



We the People

*An exploration of democracy in the light of
history*

by Thomas Kindig

Many people learn that it is impossible to accurately view the politics and activities of our day without an understanding of the history behind them. It is not only the right but the responsibility of a citizen to explore and seek to understand one's government, one's relationship to it, and a government's relationship to the larger world.

*We have just passed through another election season. Whether you are satisfied with the outcome or not, you should not overlook the miracle of the process. This peaceful, and even civil, transition of government from one leader to another is a rare and delicate thing; achieved in but a handful of nations. The process, generally referred to as *Democracy*, is won and maintained only at great cost. We cannot take it for granted. Herein we explore the meaning of democracy through important documents from the history of the United States, and of the World.



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Have you been doing some writing? Graphic Arts? How about a really sweet application that might work through what you see here? We are working to make a point: it's time for *electronic* books and magazines. These are becoming available on CD-ROM, but what about smaller works?

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We would like to see poetry, short stories, comics, graphic portfolios. . . any other ideas? Give us a try. We won't be trying any full-length novels, but short of that we are willing to take on a variety of material. As with features above, we suggest that you submit at least twenty pages of material.

Your Ideas

Have I thought of everything? Of course not. Chances are good that you have an idea that would never occur to me. So why not give it a go; let me know. The only thing it will cost you is some time.

to:ind

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The Preparation of *We the People*

We the People was prepared with the aid of the following tools: *Microsoft Word for Windows*[™], for word processing, formatting; *Paintbrush*[™] for Windows, for original graphics, final color and bitmap formatting; *Corel system's Corel Draw!*[™], for original graphics; *Logitech Scanman 256*[™], for scanned images of historical reference; *Microsoft Windows SDK*[™] help development tools, for final preparation of product. **It is said that a craftsman is only as good as his tools. Please support the producers of fine tools by paying for their work. They make life a lot more fun for all of us!**

✳️ The base system for this endeavor was a *Uniq*[™] 286/16 with Four Meg of RAM, a 91 Meg Hard Drive, and Super VGA. While the death of the 286 has been exaggerated, it has not been exaggerated by much! The author would appreciate your generous support so that he can spend more time working and less time waiting.

✳️ ASCII for all of the Historical documents found here was obtained from various sources, most notably: *Comptons On-Line Encyclopedia*, compliments of *America On-Line*[™]; The East West Educational Development Foundation, 49 Temple Place, Boston Ma.; and with reference from the following: The 1992 *World Almanac & Book of Facts*, Pharos Books; *The American People Vol. I*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York. The text of the Magna Carta compliments of Gerald Murphy (The Cleveland Free-Net - aa300), prepared by Nancy Troutman (The Cleveland Free-Net - aa345) and distributed by the Cybercasting Services Division of the National Public Telecomputing Network (NPTN).

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- ✳ *The Magna Carta*
- ✳ *The Declaration of Independence*
- ✳ *The Articles of Confederation*
- ✳ *The Constitution of the United States of America*
- ✳ *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*
- ✳ *Legacy: From the Constitutions of ten Nations*

THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION



The Articles of Confederation

To all to whom these Presents shall come, we the undersigned Delegates of the States affixed to our Names, send greeting.

Whereas the Delegates of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, did, on the 15th day of November, in the Year of Our Lord One thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy seven, and in the Second Year of the Independence of America, agree to certain articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the States of New-hampshire, Massachusetts-bay, Rhodeisland and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, and Georgia in the words following, viz. Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the states of Newhampshire, Massachusetts-bay, Rhodeisland and Providence Plantations, Connecticut New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina and Georgia.

Article I.

The Stile of this confederacy shall be The United States of America.

Article II.

Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.

Article III.

The said states hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defence, the security of their Liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretence whatever.

Article IV.

The better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the people of the different states in this union, the free inhabitants of each of these states, paupers, vagabonds and fugitives from justice excepted, shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several states; and the people of each state shall have free ingress and regress to and from any other state, and shall enjoy therein all the privileges of trade and commerce, subject to the same duties impositions and restrictions as the inhabitants thereof respectively, provided that such restriction shall not extend so far as to prevent the removal of property imported into any state, to any other state, of which the Owner is an inhabitant; provided also that no imposition, duties or restriction shall be laid by any state, on the property of the united states, or either of them. If any Person guilty of, or charged with treason, felony, - or other high misdemeanor in any state, shall flee from Justice, and be found in any of the united states, he shall, upon demand of the Governor or executive power, of the state from which he fled, be delivered up and removed to the state having jurisdiction of his offence. Full faith and credit shall be given in each of these states to the records, acts and judicial proceedings of the courts and magistrates of every other state.

Article V.

For the more convenient management of the general interests of the united states, delegates shall be annually appointed in such manner as the legislature of each state shall direct, to meet in Congress on the first Monday in November, in every year, with a power reserved to each state, to recal its delegates, or any of them, at any time within the year, and to send others in their stead, for the remainder of the Year.

No state shall be represented in Congress by less than two, nor by more than seven Members; and no person shall be capable of being a delegate for more than three years in any term of six years; nor shall any person, being a delegate, be capable of holding any office under the united states, for which he, or another for his benefit receives any salary, fees or emolument of any kind.

Each state shall maintain its own delegates in a meeting of the states, and while they act as members of the committee of the states. In determining questions in the united states in Congress assembled, each state shall have one vote.

Freedom of speech and debate in Congress shall not be impeached or questioned in any Court, or place out of Congress, and the members of congress shall be protected in their persons from arrests and imprisonments, during the time of their going to and from, and attendance on congress, except for treason, felony, or breach of the peace.

Article VI.

No state, without the Consent of the united states in congress assembled, shall send any embassy to, or receive any embassy from, or enter into any conference agreement, alliance or treaty with any King prince or state; nor shall any person holding any office of profit or trust under the united states, or any of them, accept of any present, emolument, office or title of any kind whatever from any king, prince or foreign state; nor shall the united states in congress assembled, or any of them, grant any title of nobility.

No two or more states shall enter into any treaty, confederation or alliance whatever between them, without the consent of the united states in congress assembled, specifying accurately the purposes for which the same is to be entered into, and how long it shall continue.

No state shall lay any imposts or duties, which may interfere with any stipulations in treaties, entered into by the united states in congress assembled, with any king, prince or state, in pursuance of any treaties already proposed by congress, to the courts of France and Spain.

No vessels of war shall be kept up in time of peace by any state, except such number only, as shall be deemed necessary by the united states in congress assembled, for the defence of such state, or its trade; nor shall any body of forces be kept up by any state, in time of peace, except such number only, as in the judgment of the united states, in congress assembled, shall be deemed requisite to garrison the forts necessary for the defence of such state; but every state shall always keep up a well regulated and disciplined militia, sufficiently armed and accoutred, and shall provide and constantly have ready for use, in public stores, a due number of field pieces and tents, and a proper quantity of arms, ammunition and camp equipage.

No state shall engage in any war without the consent of the united states in congress assembled, unless such state be actually invaded by enemies, or shall have received certain advice of a resolution being formed by some nation of Indians to invade such state, and the danger is so imminent as not to admit of a delay till the united states in congress assembled can be consulted: nor shall any state grant commissions to any ships or vessels of war, nor letters of marque or reprisal, except it be after a declaration of war by the united states in congress assembled, and then only against the kingdom or state and the subjects thereof, against which war has been so declared, and under such regulations as shall be established by the united states in congress assembled, unless such state be infested by pirates, in which case vessels of war may be fitted out for that occasion, and kept so long as the danger shall continue, or

until the united states in congress assembled, shall determine otherwise.

Article VII.

When land-forces are raised by any state for the common defence, all officers of or under the rank of colonel, shall be appointed by the legislature of each state respectively, by whom such forces shall be raised, or in such manner as such state shall direct, and all vacancies shall be filled up by the State which first made the appointment.

Article VIII.

All charges of war, and all other expences that shall be incurred for the common defence or general welfare, and allowed by the united states in congress assembled, shall be defrayed out of a common treasury, which shall be supplied by the several states in proportion to the value of all land within each state, granted to or surveyed for any Person, as such land and the buildings and improvements thereon shall be estimated according to such mode as the united states in congress assembled, shall from time to time direct and appoint.

The taxes for paying that proportion shall be laid and levied by the authority and direction of the legislatures of the several states within the time agreed upon by the united states in congress assembled.

Article IX.

The united states in congress assembled, shall have the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace and war, except in the cases mentioned in the sixth article--of sending and receiving ambassadors--entering into treaties and alliances, provided that no treaty of commerce shall be made whereby the legislative power of the respective states shall be restrained from imposing such imposts and duties on foreigners as their own people are subjected to, or from prohibiting the exportation or importation of any species of goods or commodities, whatsoever--of establishing rules for deciding in all cases, what captures on land or water shall be legal, and in what manner prizes taken by land or naval forces in the service of the united states shall be divided or appropriated--of granting letters of marque and reprisal in times of peace--appointing courts for the trial of piracies and felonies committed on the high seas and establishing courts for receiving and determining finally appeals in all cases of captures, provided that no member of congress shall be appointed a judge of any of the said courts.

The united states in congress assembled shall also be the last resort on appeal in all disputes and differences now subsisting or that hereafter may arise between two or more states concerning boundary, jurisdiction or any other cause whatever; which authority shall always be exercised in the manner following. Whenever the legislative or executive authority or lawful agent of any state in controversy with another shall present a petition to congress stating the matter in question and praying for a hearing, notice thereof shall be given by order of congress to the legislative or executive authority of the other state in controversy, and a day assigned for the appearance of the parties by their lawful agents, who shall then be directed to appoint by joint consent, commissioners or judges to constitute a court for hearing and determining the matter in question: but if they cannot agree, congress shall name three persons out of each of the united states, and from the list of such persons each party shall alternately strike out one, the petitioners beginning, until the number shall be reduced to thirteen; and from that number not less than seven, nor more than nine names as congress shall direct, shall in the presence of congress be drawn out by lot, and the persons whose names shall be so drawn or any five of them, shall be commissioners or judges, to hear and finally determine the controversy, so always as a major part of the judges who shall hear the cause shall agree in the determination: and if either party shall neglect to attend at the day appointed, without showing reasons, which congress shall judge sufficient, or being present shall refuse to strike, the congress shall proceed to nominate three persons out of each state, and the secretary of congress shall strike in behalf of such party absent or refusing; and the judgment and sentence of the court to be appointed, in the manner before prescribed, shall be final and conclusive; and

if any of the parties shall refuse to submit to the authority of such court, or to appear or defend their claim or cause, the court shall nevertheless proceed to pronounce sentence, or judgment, which shall in like manner be final and decisive, the judgment or sentence and other proceedings being in either case transmitted to congress, and lodged among the acts of congress for the security of the parties concerned: provided that every commissioner, before he sits in judgment, shall take an oath to be administered by one of the judges of the supreme or superior court of the state, where the cause shall be tried, "well and truly to hear and determine the matter in question, according to the best of his judgment, without favour, affection or hope of reward:" provided also, that no state shall be deprived of territory for the benefit of the united states.

