that each branch of government should serve as a check on the other branches.

#### The Spirit of the Laws (1748)

In every government there are three sorts of power; the legislative; the executive, in respect to things dependent on the law of nations; and the executive, in regard to things that depend on the civil law.

By virtue of the first [power], the prince or magistrate enacts temporary or perpetual laws, and amends or abrogates those that have been already enacted. By the second [power], he makes peace or war, sends or receives embassies; establishes the public security, and provides against invasions. By the third [power], he punishes criminals, or determines the disputes that arise between individuals. The latter we shall call the judiciary power, and the other simply the executive power of the state.

The political liberty of the subject is a tranquillity of mind, arising from the opinion each person has of his safety. In order to have this liberty, it is requisite the government be so constituted as one man need not be afraid of another.

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty; because apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws, to execute them in a tyrannical manner.

Again, there is no liberty, if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers. Were it joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control, for the judge would then be the legislator. Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave with all the violence of an oppressor.

There would be an end of every thing were the same man, or the same body, whether of the nobles or of the people[,] to exercise those three powers[:] that of enacting laws, that of executing the public resolutions, and that of judging the crimes or differences of individuals.

Baron de Montesquieu  
*The Spirit of the Laws*  
(1748)



The powers of government should be separated into executive, legislative, and judicial branches, to prevent any one group from gaining too much power.

"In order to have . . . liberty, it is necessary that government be set up so that one man need not be afraid of another."

His ideas about separation of powers greatly influenced framers of U.S. Constitution.

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## ACTIVITY THREE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESOURCE CARD 5

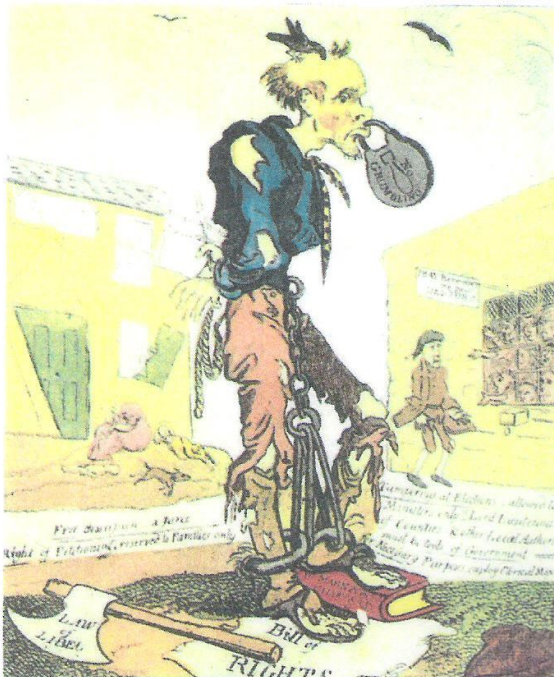
#### Social Issues of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries



At left, a caricature satirizing the inequality of taxation in Europe during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It represents a peasant carrying on his back a judge, a bishop, and a nobleman.

Below, left, an 18<sup>th</sup> century British print exposing lack of liberty. Repeated protests arose against restrictions imposed by monarchies. The aim of these restrictions was to repress liberals whose ideas might endanger the monarchies. An effective means of doing this was control of public opinion.

Below, right, the 17<sup>th</sup> century French political cartoon "The Spider and the Fly." The caption on the lower left side of this illustration states, "The noble is the spider, the peasant the fly." The caption on the upper right notes, "The more people have, the more they want. The poor man brings everything – wheat, fruit, money, vegetables. The greedy lord sitting there ready to take everything will not even give him the favor of a glance."