All controversies concerning the private right of soil claimed under different grants of two or more states, whose jurisdictions as they may respect such lands, and the states which passed such grants are adjusted, the said grants or either of them being at the same time claimed to have originated antecedent to such settlement of jurisdiction, shall on the petition of either party to the congress of the united states, be finally determined as near as may be in the same manner as is before prescribed for deciding disputes respecting territorial jurisdiction between different states.

The united states in congress assembled shall also have the sole and exclusive right and power of regulating the alloy and value of coin struck by their own authority, or by that of the respective states--fixing the standard of weights and measures throughout the united states--regulating the trade and managing all affairs with the Indians, not members of any of the states, provided that the legislative right of any state within its own limits be not infringed or violated--establishing or regulating post offices from one state to another, throughout all the united states, and exacting such postage on the papers passing thro' the same as may be requisite to defray the expences of the said office--appointing all officers of the land forces, in the service of the united states, excepting regimental officers--appointing all the officers of the naval forces, and commissioning all officers whatever in the service of the united states--making rules for the government and regulation of the said land and naval forces, and directing their operations.

The united states in congress assembled shall have authority to appoint a committee, to sit in the recess of congress, to be denominated "A Committee of the States," and to consist of one delegate from each state; and to appoint such other committees and civil officers as may be necessary for managing the general affairs of the united states under their direction--to appoint one of their number to preside, provided that no person be allowed to serve in the office of president more than one year in any term of three years; to ascertain the necessary sums of money to be raised for the service of the united states, and to appropriate and apply the same for defraying the public expences to borrow money, or emit bills on the credit of the united states, transmitting every half year to the respective states an account of the sums of money so borrowed or emitted,--to build and equip a navy--to agree upon the number of land forces, and to make requisitions from each state for its quota, in proportion to the number of white inhabitants in such state; which requisition shall be binding, and thereupon the legislature of each state shall appoint the regimental officers, raise the men and cloath, arm and equip them in a soldier like manner, at the expence of the united states; and the officers and men so cloathed, armed and quipped shall march to the place apointed, and within the time agreed on by the united states in congress assembled: But if the united states in congress assembled shall, on consideration of circumstances judge proper that any state should not raise men, or should raise a smaller number than its quota, and that any other state should raise a greater number of men than the quota thereof, such extra number shall be raised, officered, cloathed, armed and equipped in the same manner as the quota of such state, unless the legislature of such state shall judge that such extra number cannot be safely spared out of the same, in which case they shall raise officer, cloath, arm and equip as many of such extra number as they judge can be safely spared. And the officers and men so cloathed, armed and equipped, shall march to the place appointed, and within the time agreed on by the united states in congress assembled.

The united states in congress assembled shall never engage in a war, nor grant letters of marque and

reprisal in time of peace, nor enter into any treaties or alliances, nor coin money, nor regulate the value thereof, nor ascertain the sums and expences necessary for the defence and welfare of the united states, or any of them, nor emit bills, nor borrow money on the credit of the united states, nor appropriate money, nor agree upon the number of vessels of war, to be built or purchased, or the number of land or sea forces to be raised, nor appoint a commander in chief of the army or navy, unless nine states assent to the same: nor shall a question on any other point, except for adjourning from day to day be determined, unless by the votes of a majority of the united states in congress assembled.

The congress of the united states shall have power to adjourn to any time within the year, and to any place within the united states, so that no period of adjournment be for a longer duration than the space of six Months, and shall publish the Journal of their proceedings monthly, except such parts thereof relating to treaties, alliances or military operations, as in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the delegates of each state on any question shall be entered on the Journal, when it is desired by any delegate; and the delegates of a state, or any of them, at his or their request shall be furnished with a transcript of the said Journal, except such parts as are above excepted, to lay before the legislatures of the several states.

Article X.

The committee of the states, or any nine of them, shall be authorized to execute, in the recess of congress, such of the powers of congress as the united states in congress assembled, by the consent of nine states, shall from time to time think expedient to vest them with; provided that no power be delegated to the said committee, for the exercise of which, by the articles of confederation, the voice of nine states in the congress of the united states assembled is requisite.

Article XI.

Canada acceding to this confederation, and joining in the measures of the united states, shall be admitted into, and entitled to all the advantages of this union: but no other colony shall be admitted into the same, unless such admission be agreed to by nine states.

Article XII.

All bills of credit emitted, monies borrowed and debts contracted by, or under the authority of congress, before the assembling of the united states, in pursuance of the present confederation, shall be deemed and considered as a charge against the united states, for payment and satisfaction whereof the said united states, and the public faith are hereby solemnly pledged.

Article XIII.

Every state shall abide by the determinations of the united states in congress assembled, on all questions which by this confederation are submitted to them. And the Articles of this confederation shall be inviolably observed by every state, and the union shall be perpetual; nor shall any alteration at any time hereafter be made in any of them; unless such alteration be agreed to in a congress of the united states, and be afterwards confirmed by the legislatures of every state.

And Whereas it hath pleased the Great Governor of the World to incline the hearts of the legislatures we respectively represent in congress, to approve of, and to authorize us to ratify the said articles of confederation and perpetual union. Know Ye that we the undersigned delegates, by virtue of the power and authority to us given for that purpose, do by these presents, in the name and in behalf of our respective constituents, fully and entirely ratify and confirm each and every of the said articles of confederation and perpetual union, and all and singular the matters and things therein contained: And we do further solemnly plight and engage the faith of our respective constituents, that they shall abide by the determinations of the united states in congress assembled, on all questions, which by the said confederation are submitted to them. And that the articles thereof shall be inviolably observed by the

states we respectively represent, and that the union shall be perpetual. In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands in Congress. Done at Philadelphia in the state of Pennsylvania the ninth day of July in the Year of our Lord one Thousand seven Hundred and Seventy-eight, and in the third year of the independence of America.

On the part of & behalf of the
State of New Hampshire:
Josiah Bartlett,
John Wentworth. Junr
August 8th, 1778.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Rhode-Island and
Providence Plantations:
William Ellery,
Henry Marchant,
John Collins.

On the part and behalf of the
State of New York:
Jas Duane,
Fra: Lewis,
Wm Duer,
Gouvvr Morris.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Pennsylvania:
Robert Morris,
Daniel Roberdeau,
Jon. Bayard Smith,
William Clingar,
Joseph Reed,
22d July, 1778.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Maryland:
John Hanson, March 1, 1781,
Daniel Carroll, do.

On the part and behalf of the
State of North Carolina:
John Penn, July 21st, 1778,
Corns Harnett,
Jno Williams.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Georgia:
Jno Walton, 24th July, 1778,
Edwd Telfair,
Edwd Langworthy.

On the part of & behalf of the
State of Massachusetts Bay:
John Hancock,
Samuel Adams,
Elbridge Gerry,
Francis Dana,
James Lovell,
Samuel Holten.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Connecticut:
Roger Sherman,
Samuel Huntington,
Oliver Wolcott,
Titus Hosmer,
Andrew Adams.

On the Part and in Behalf of the
State of New Jersey,
November 26th, 1778:
Jno Witherspoon,
Nathl Scudder.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Delaware:
Thos McKean, Febr 22d, 1779,
John Dickinson, May 5th, 1779,
Nicholas Van Dyke.

On the part and behalf of the
State of Virginia:
Richard Henry Lee,
John Banister,
Thomas Adams,
Jno Harvie,
Francis Lightfoot Lee.

On the part and behalf of the
State of South Carolina:
Henry Laurens,
William Henry Drayton,
Jno Mathews,
Richd Hutson,
Thos Heyward, junr.



The **ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION AND PERPETUAL UNION** were drafted by the Continental Congress in 1777, but were not adopted until ratified by all of the thirteen states on November 15 of 1781. Several of the states had territorial claims which were not in keeping with the final article; they finally dropped these in favor of the long-term interests of the union. Five years prior, on July 4, 1776, the Congress had adopted **THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**. In November of 1782 the British cabinet would sign an agreement in Paris recognizing U.S. independence. This document outlined the basis for a confederation of states; and defined the rights and responsibilities of each state joined in this union.

Note...

This document is presented "as is" without linking or reference. The Editor is an interested novice, and not an Historian or one so literate of the law as to (correctly) establish the connections between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. ✨

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



The Declaration of Independence

When in the Course of Human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.

Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

HE has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

HE has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

HE has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

HE has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

HE has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his invasions on the Rights of the People.

HE has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the

Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

***HE** has endeavored to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.*

***HE** has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.*

***HE** has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.*

***HE** has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harrass our People, and eat out their Substance.*

***HE** has kept among us, in times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the consent of our Legislatures.*

***HE** has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.*

***HE** has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: **FOR** quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us: **FOR** protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: **FOR** cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World: **FOR** imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: **FOR** depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury; **FOR** transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences; **FOR** abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing herein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies: **FOR** taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: **FOR** suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.*

***HE** has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.*

***HE** has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.*

***HE** is, at this time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.*

***HE** has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.*

***HE** has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.*

***IN** every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.*

***NOR** have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from time to time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence.*

They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies

in War, in Peace, Friends.

WE, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

The Declaration was signed by the following delegates to the Congress:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| John Adams (Mass.) | William Hooper (N.C.) | George Read (Del.) |
| Samuel Adams (Mass.) | Stephen Hopkins (R.I.) | Caesar Rodney (Del.) |
| Josiah Bartlett (N.H.) | Francis Hopkinson (N.J.) | George Ross (Penn.) |
| Carter Braxton (Va.) | Samuel Huntington (Conn.) | Benjamin Rush (Penn.) |
| Charles Carroll (Md.) | Thomas Jefferson (Va.) | Edward Rutledge (S.C.) |
| Samuel Chase (Md.) | Richard Henry Lee (Va.) | Roger Sherman (Conn.) |
| Abraham Clark (N.J.) | Francis Lightfoot Lee (Va.) | James Smith (Penn.) |
| George Clymer (Penn.) | Francis Lewis (N.Y.) | Richard Stockton (N.J.) |
| William Ellery (R.I.) | Philip Livingston (N.Y.) | Thomas Stone (Md.) |
| William Floyd (N.Y.) | Thomas Lynch, Jr. (S.C.) | George Taylor (Penn.) |
| Benjamin Franklin (Penn.) | Thomas McKean (Del.) | Matthew Thornton (N.H.) |
| Elbridge Gerry (Mass.) | Arthur Middleton (S.C.) | George Walton (Ga.) |
| Button Gwinnett (Ga.) | Lewis Morris (N.Y.) | William Whipple (N.H.) |
| Lyman Hall (Ga.) | Robert Morris (Penn.) | William Williams (Conn.) |
| John Hancock (Mass.) | John Morton (Penn.) | James Wilson (Penn.) |
| Benjamin Harrison (Va.) | Thomas Nelson, Jr. (Va.) | John Witherspoon (N.J.) |
| John Hart (N.J.) | William Paca (Md.) | Oliver Wolcott (Conn.) |
| Joseph Hewes (N.C.) | Robert Treat Paine (Mass.) | George Wythe (Va.) |
| Thomas Heyward, Jr. (S.C.) | John Penn (N.C.) | |

The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress, in Philadelphia, on July 4, 1776, and was signed by John Hancock as President and by Charles Thomson as Secretary. A unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America, this document, was written by Thomas Jefferson. He used fragments from earlier work, most notably from a declaration of grievances that he had written for the new Virginia Bill of Rights. He took a draft of the Declaration to Benjamin Franklin who strengthened the language. Still more changes were made by the Continental Congress before the document was finally adopted on one of the best known dates in our history. It was published first on July 6 in the Pennsylvania Evening Post. A copy of the Declaration, engrossed on parchment, was signed by members of Congress on and after August 2, 1776.

I discovered this document in 1982 while helping a friend with citizenship classes. It is truly one of the most remarkable statements ever written. If you doubt this, think about how you would describe the contents of the preamble to someone with limited facility in English. The Declaration has not worn with age. We are familiar with the conditions that it describes. The affirmation of the rights of individual human beings (and of free associations of people) is by no means a standard practice in our world today. Read either in the context of 1776 or today, this is a most powerful and moving document.



The text of **THE MAGNA CARTA** ✨



The Magna Carta (The Great Charter):

Preamble:

John, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and count of Anjou, to the archbishop, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciaries, foresters, sheriffs, stewards, servants, and to all his bailiffs and liege subjects, greetings. Know that, having regard to God and for the salvation of our soul, and those of all our ancestors and heirs, and unto the honor of God and the advancement of his holy Church and for the rectifying of our realm, we have granted as underwritten by advice of our venerable fathers, Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and cardinal of the holy Roman Church, Henry, archbishop of Dublin, William of London, Peter of Winchester, Jocelyn of Bath and Glastonbury, Hugh of Lincoln, Walter of Worcester, William of Coventry, Benedict of Rochester, bishops; of Master Pandulf, subdeacon and member of the household of our lord the Pope, of brother Aymeric (master of the Knights of the Temple in England), and of the illustrious men William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, William, earl of Salisbury, William, earl of Warenne, William, earl of Arundel, Alan of Galloway (constable of Scotland), Waren Fitz Gerold, Peter Fitz Herbert, Hubert De Burgh (seneschal of Poitou), Hugh de Neville, Matthew Fitz Herbert, Thomas Basset, Alan Basset, Philip d'Aubigny, Robert of Roppesley, John Marshal, John Fitz Hugh, and others, our liegemen.

1. In the first place we have granted to God, and by this our present charter confirmed for us and our heirs forever that the English Church shall be free, and shall have her rights entire, and her liberties inviolate; and we will that it be thus observed; which is apparent from this that the freedom of elections, which is reckoned most important and very essential to the English Church, we, of our pure and unconstrained will, did grant, and did by our charter confirm and did obtain the ratification of the same from our lord, Pope Innocent III, before the quarrel arose between us and our barons: and this we will observe, and our will is that it be observed in good faith by our heirs forever. We have also granted to all freemen of our kingdom, for us and our heirs forever, all the underwritten liberties, to be had and held by them and their heirs, of us and our heirs forever.

2. If any of our earls or barons, or others holding of us in chief by military service shall have died, and at the time of his death his heir shall be full of age and owe "relief", he shall have his inheritance by the old relief, to wit, the heir or heirs of an earl, for the whole barony of an earl by L100; the heir or heirs of a baron, L100 for a whole barony; the heir or heirs of a knight, 100s, at most, and whoever owes less let him give less, according to the ancient custom of fees.

3. If, however, the heir of any one of the aforesaid has been under age and in wardship, let him have his inheritance without relief and without fine when he comes of age.

4. The guardian of the land of an heir who is thus under age, shall take from the land of the heir nothing but reasonable produce, reasonable customs, and reasonable services, and that without destruction or waste of men or goods; and if we have committed the wardship of the lands of any such minor to the sheriff, or to any other who is responsible to us for its issues, and he has made destruction or waster of what he holds in wardship, we will take of him amends, and the land shall be committed to two lawful and discreet men of that fee, who shall be responsible for the issues to us or to him to whom we shall assign them; and if we have given or sold the wardship of any such land to anyone and he has therein made destruction or waste, he shall lose that wardship, and it shall be transferred to two lawful and

discreet men of that fief, who shall be responsible to us in like manner as aforesaid.

5. The guardian, moreover, so long as he has the wardship of the land, shall keep up the houses, parks, fishponds, stanks, mills, and other things pertaining to the land, out of the issues of the same land; and he shall restore to the heir, when he has come to full age, all his land, stocked with ploughs and wainage, according as the season of husbandry shall require, and the issues of the land can reasonable bear.

6. Heirs shall be married without disparagement, yet so that before the marriage takes place the nearest in blood to that heir shall have notice.

7. A widow, after the death of her husband, shall forthwith and without difficulty have her marriage portion and inheritance; nor shall she give anything for her dower, or for her marriage portion, or for the inheritance which her husband and she held on the day of the death of that husband; and she may remain in the house of her husband for forty days after his death, within which time her dower shall be assigned to her.

8. No widow shall be compelled to marry, so long as she prefers to live without a husband; provided always that she gives security not to marry without our consent, if she holds of us, or without the consent of the lord of whom she holds, if she holds of another.

9. Neither we nor our bailiffs will seize any land or rent for any debt, as long as the chattels of the debtor are sufficient to repay the debt; nor shall the sureties of the debtor be distrained so long as the principal debtor is able to satisfy the debt; and if the principal debtor shall fail to pay the debt, having nothing wherewith to pay it, then the sureties shall answer for the debt; and let them have the lands and rents of the debtor, if they desire them, until they are indemnified for the debt which they have paid for him, unless the principal debtor can show proof that he is discharged thereof as against the said sureties.

10. If one who has borrowed from the Jews any sum, great or small, die before that loan be repaid, the debt shall not bear interest while the heir is under age, of whomsoever he may hold; and if the debt fall into our hands, we will not take anything except the principal sum contained in the bond.

11. And if anyone die indebted to the Jews, his wife shall have her dower and pay nothing of that debt; and if any children of the deceased are left under age, necessaries shall be provided for them in keeping with the holding of the deceased; and out of the residue the debt shall be paid, reserving, however, service due to feudal lords; in like manner let it be done touching debts due to others than Jews.

12. No scutage nor aid shall be imposed on our kingdom, unless by common counsel of our kingdom, except for ransoming our person, for making our eldest son a knight, and for once marrying our eldest daughter; and for these there shall not be levied more than a reasonable aid. In like manner it shall be done concerning aids from the city of London.

13. And the city of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, as well by land as by water; furthermore, we decree and grant that all other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports shall have all their liberties and free customs.

14. And for obtaining the common counsel of the kingdom anent the assessing of an aid (except in the three cases aforesaid) or of a scutage, we will cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons, severally by our letters; and we will moreover cause to be summoned generally, through our sheriffs and bailiffs, and others who hold of us in chief, for a fixed date, namely, after the expiry of at least forty days, and at a fixed place; and in all letters of such summons we will specify the reason of the summons. And when the summons has thus been made, the business shall proceed on the

day appointed, according to the counsel of such as are present, although not all who were summoned have come.

15. We will not for the future grant to anyone license to take an aid from his own free tenants, except to ransom his person, to make his eldest son a knight, and once to marry his eldest daughter; and on each of these occasions there shall be levied only a reasonable aid.

16. No one shall be distrained for performance of greater service for a knight's fee, or for any other free tenement, than is due therefrom.

17. Common pleas shall not follow our court, but shall be held in some fixed place.

18. Inquests of novel disseisin, of mort d'ancestor, and of darrein presentment shall not be held elsewhere than in their own county courts, and that in manner following; We, or, if we should be out of the realm, our chief justiciar, will send two justiciaries through every county four times a year, who shall alone with four knights of the county chosen by the county, hold the said assizes in the county court, on the day and in the place of meeting of that court.

19. And if any of the said assizes cannot be taken on the day of the county court, let there remain of the knights and freeholders, who were present at the county court on that day, as many as may be required for the efficient making of judgments, according as the business be more or less.

20. A freeman shall not be amerced for a slight offense, except in accordance with the degree of the offense; and for a grave offense he shall be amerced in accordance with the gravity of the offense, yet saving always his "contentment"; and a merchant in the same way, saving his "merchandise"; and a villein shall be amerced in the same way, saving his "wainage" if they have fallen into our mercy: and none of the aforesaid ameracements shall be imposed except by the oath of honest men of the neighborhood.