### DEMOCRATIC IDEALS

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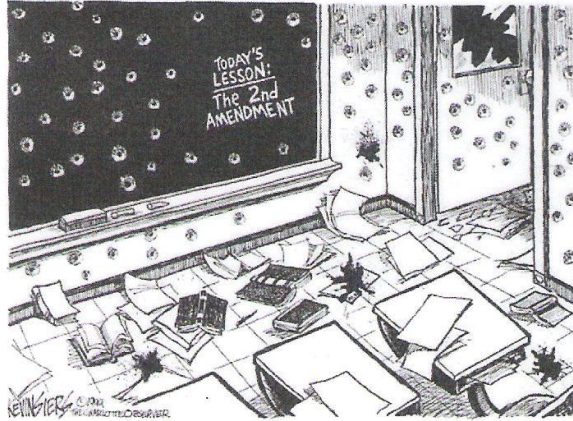
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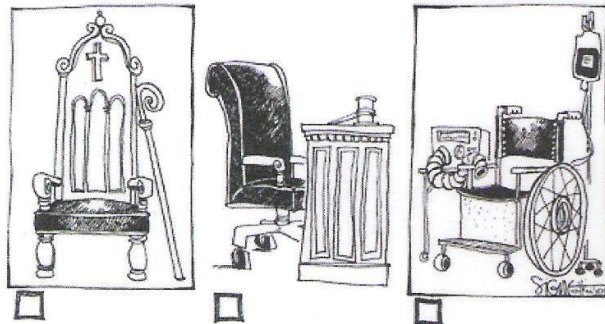
### Modern-day Political Cartoons



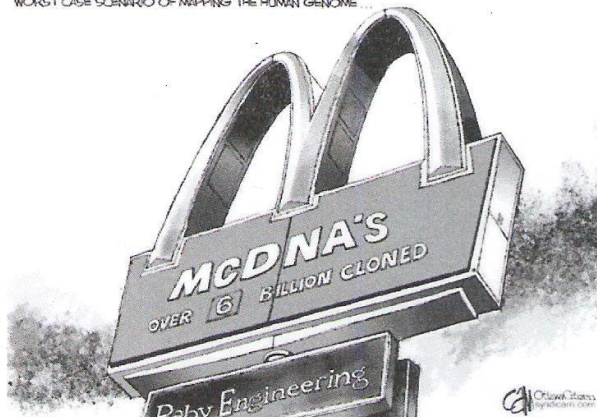
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THE BEST SEAT for DECIDING the MORALITY of ASSISTED SUICIDE



WORST CASE SCENARIO OF MAPPING THE HUMAN GENOME...



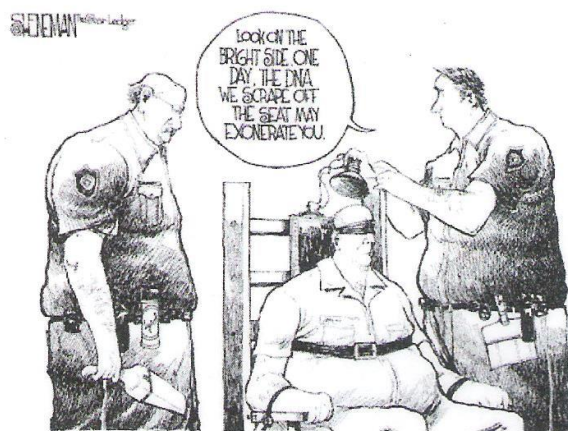
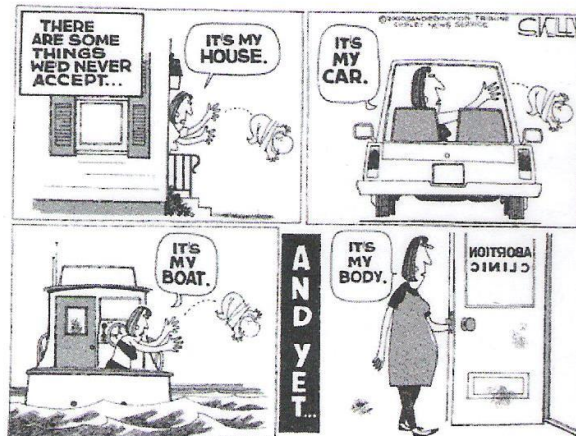
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## ACTIVITY THREE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESOURCE CARD 7 Modern-day Political Cartoons



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