21. Earls and barons shall not be amerced except through their peers, and only in accordance with the degree of the offense.

22. A clerk shall not be amerced in respect of his lay holding except after the manner of the others aforesaid; further, he shall not be amerced in accordance with the extent of his ecclesiastical benefice.

23. No village or individual shall be compelled to make bridges at river banks, except those who from of old were legally bound to do so.

24. No sheriff, constable, coroners, or others of our bailiffs, shall hold pleas of our Crown.

25. All counties, hundred, wapentakes, and trithings (except our demesne manors) shall remain at the old rents, and without any additional payment.

26. If anyone holding of us a lay fief shall die, and our sheriff or bailiff shall exhibit our letters patent of summons for a debt which the deceased owed us, it shall be lawful for our sheriff or bailiff to attach and enroll the chattels of the deceased, found upon the lay fief, to the value of that debt, at the sight of law worthy men, provided always that nothing whatever be thence removed until the debt which is evident shall be fully paid to us; and the residue shall be left to the executors to fulfill the will of the deceased; and if there be nothing due from him to us, all the chattels shall go to the deceased, saving to his wife and children their reasonable shares.

27. If any freeman shall die intestate, his chattels shall be distributed by the hands of his nearest kinsfolk

and friends, under supervision of the Church, saving to every one the debts which the deceased owed to him.

28. No constable or other bailiff of ours shall take corn or other provisions from anyone without immediately tendering money therefor, unless he can have postponement thereof by permission of the seller.

29. No constable shall compel any knight to give money in lieu of castle-guard, when he is willing to perform it in his own person, or (if he himself cannot do it from any reasonable cause) then by another responsible man. Further, if we have led or sent him upon military service, he shall be relieved from guard in proportion to the time during which he has been on service because of us.

30. No sheriff or bailiff of ours, or other person, shall take the horses or carts of any freeman for transport duty, against the will of the said freeman.

31. Neither we nor our bailiffs shall take, for our castles or for any other work of ours, wood which is not ours, against the will of the owner of that wood.

32. We will not retain beyond one year and one day, the lands those who have been convicted of felony, and the lands shall thereafter be handed over to the lords of the fiefs.

33. All kydells for the future shall be removed altogether from Thames and Medway, and throughout all England, except upon the seashore.

34. The writ which is called praecipe shall not for the future be issued to anyone, regarding any tenement whereby a freeman may lose his court.

35. Let there be one measure of wine throughout our whole realm; and one measure of ale; and one measure of corn, to wit, "the London quarter"; and one width of cloth (whether dyed, or russet, or "halberget"), to wit, two ells within the selvedges; of weights also let it be as of measures.

36. Nothing in future shall be given or taken for a writ of inquisition of life or limbs, but freely it shall be granted, and never denied.

37. If anyone holds of us by fee-farm, either by socage or by burage, or of any other land by knight's service, we will not (by reason of that fee-farm, socage, or burage), have the wardship of the heir, or of such land of his as if of the fief of that other; nor shall we have wardship of that fee-farm, socage, or burage, unless such fee-farm owes knight's service. We will not by reason of any small serjeancy which anyone may hold of us by the service of rendering to us knives, arrows, or the like, have wardship of his heir or of the land which he holds of another lord by knight's service.

38. No bailiff for the future shall, upon his own unsupported complaint, put anyone to his "law", without credible witnesses brought for this purposes.

39. No freemen shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or exiled or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him nor send upon him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay, right or justice.

41. All merchants shall have safe and secure exit from England, and entry to England, with the right to tarry there and to move about as well by land as by water, for buying and selling by the ancient and right

customs, quit from all evil tolls, except (in time of war) such merchants as are of the land at war with us. And if such are found in our land at the beginning of the war, they shall be detained, without injury to their bodies or goods, until information be received by us, or by our chief justiciar, how the merchants of our land found in the land at war with us are treated; and if our men are safe there, the others shall be safe in our land.

42. It shall be lawful in future for anyone (excepting always those imprisoned or outlawed in accordance with the law of the kingdom, and natives of any country at war with us, and merchants, who shall be treated as if above provided) to leave our kingdom and to return, safe and secure by land and water, except for a short period in time of war, on grounds of public policy- reserving always the allegiance due to us.

43. If anyone holding of some escheat (such as the honor of Wallingford, Nottingham, Boulogne, Lancaster, or of other escheats which are in our hands and are baronies) shall die, his heir shall give no other relief, and perform no other service to us than he would have done to the baron if that barony had been in the baron's hand; and we shall hold it in the same manner in which the baron held it.

44. Men who dwell without the forest need not henceforth come before our justiciaries of the forest upon a general summons, unless they are in plea, or sureties of one or more, who are attached for the forest.

45. We will appoint as justices, constables, sheriffs, or bailiffs only such as know the law of the realm and mean to observe it well.

46. All barons who have founded abbeys, concerning which they hold charters from the kings of England, or of which they have long continued possession, shall have the wardship of them, when vacant, as they ought to have.

47. All forests that have been made such in our time shall forthwith be disafforsted; and a similar course shall be followed with regard to river banks that have been placed "in defense" by us in our time.

48. All evil customs connected with forests and warrens, foresters and warreners, sheriffs and their officers, river banks and their wardens, shall immediately be inquired into in each county by twelve sworn knights of the same county chosen by the honest men of the same county, and shall, within forty days of the said inquest, be utterly abolished, so as never to be restored, provided always that we previously have intimation thereof, or our justiciar, if we should not be in England.

49. We will immediately restore all hostages and charters delivered to us by Englishmen, as sureties of the peace of faithful service.

50. We will entirely remove from their bailiwicks, the relations of Gerard of Athee (so that in future they shall have no bailiwick in England); namely, Engelard of Cigogne, Peter, Guy, and Andrew of Chanceaux, Guy of Cigogne, Geoffrey of Martigny with his brothers, Philip Mark with his brothers and his nephew Geoffrey, and the whole brood of the same.

51. As soon as peace is restored, we will banish from the kingdom all foreign born knights, crossbowmen, serjeants, and mercenary soldiers who have come with horses and arms to the kingdom's hurt.

52. If anyone has been dispossessed or removed by us, without the legal judgment of his peers, from his lands, castles, franchises, or from his right, we will immediately restore them to him; and if a dispute arise over this, then let it be decided by the five and twenty barons of whom mention is made below in the clause for securing the peace. Moreover, for all those possessions, from which anyone has, without the

lawful judgment of his peers, been disseised or removed, by our father, King Henry, or by our brother, King Richard, and which we retain in our hand (or which as possessed by others, to whom we are bound to warrant them) we shall have respite until the usual term of crusaders; excepting those things about which a plea has been raised, or an inquest made by our order, before our taking of the cross; but as soon as we return from the expedition, we will immediately grant full justice therein.

53. We shall have, moreover, the same respite and in the same manner in rendering justice concerning the disafforestation or retention of those forests which Henry our father and Richard our brother afforested, and concerning the wardship of lands which are of the fief of another (namely, such wardships as we have hitherto had by reason of a fief which anyone held of us by knight's service), and concerning abbeys founded on other fiefs than our own, in which the lord of the fee claims to have right; and when we have returned, or if we desist from our expedition, we will immediately grant full justice to all who complain of such things.

54. No one shall be arrested or imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman, for the death of any other than her husband.

55. All fines made with us unjustly and against the law of the land, and all amercements, imposed unjustly and against the law of the land, shall be entirely remitted, or else it shall be done concerning them according to the decision of the five and twenty barons whom mention is made below in the clause for securing the peace, or according to the judgment of the majority of the same, along with the aforesaid Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, if he can be present, and such others as he may wish to bring with him for this purpose, and if he cannot be present the business shall nevertheless proceed without him, provided always that if any one or more of the aforesaid five and twenty barons are in a similar suit, they shall be removed as far as concerns this particular judgment, others being substituted in their places after having been selected by the rest of the same five and twenty for this purpose only, and after having been sworn.

56. If we have disseised or removed Welshmen from lands or liberties, or other things, without the legal judgment of their peers in England or in Wales, they shall be immediately restored to them; and if a dispute arise over this, then let it be decided in the marches by the judgment of their peers; for the tenements in England according to the law of England, for tenements in Wales according to the law of Wales, and for tenements in the marches according to the law of the marches. Welshmen shall do the same to us and ours.

57. Further, for all those possessions from which any Welshman has, without the lawful judgment of his peers, been disseised or removed by King Henry our father, or King Richard our brother, and which we retain in our hand (or which are possessed by others, and which we ought to warrant), we will have respite until the usual term of crusaders; excepting those things about which a plea has been raised or an inquest made by our order before we took the cross; but as soon as we return (or if perchance we desist from our expedition), we will immediately grant full justice in accordance with the laws of the Welsh and in relation to the foresaid regions.

58. We will immediately give up the son of Llywelyn and all the hostages of Wales, and the charters delivered to us as security for the peace.

59. We will do towards Alexander, king of Scots, concerning the return of his sisters and his hostages, and concerning his franchises, and his right, in the same manner as we shall do towards our other barons of England, unless it ought to be otherwise according to the charters which we hold from William his father, formerly king of Scots; and this shall be according to the judgment of his peers in our court.

60. Moreover, all these aforesaid customs and liberties, the observances of which we have granted in our

kingdom as far as pertains to us towards our men, shall be observed by all of our kingdom, as well clergy as laymen, as far as pertains to them towards their men.

61. Since, moreover, for God and the amendment of our kingdom and for the better allaying of the quarrel that has arisen between us and our barons, we have granted all these concessions, desirous that they should enjoy them in complete and firm endurance forever, we give and grant to them the underwritten security, namely, that the barons choose five and twenty barons of the kingdom, whomsoever they will, who shall be bound with all their might, to observe and hold, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties we have granted and confirmed to them by this our present Charter, so that if we, or our justiciar, or our bailiffs or any one of our officers, shall in anything be at fault towards anyone, or shall have broken any one of the articles of this peace or of this security, and the offense be notified to four barons of the foresaid five and twenty, the said four barons shall repair to us (or our justiciar, if we are out of the realm) and, laying the transgression before us, petition to have that transgression redressed without delay. And if we shall not have corrected the transgression (or, in the event of our being out of the realm, if our justiciar shall not have corrected it) within forty days, reckoning from the time it has been intimated to us (or to our justiciar, if we should be out of the realm), the four barons aforesaid shall refer that matter to the rest of the five and twenty barons, and those five and twenty barons shall, together with the community of the whole realm, distrain and distress us in all possible ways, namely, by seizing our castles, lands, possessions, and in any other way they can, until redress has been obtained as they deem fit, saving harmless our own person, and the persons of our queen and children; and when redress has been obtained, they shall resume their old relations towards us. And let whoever in the country desires it, swear to obey the orders of the said five and twenty barons for the execution of all the aforesaid matters, and along with them, to molest us to the utmost of his power; and we publicly and freely grant leave to everyone who wishes to swear, and we shall never forbid anyone to swear.

All those, moreover, in the land who of themselves and of their own accord are unwilling to swear to the twenty five to help them in constraining and molesting us, we shall by our command compel the same to swear to the effect foresaid. And if any one of the five and twenty barons shall have died or departed from the land, or be incapacitated in any other manner which would prevent the foresaid provisions being carried out, those of the said twenty five barons who are left shall choose another in his place according to their own judgment, and he shall be sworn in the same way as the others. Further, in all matters, the execution of which is entrusted to these twenty five barons, if perchance these twenty five are present and disagree about anything, or if some of them, after being summoned, are unwilling or unable to be present, that which the majority of those present ordain or command shall be held as fixed and established, exactly as if the whole twenty five had concurred in this; and the said twenty five shall swear that they will faithfully observe all that is aforesaid, and cause it to be observed with all their might. And we shall procure nothing from anyone, directly or indirectly, whereby any part of these concessions and liberties might be revoked or diminished; and if any such things has been procured, let it be void and null, and we shall never use it personally or by another.

62. And all the will, hatreds, and bitterness that have arisen between us and our men, clergy and lay, from the date of the quarrel, we have completely remitted and pardoned to everyone. Moreover, all trespasses occasioned by the said quarrel, from Easter in the sixteenth year of our reign till the restoration of peace, we have fully remitted to all, both clergy and laymen, and completely forgiven, as far as pertains to us. And on this head, we have caused to be made for them letters testimonial patent of the lord Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, of the lord Henry, archbishop of Dublin, of the bishops aforesaid, and of Master Pandulf as touching this security and the concessions aforesaid.

63. Wherefore we will and firmly order that the English Church be free, and that the men in our kingdom have and hold all the aforesaid liberties, rights, and concessions, well and peaceably, freely and quietly,

fully and wholly, for themselves and their heirs, of us and our heirs, in all respects and in all places forever, as is aforesaid. An oath, moreover, has been taken, as well on our part as on the part of the barons, that all these conditions aforesaid shall be kept in good faith and without evil intent. Given under our hand - the above named and many others being witnesses - in the meadow which is called Runnymede, between Windsor and Staines, on the fifteenth day of June, in the seventeenth year of our reign.

THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



**THE UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS**



Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human right should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas the people of the United Nations have in the Charter rearmend their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore The General Assembly

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among, the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin,

property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental right granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subject to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecution genuinely arising from nonpolitical crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in the periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or persons any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

The declaration was the work of the UN Commission on Human Rights which met in January 1947 under the chairmanship of Elainore D. Roosevelt. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights they drew up was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948. It was the first effort to set common standards of achievement in human rights for all people of all nations.

*Excerpts from the Constitutions
of Ten Nations*

 *Canada*

 *Chile*

 *China*

 *France*

 *India*

 *Japan*

 *Mexico*

 *Nicaragua*

 *Philippines*

 *Jump to U.S. Constitution*

Excerpts from the Constitutions of Ten Nations ✨



We live in a large and complex world. Being a citizen of the "West" in general, and of the U.S. in particular, gives one a view of the entire world, if one chooses to look. Here are documents drafted in the context of religion, liberation, revolution, and following great wars -- all crafted with the type of concern and sincerity that characterizes the Constitution of your own nation: for I must believe that it would be difficult for any person to take these matters lightly. These documents show not only the legacy of the Constitution of the United States, but give us a clear picture of the cultures that drafted them, and a snapshot of the times in which they were drafted.

✨ *Canada*

✨ *Chile*

✨ *China*

✨ *France*

✨ *India*

✨ *Japan*

✨ *Mexico*

✨ *Nicaragua*

✨ *Philippines*



*Canada's Constitution Acts,
1867 to 1982*

Part I Schedule B

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law:

Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms

1. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Fundamental Freedoms

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
 - (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
 - (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
 - (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
 - (d) freedom of association.

Democratic Rights

3. Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.
4. (1) No House of Commons and no legislative assembly shall continue for longer than five years from the date fixed for the return of the writs at a general election of its members.

(2) In time of real or apprehended war, invasion or insurrection, a House of Commons may be continued by Parliament and a legislative assembly may be continued by the legislature beyond five years if such continuation is not opposed by the votes of more than one-third of the members of the House of Commons or the legislative assembly, as the case may be.
5. There shall be a sitting of Parliament and of each legislature at least once every twelve months.

Mobility Rights

6. (1) Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.

(2) Every citizen of Canada and every person who has the status of a permanent resident of Canada has the right (a) to move to and take up residence in any province; and (b) to pursue the gaining of a livelihood in any province.

(3) The rights specified in subsection (2) are subject to (a) any laws or practices of general application in force in a province other than those that discriminate among persons primarily on the basis of province of present or previous residence; and (b) any laws providing for reasonable residency requirements as a qualification for the receipt of publicly provided social services.

(4) Subsections (2) and (3) do not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration in a province of conditions of individuals in that province who are socially or economically disadvantaged if the rate of employment in that province is below the rate of employment in Canada.

7. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.
8. Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.
9. Everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned.
10. Everyone has the right on arrest or detention (a) to be informed promptly of the reasons therefor; (b) to retain and instruct counsel without delay and to be informed of that right; and (c) to have the validity of the detention determined by way of habeas corpus and to be released if the detention is not lawful.
11. Any person charged with an offence has the right...
 - (a) to be informed without unreasonable delay of the specific offence;
 - (b) to be tried within a reasonable time;
 - (c) not to be compelled to be a witness in proceedings against that person in respect of the offence;
 - (d) to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal;
 - (e) not to be denied reasonable bail without just cause;
 - (f) except in the case of an offence under military law tried before a military tribunal, to the benefit of trial by jury where the maximum punishment for the offence is imprisonment for five years or a more severe punishment;
 - (g) not to be found guilty on account of any act or omission unless, at the time of the act or omission, it constituted an offence under Canadian or international law or was criminal according to the general principles of law recognized by the community of nations;
 - (h) if finally acquitted of the offence, not to be tried for it again and, if finally found guilty and punished for the offence, not to be tried or punished for it again; and
 - (i) if found guilty of the offence and if the punishment for the offence has been varied between the time of commission and the time of sentencing, to the benefit of the lesser punishment.
12. Everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.
13. A witness who testifies in any proceedings has the right not to have any incriminating evidence so given used to incriminate that witness in any other proceedings, except in a prosecution for perjury or for the giving of contradictory evidence.
14. A party or witness in any proceedings who does not understand or speak the language in which the proceedings are conducted or who is deaf has the right to the assistance of an interpreter.

Equality Rights

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and

equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Official Languages of Canada

16. (1) English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada....

Minority Language Educational Rights

23. (1) Citizens of Canada (a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or (b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province....

Enforcement

24. (1) Anyone whose rights or freedoms, as guaranteed by this Charter, have been infringed or denied may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain such remedy as the court considers appropriate and just in the circumstances.

(2) Where, in proceedings under subsection (1), a court concludes that evidence was obtained in a manner that infringed or denied any rights or freedoms guaranteed by this Charter, the evidence shall be excluded if it is established that, having regard to all the circumstances, the admission of it in the proceedings would bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

General

25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including (a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and (b) any rights or freedoms that may be acquired by the aboriginal peoples of Canada by way of land claims settlement.

26. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed as denying the existence of any other rights or freedoms that exist in Canada.

27. This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

28. Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons....



The Political Constitution of Chile

March 11, 1981

CHAPTER III Constitutional Rights and Obligations

Article 19. The Constitution guarantees to all persons:

1. The right to life and to the physical and psychic wellbeing of the individual. The law protects the life of those about to be born. The death penalty may only be instituted for a crime established by law approved by a qualified quorum. Use of all illegal pressure is prohibited.
2. Equality before the law. In Chile there are no privileged persons or groups. In Chile there are no slaves, and he who sets foot on this territory becomes free. Neither the law nor any authority may establish arbitrary differences.
3. Equal protection under law in the exercise of their rights. Every person has the right to legal defense in the manner provided by law and no authority nor individual may impede, restrict or perturb the proper appearance of an attorney, should it have been sought.... The law will provide the means whereby legal counsel and defense may be given to those who may be unable to obtain them on their own. No one may be judged by special commissions, but only by the tribunal provided by law, and provided such tribunal has been established prior to the enactment of said law. Every sentence decreed by a court vested with jurisdiction must be based upon prior legal proceedings.... The law may not presume de jure criminal responsibility. No crime shall be subject to penalties other than those prescribed by a law enacted prior to the perpetration of the crime, except in cases where new legislation favors the interested party. No law may establish penalties without the conduct that is being penalized being expressly described in it.
4. Respect for and protection of private and public life and the honor of the individual or his family....
5. The inviolability of the home and all forms of private communication. The home may be searched and private communications and documents intercepted, opened or inspected only in the cases and in means provided by law.
6. Freedom of conscience, manifestation of all creeds and the free exercise of all cults which are not opposed to morals, proper usages and public order. Religious establishments may erect and maintain churches and their dependencies in accordance with the conditions of safety and hygiene established by laws and ordinances....
7. The right to personal freedom and individual security.

Consequently:

- a) Every person has the right to live and remain in any place in the Republic, move from one location to another, and enter and leave the national territory on condition that the norms established by law are respected and provided that third parties are not injured.

- b)** No one may be deprived of his personal freedom nor may such freedom be restricted except for the cases in the manner determined by the Constitution and law.
 - c)** No one may be arrested or detained unless on an order of a public official expressly empowered by law to that effect and provided such an order has been communicated in the manner prescribed by law. However, an individual caught in the act of committing a crime may be detained provided that he be brought, within the following 24 hours, before the competent judge. Should the authority order the arrest or detention of an individual, the competent judge must be notified, within 48 hours following the arrest or detention, and the individual is to be placed at his disposition. For probable cause, the judge may extend this period to five days and, in instances where the facts under investigation are described by the law as terrorist acts, such period may be extended to ten days.
 - d)** No one may be arrested or detained, held under preventive arrest or in prison, except in his home or public premises established for that purpose....
 - e)** Release on bail shall apply unless the judge considers the detention or preventive imprisonment as necessary for investigation proceedings, or for the security of the victim of the offense or of society....
 - f)** In criminal cases the defendant cannot be obliged to testify under oath as to his own deeds; neither may there be obliged to testify against him his ancestors, descendants, spouse nor any other persons who, according to cases or circumstances, should be specified by law.
 - g)** The penalty of confiscation may not be imposed except for seizure in the circumstances determined by law; but such a penalty will apply with respect to illicit associations.
 - h)** The loss of social security rights may not be imposed as a penalty, and
 - i)** Once a definitive stay of proceeding has been decreed, or when an absolute sentence is pronounced, the person subjected to trial or sentenced in any process as the result of a decision which the Supreme Court declares unjustifiably erroneous or arbitrary, shall have the right to be indemnified by the State for proprietary and moral losses which he may have suffered....
- 8.** The right to live in an environment free from contamination....
 - 9.** The right to protection of health. The State protects the free and equal access to facilities for the promotion, protection and recovery of health and rehabilitation of the individual....
 - 10.** The right to education. The objective of education is the complete development of the individual in the various stages of his life. Parents have the prime right and duty to educate their children. The State shall provide special protection for the exercise of this right. Basic education is mandatory....
 - 11.** Freedom of teaching includes the right to open, organize and maintain educational establishments. Freedom of education has no other limitations than those imposed by morals, proper usages, public order and national security. Officially recognized education cannot be directed towards propagating any partisan political tendency. Parents have the right to choose the educational establishment for their children....
 - 12.** Freedom to express opinions and to disseminate information without prior censorship in any form and by any means, notwithstanding assumption of responsibility for any crimes or abuses committed in the exercise of such liberties, in conformity with law, which must be approved by a qualified quorum. In no case may the law establish a state monopoly over the media of mass communication.... The law shall establish a system of censorship for the exhibition and publicity of motion picture production and will set the general norms governing public expression of other artistic activities.
 - 13.** The right to assemble peacefully and unarmed, without prior permission. Meetings in squares, streets and other public places shall be ruled by general police regulations.
 - 14.** The right to submit petitions to the authorities with reference to any matter of public or private

interest, with no limitation other than the requirement to submit such petitions in a respectful and appropriate manner.

- 15.** The right to associate without prior authorization. In order to have juridical personality, associations must be organized in accordance with law. No one can be obliged to belong to an association. Associations contrary to moral standards, public order and Security of the State are prohibited....
- 16.** Freedom to work and its protection. Every person has the right to free undertaking and free selection of his work, for proper compensation. Any discrimination not based on personal competence or fitness is prohibited, provided however that the law may require Chilean citizenship or set age limits in certain cases....
- 17.** Admission to all public positions and employments with no requirements other than those imposed by the Constitution and the law.
- 18.** The right to social security....
- 19.** The right to affiliation with unions in the cases and in the manner prescribed by law....
- 20.** Equal distribution of taxes in proportion to individual income or in progression or the manner established by law....
- 21.** The right to develop any economic activity which is not contrary to morals, public order or national security, abiding by the legal norms which regulate it....
- 22.** No arbitrary discrimination in the treatment that the State and its organisms must provide in economic matters....
- 23.** Freedom to acquire ownership over all types of property except that which nature has made common to all men or which should belong to the entire Nation, and that the law so declares....



*The Constitution of the
People's Republic of China,*

December 4, 1982

Article 1

The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants. The socialist system is the basic system of the People's Republic of China. Sabotage of the socialist system by any organization or individual is prohibited.

Article 2

All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which people exercise state power are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at different levels. The people administer state affairs and manage economic, cultural and social affairs through various channels and in various ways in accordance with the law....

Article 4

All nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal.... Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any acts that undermine the unity of the nationalities or instigate their secession are prohibited....

Article 5

...No organization or individual may enjoy the privilege of being above the Constitution and the law....

Article 10

Land in the cities is owned by the state. Land in the rural and suburban areas is owned by collectives except for those portions which belong to the state in accordance with the law; house sites and privately farmed plots of cropland and hilly land are also owned by collectives.... No organization or individual may appropriate, buy, sell or lease land, or unlawfully transfer land in other ways. All organizations and individuals who use land must make rational use of the land....

Article 13

The state protects the right of citizens to own lawfully earned income, savings, houses and other lawful property. The state protects by law the right of citizens to inherit private property....

Article 19

...The state promotes the nationwide use of Putonghua (Common Speech based on Beijing pronunciation)....

Article 21

The state develops medical and health services, promotes modern medicine and traditional Chinese

medicine, encourages and supports the setting up of various medical and health facilities by the rural economic collectives.

Chapter Two

The Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens

Article 33

All persons holding the nationality of the People's Republic of China are citizens of the People's Republic of China. All citizens of the People's Republic of China are equal before the law. Every citizen enjoys the rights and at the same time must perform the duties prescribed by the constitution and the law.

Article 34

All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of nationality, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education, property status, or length of residence, except persons deprived of political rights according to law.

Article 35

Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.

Article 36

Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion or engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to foreign domination.

Article 37

The freedom of person of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable. No citizen may be arrested except with the approval... of a people's procuratorate or by decision of a people's court, and arrests must be made by a public security organ. Unlawful deprivation or restriction of citizens' freedom of person by detention or other means is prohibited; and unlawful search of the person of citizens is prohibited.

Article 38

The personal dignity of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable. Insult, libel, false charge or frame-up directed against citizens by any means is prohibited.

Article 39

The home of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable. Unlawful search of, or intrusion into, a citizen's home is prohibited.

Article 40

The freedom and privacy of correspondence of citizens of the People's Republic of China are protected by law. No organization or individual may, on any ground, infringe upon citizens' freedom and privacy of correspondence except in cases where, to meet the needs of state security or of investigation into criminal offences, public security or procuratorial organs are permitted to censor correspondence in accordance with procedures prescribed by law.

Article 41

Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to criticize and make suggestions to any state organ or functionary....

Article 42

Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right as well as the duty to work. Using various channels, the state creates conditions for employment, strengthens labour protection, improves working conditions and, on the basis of expanded production, increases remuneration for work and social benefits. Work is the glorious duty of every able-bodied citizen. All working people in state enterprises and in urban and rural economic collective should perform their tasks with an attitude consonant with their status as masters of the country....

Article 43

Working people in the People's Republic of China have the right to rest. The state expands facilities for rest and recuperation of working people, and prescribes working hours and vacations....

Article 45

Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to material assistance from the state and society when they are old, ill or disabled....

Article 46

Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the duty as well as the right to receive education. The state promotes the all-around moral, intellectual and physical development of children and young people.

Article 47

Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the freedom to engage in scientific research, literary and artistic creation and other cultural pursuits....

Article 48

Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, cultural and social, including family life. The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women alike and trains and selected cadres from among women.

Article 49

Marriage, the family and mother and child are protected by the state. Both husband and wife have the duty to practice family planning. Parents have the duty to rear and educate their minor children, and children who have come of age have the duty to support and assist their parents. Violation of the freedom of marriage is prohibited. Maltreatment of old people, women and children is prohibited....

Article 51

The exercise of citizens of the People's Republic of China of their freedoms and rights may not infringe upon the interests of the state, of society and of the collective, or upon the lawful freedoms and rights of other citizens....

Article 54

It is the duty of citizens of the People's Republic of China to safeguard the security, honour and interests of the motherland; they must not commit acts detrimental to the security, honour and interests of the motherland.

Article 55

It is the sacred obligation of every citizen of the People's Republic of China to defend the motherland and resist aggression. It is the honourable duty of citizens... to perform military service and join the militia in accordance with the law.

Article 56

It is the duty of citizens of the People's Republic of China to pay taxes in accordance with the law.

Excerpts from *THE FRENCH CONSTITUTION* ✨



The French Constitution,

October 4, 1958 (Amended through Oct. 29, 1974)

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen Adopted by the National Assembly during the French Revolution on August 26, 1789 and reaffirmed by the Constitution of 1958.

Preamble

The Representatives of the French People, formed into a National Assembly, considering ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt of the rights of man to be the only causes of public misfortunes and the corruption of Governments, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn Declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man, to the end that this Declaration, constantly present to all members of the body politic, may remind them unceasingly of their rights and their duties; to the end that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power, since they may be continually compared with the aim of every political institution, may thereby be the more respected; to the end that the demands of the citizens, founded henceforth on simple and uncontested principles, may always be directed toward the maintenance of the Constitution and the happiness of all.

In consequence whereof, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

Article 1

All men are born and remain free, and have equal rights. Social distinctions are unjustifiable except insofar as they may serve the common good.

Article 2

The purpose of political association is to preserve the natural and inalienable rights of man, i.e., liberty, private property, the inviolability of the person, and the right to resist oppression.

Article 3

Sovereignty resides essentially in the nation as a whole; no group or individual can exercise any authority not expressly delegated to it or him.

Article 4

Liberty is the right to do anything which does not harm others. Thus, each man's natural rights are limited only by the necessity to assure equal liberty to others. Only the law can determine what restrictions must be made.

Article 5

The law can proscribe only those actions which harm society. Any action not forbidden by law cannot be disallowed, nor can anyone be forced to do what the law does not specifically command.

Article 6

Law is the overt expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in legislation, either in person or through their representatives. The law must be framed to operate completely

impartially. Since all are equal before the law, all are equally eligible, in accordance with their abilities, for all public offices and positions.

Article 7

No man can be indicted, arrested, or held in custody except for offenses legally defined, and according to specified procedures. Those who solicit, transmit, execute or cause to be executed arbitrary commands must be punished; but if a citizen is summoned or arrested in due legal form it is his duty to obey instantly.

Article 8

The law must impose only penalties that are obviously necessary. No one can be punished except under the correct application of an established law which must, moreover, have existed before he committed the offense.

Article 9

Everyone must be presumed innocent until he is pronounced guilty. If his arrest and detention are thought necessary, then no more force may be used than is necessary to secure his person.

Article 10

No one must suffer for his opinions, even for religious opinions, provided that his advocacy of them does not endanger public order.

Article 11

Free communication of thought and opinion is one of the most valuable rights of man; thus, every citizen may speak, write and print his views freely, provided only that he accepts the bounds of this freedom established by law.

Article 12

Some form of military or police force is necessary to guarantee the maintenance of the rights of man and of the citizen; thus, such a force exists for the benefit of all and not for... those who command it.

Article 13

To maintain the police force and to meet administrative expenses a financial levy is essential; this must be borne equally by all citizens, in accordance with their individual means.

Article 14

All citizens have the right to decide, either personally or through their representative, the necessity of a financial levy and their free assent to it must be obtained. They can appropriate it, and decide its extent, duration, and assessment.

Article 15

Society has the right to require of every public official an account of his administration.

Article 16

A society in which rights are not guaranteed, and in which there is no separation of powers, has no constitution.

Article 17

Since the right to private property is sacred and inviolable no one can be deprived of it except in certain cases legally determined to be essential for public security; in such cases a fair indemnity must first of all be granted.

Constitution of the French Republic of October 27, 1954

PREAMBLE

On the morrow of the victory of the free peoples over the regimes that attempted to enslave and degrade the human person, the French people proclaim once more that every human being, without distinction as to race, religion or creed, possesses inalienable and sacred rights. They solemnly reaffirm the rights and freedoms of man and of the citizen ordained by the Declaration of Rights of 1789 and the fundamental principles recognized by the laws of the Republic. They further proclaim as most vital to our time the following political, economic and social principles:

- The law shall guarantee to women equal rights with men, in all domains.
- Anyone persecuted because of his activities in the cause of freedom shall be entitled to the right of asylum within the territories of the Republic.
- Everyone shall have the duty to work and the right to obtain employment. No one may suffer in his work or his employment because of his origin, his opinions or his beliefs.
- Everyone may defend his rights and interests by trade-union action and may join the union of his choice.
- The right to strike may be exercised within the framework of the laws that govern it.
- Every worker, through his delegates, may participate in collective bargaining to determine working conditions, as well as in the management of the enterprise.
- All property and all enterprises that now have, or subsequently shall have, the character of a national public service or of a monopoly in fact, must become the property of the community.
- The Nation shall ensure to the individual and to the family the conditions necessary to their development.
- The Nation shall guarantee to all, and particularly to the child, the mother and the aged worker, protection of health, material security, rest and leisure. Any individual who, because of his or her age, his or her physical or mental condition, or because of the economic situation, shall find himself or herself unable to work shall have the right to obtain from the community the means for a decent existence.
- The Nation shall proclaim the solidarity and equality of all the French people with respect to burdens resulting from national disasters.
- The Nation shall guarantee equal access of children and adults to education, professional training and culture. The establishment of free, secular, public education on all levels shall be a duty of the State.
- The French Republic, faithful to its traditions, shall abide by the rules of international public law. It shall not undertake wars of conquest and shall never use force against the freedom of any people.
- Faithful to her traditional mission, France shall guide the peoples for whom she has assumed responsibility toward freedom to govern themselves and toward the democratic administration of their own affairs; rejecting any system of colonization based upon arbitrary power, she shall guarantee to all equal access to public office and the individual or collective exercise of the rights and liberties hereinabove proclaimed or confirmed.



The Constitution of India

PART III

Fundamental Rights

General

12. Definition -- In this Part, unless the context otherwise requires, "the State" includes the Government and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the States and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India....

Right to Equality

14. Equality before law -- The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth --

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to -- (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public. (3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children. (4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

16. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment -- (1) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. (2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the State....

17. Abolition of Untouchability -- "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of "Untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

18. Abolition of titles -- (1) No title, not being a military or academic distinction, shall be conferred by the State....

Right to Freedom

19. Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc. -- (1) All citizens shall have the right -- (a) to freedom of speech and expression; (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms; (c) to form

associations or unions; (d) to move freely throughout the territory of India; (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and (f) [removed]; (g) to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.

...Nothing in sub-clause (a)... (b)... (c)... (d)... (e)... (g)... of Clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub-clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India....

20. Protection in respect of conviction for offenses -- (1) No person shall be convicted of any offence except for violation of a law in force at the time of the commission of the act charged as an offence, nor be subjected to a penalty greater than that which might have been inflicted under the law in force at the time of the commission of the offence. (2) No person shall be prosecuted and punished for the same offence more than once. (3) No person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself.
21. Protection of life and personal liberty -- No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
22. Protection against arrest and detention in certain cases -- (1) No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the grounds for such arrest nor shall he be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice. (2) Every person who is arrested and detained in custody shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours of such arrest excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court of the magistrate and no such person shall be detained in custody beyond the said period without the authority of a magistrate. (3) Nothing in clauses (1) and (2) shall apply -- (a) to any person who for the time being is an enemy alien; or (b) to any person who is arrested or detained under any law providing for preventive detention. (4) No law providing for preventive detention shall authorize the detention of a person for a longer period than three months unless -- (a) an Advisory Board consisting of persons who are, or have been, or are qualified to be appointed as, Judges of a High Court has reported before the expiration of the said period of three months that there is in its opinion sufficient cause for such detention;... (5) When any person is detained in pursuance of an order made under any law providing for preventive detention, the authority making the order shall, as soon as may be, communicate to such person the grounds on which the order has been made and shall afford him the earliest opportunity of making a representation against the order. (6) Nothing in clause (5) shall require the authority making any such order as is referred to in that clause to disclose facts which such authority considers to be against the public interest to disclose....

Right Against Exploitation

23. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labor -- (1) Traffic in human beings and begar and other similar forms of force labor are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. (2) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from imposing compulsory service for public purposes....
24. Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc. -- No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

Right to Freedom of Religion

25. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion --(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. (2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making

any law -- (a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; (b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus....

Cultural and Educational Rights

29. Protection of interests of minorities -- (1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them....
34. Restriction on rights conferred by this Part while martial law is in force in any area - ..Parliament may by law indemnify any person in the service of the Union or of a State or any other person in respect of any act done by him in connection with the maintenance or restoration of order in any area within the territory of India where martial law was in force or validate any sentence passed, punishment inflicted, forfeiture ordered or other act done under martial law in such area....
- 51-A. Fundamental duties -- It shall be the duty of every citizen of India -- (a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem; (b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom; (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India; (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so; (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practice derogatory to the dignity of women; (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture; (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures; (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform; (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence; (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.



The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Beneficent

24 of Aban, 1358 of the Solar Year

Translated by Dr. Changi Vafai

Article 1

The Government of Iran is an Islamic Republic, approved by the nation in the referendum of the 10th and 11th of the month of Farvardin, in the solar year 1358, and with the approval of 98.2% of the eligible voters. It is based upon the nation's timehonored belief in the necessity for a government founded on truth and Koranic justice, and follows the victorious Islamic Revolution led by His Eminence and Supreme Holiness Imam Khomeini.

Article 2

The Islamic Republic is a system based on belief in: (1) One God (There is no God but one) and the exclusive sovereignty of God, the acceptance of His rule and the necessity of obeying His commands. (2) Divine Revelation and its fundamental role in expressing His laws. (3) resurrection and its constructive role in the evolution of mankind leading toward God. (4) The Justice of God in creation and in Divine Law. (5) The Imamate and the continuous leadership and its basic role in giving strength and endurance to the Islamic Revolution. (6) The compassion of human beings and in their great worth.

These aims are to be achieved through: (a) judgment made on a continuous basis by the eminent clergy, based on the book of traditions of the Saints, may God's blessing be upon them. (b) the utilization of advances in science, technology, and knowledge, and efforts to improve them. (c) the prohibition of all kinds of oppression, or acceptance of oppression; the prohibition of domination or acceptance of domination.

Justice, as well as political, economic, social and cultural, and national independence will be secured through these concepts.

Article 3

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to attain the goals mentioned in Article 2, shall employ every possible means to achieve the following:

(1) Creation of an environment favorable to the development of moral virtues, based on faith, piety, and the struggle against corruption and vice in any form. (2) Raising the level of public awareness in all fields, by a correct use of the press, the mass media and other means. (3) Free education and physical training for all at all levels, and providing facilities for the expansion of higher education.... (7) Securing political and social freedom within the limits of the law. (8) Participation of all the people in the determination of their political, economic, and social and cultural destiny. (9) Elimination of unfair discrimination, and creation of just opportunities for all, in all material and spiritual fields.... (12) Laying the groundwork for a sound and just economy, based on Islamic principles, aimed at promoting the welfare of all the people, the elimination of poverty and of all kinds of deprivations of food, housing, employment, health and general social insurance.... (14) Securing every human right for both men and women, and establishing judicial security for all based on justice and the equality of all before the law.... (16) Adoption of a foreign policy based in Islamic principles, brotherly commitment to all Moslems, and unsparing support for the oppressed people of the world.

Article 4

All civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, laws and regulations, as well as any other laws or regulations, should be based in Islamic principles....

Article 5

Until the appearance of the Saint of the Agnes, may God hasten his appearance, in the Islamic Republic of Iran the Mandate for state affairs for the Imamate of the Islamic community will be given to a just, spiritual, up-to-date, courageous, efficient, prudent person who is a member of the clergy and is recognized by the majority of the people as their leader. Should no member of the clergy be recognized by the majority as leader, the leader or council of leaders, consisting of members of the clergy who meet the requirements mentioned above,... shall assume the role of Mandatory....

Article 9

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, freedom, independence, unity and the territorial integrity of the country are inseparable from each other and preserving them is the duty of the Government and the people. No individual, or group, or authority shall in the name of freedom harm in any way the political, cultural, economic, or military independence and territorial integrity of Iran, and no authority shall limit legal freedoms, even by enacting laws and regulations on the excuse of preserving the independence and territorial integrity of the country.

Article 10

The family being the fundamental unit of the Islamic society, all laws, regulations, and programs which pertain to it shall facilitate the establishment of the family and the stability of family relationships, based in Islamic laws and moral concepts....

Article 12

The official religion of Iran is Islam, and the sect followed in Jafari Shi'ism and this Article is unalterable. Other Islamic denominations, such as Hanfi, Shafi'i, Haliki, Hanbali, and Zaydi, shall enjoy complete respect....

Article 13

The Iranian Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are the only recognized minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their own religious rites, and who, in matters relating to their personal affairs and teachings, may act in accordance with their religious regulations.

Article 14

According to the Koran,... the Islamic Republic of Iran and Moslems shall treat nonMoslems according to the dictates of virtue and Islamic justice, and to honor their human rights. This principle will be applicable only to those who do not become involved in conspiracies and activities which are anti-Islamic or are against the Islamic Republic of Iran....

Article 19

The people of Iran, regardless of their ethnic, family and tribal origins, shall enjoy equal rights. Color, race, language and the like shall not be cause for privilege.

Article 20

All citizens of the nation, whether men or women, are equally protected by the law. They also enjoy human, political, economic and cultural rights according to Islamic standards.

Article 21

The Government shall guarantee the rights of women in all areas according to Islamic standards and

shall provide for the following: (1) The creation of an environment favorable to the personal growth of women, and to the restoration of their material and spiritual rights. (2) Protection of mothers, especially during pregnancy and the child rearing period, as well as the protection of children without guardians....

Article 22

The dignity, life, property, rights, shelter, and employment of individuals are immune from encroachment except in cases prescribed by law.

Article 23

The interrogation of people regarding their beliefs is forbidden. No person shall be attacked for his beliefs.

Article 24

Publications and the press may express ideas freely, except when they are contrary to Islamic principles, or are detrimental to public rights....

Article 25

Opening and reading, and failing to deliver letters, recording and divulging telephone conversations, revealing telegraph and telex messages, exercising censorship, refusing to communicate messages, tapping and such prying is forbidden, unless ordered by law.

Article 26

Parties, groups, political and professional associations, as well as Islamic or recognized minority religious associations are permitted, provided they do not violate principles of independence, freedom, and national unity, or which are contrary to the principles of Islam or the Islamic Republic. No one shall be prevented from participating in these groups or be forced to join any of them.

Article 27

Unarmed assemblies and marches are permitted provided they do not violate the principles of Islam.

Article 28

Every person has the right to choose the profession he wishes, provided it is not contrary to the principles of Islam, to the public interest or to the rights of others....

Article 29

Social insurance, or aid in other forms,... is a public right....

Article 30

The Government shall provide everyone with free education and training through high school level....

Article 31

A suitable dwelling, according to need, is the right of every Iranian person and family....

Article 32

No one shall be arrested except when permitted by law and in accordance with proper legal procedures. The accused shall be notified immediately of the nature of the accusation against him in written form so that he understands it. Within a maximum of 24 hours, the preliminary file shall be submitted to the appropriate judicial authorities. Preliminaries to the trial shall be completed without delay....

Article 33

No one shall be banished from his residence, nor be banned from the place of his choosing, nor forced to reside in a particular location not of his choosing, except as determined by law.

Article 34

Every individual has the absolute right of recourse to competent courts in order to seek justice....

Article 35

The parties to any litigation shall have the right to legal representation in all courts of justice; if the parties to litigation are not able to select an attorney, legal representation shall be provided for them.

Article 36

A sentence can only be pronounced and conferred by a competent court and in accordance with the law.

Article 37

An individual is presumed innocent unless proven guilty by a competent court.

Article 38

Any form of torture to obtain confession or acquire information is forbidden. No one shall be forced to testify, confess, or take an oath and such testimony, confession and taking of an oath obtained by force is null and void....

Article 39

Violating in any way the dignity and honor of a person who has been seized, detained, imprisoned, or exiled in accordance with the law, is forbidden under any circumstance....

Article 40

No one may assert his right in order to harm another or to infringe upon the public interest....

Article 46

Everyone shall enjoy the benefits of his legitimate business and labor and no one may, because he is the owner (of a particular type of business), deprive others of the opportunity to do the same job.

Article 47

Personal property obtained through legitimate means is respected....

Article 49

The Government shall confiscate wealth derived from usury, extortion, bribery, embezzlement, theft, gambling;....

Article 50

Protecting the environment in which the present generation lives and in which future generations will develop socially is considered a public responsibility in the Islamic Republic. Therefore, economic activities, and other activities which may pollute the environment or destroy it irrevocably, shall be forbidden....

Article 91

For the purpose of safeguarding the principles of Islam and the Constitution and to avoid any conflict between these principles and the laws of the Assembly, a Council of Guardians will be formed consisting of: (1) Six members of the clergy who are just, are knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence, and aware of the needs of the times. The selection of these persons will be made by the Leader of the Council of Guardians. (2) Six lawyers from various branches of law, from among Moslem lawyers,

who have been introduced to the National Assembly by the Supreme Council for the Judiciary...

Excerpts from the Shari'a (Islamic Law)

From the Koran:

Chapter 2 (v.190) - "And fight in God's cause against those who wage war upon you; but do not commit aggression; verily God does not love aggressors."

Chapter 50 (v.228) - "And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable, But men have a degree [of advantage] over them..."

Chapter 52 (v. 254) - "Those who reject Faith -- they are the wrongdoers."

Chapter 62 (v.15) - "If any of your women are guilty of lewdness,... confine them to houses until death do claim them."

Chapter 62 (v.16) - "If two men among you are guilty of lewdness, punish them both. If they repent and amend, leave them alone."

Chapter 72 (v.38) - "As to the thief. Male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from God, for their crime."

From Sayings of the Prophet Mohammed:

- "All men are equal, like the tooth of a comb."

- "Hearing and obeying are the duty of a Muslim both regarding what he likes and what he dislikes, as long as he is not commanded to perform an act of disobedience to God, in which case he must neither hear nor obey." [Hadith]

- "You have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. You have the right that they should not defile your bed and that they should not behave with open unseemliness. If they do, God allows you to put them in separate rooms and to beat them, but not with severity."



The Constitution of Japan,

November 3, 1946

We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people.

This is a universal principle of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded. We reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances and rescripts in conflict herewith.

We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.

We believe that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal: and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all nations who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other nations.

We, the Japanese people, pledge our national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all our resources.

CHAPTER I. THE EMPEROR

ARTICLE 1. The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.

ARTICLE 2. The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House Law passed by the Diet.

ARTICLE 3. The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state, and the Cabinet shall be responsible therefor.

ARTICLE 4. The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government. The Emperor may delegate the performance of his acts in matters of state as may be provided by law.

ARTICLE 5. When, in accordance with the Imperial House Law, a Regency is established, the Regent shall perform his acts in matters of state in the Emperor's name. In this case, paragraph one of the preceding article will be applicable.

ARTICLE 6. The Emperor shall appoint the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet. The Emperor shall appoint the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court as designated by the Cabinet.

ARTICLE 7. The Emperor, with the advice and approval of the Cabinet, shall perform the following acts

in matters of state on behalf of the people:

- Promulgation of Amendments of the constitution, laws, cabinet orders and treaties.
- Convocation of the Diet.
- Dissolution of the House of Representatives.
- Proclamation of general election of members of the Diet.
- Attestation of the appointment and dismissal of Ministers of State and other officials as provided for by law, and of full powers and credentials of Ambassadors and Ministers.
- Attestation of general and special amnesty, commutation of punishment, reprieve, and restoration of rights.
- Awarding of honors.
- Attestation of instruments of ratification and other diplomatic documents as provided for by law.
- Receiving foreign ambassadors and ministers.
- Performance of ceremonial functions.

ARTICLE 8. No property can be given to, or received by, the Imperial House, nor can any gifts be made therefrom, without the authorization of the Diet.

CHAPTER II. RENUNCIATION OF WAR

ARTICLE 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

CHAPTER III. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE PEOPLE

ARTICLE 10. The conditions necessary for being a Japanese national shall be determined by law.

ARTICLE 11. The people shall not be prevented from enjoying any of the fundamental human rights. These fundamental human rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be conferred upon the people of this and future generations as eternal and inviolate rights.

ARTICLE 12. The freedoms and rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be maintained by the constant endeavor of the people, who shall refrain from any abuse of these freedoms and rights and shall always be responsible for utilizing them for the public welfare.

ARTICLE 13. All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

ARTICLE 14. All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin. Peers and peerage shall not be recognized. No privilege shall accompany any award of honor, decoration or any distinction, nor shall any such award be valid beyond the lifetime of the individual who now holds or hereafter may receive it.

ARTICLE 15. The people have the inalienable right to choose their public officials and to dismiss them. All public officials are servants of the whole community and not of any group thereof. Universal adult suffrage is guaranteed with regard to the election of public officials. In all elections, secrecy of the ballot shall not be violated. A voter shall not be answerable, publicly or privately, for the choice

he has made.

ARTICLE 16. Every person shall have the right of peaceful petition for the redress of damage, for the removal of public officials, for the enactment, repeal or amendment of laws, ordinances or regulations and for other matters; nor shall any person be in any way discriminated against for sponsoring such a petition.

ARTICLE 17. Every person may sue for redress as provided by law from the State or a public entity, in case he has suffered damage through illegal act of any public official.

ARTICLE 18. No person shall be held in bondage of any kind. Involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime, is prohibited.

ARTICLE 19. Freedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated.

ARTICLE 20. Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.

ARTICLE 21. Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed. No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated.

ARTICLE 22. Every person shall have freedom to choose and change his residence and to choose his occupation to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare. Freedom of all persons to move to a foreign country and to divest themselves of their nationality shall be inviolate.

ARTICLE 23. Academic freedom is guaranteed.

ARTICLE 24. Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis. With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce..., laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes.

ARTICLE 25. All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living....

ARTICLE 26. All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law....

ARTICLE 27. All people shall have the right and the obligation to work. Standards for wages, hours, rest and other working conditions shall be fixed by law. Children shall not be exploited.

ARTICLE 28. The right of workers to organize and to bargain and act collectively is guaranteed.

ARTICLE 29. The right to own or to hold property is inviolable. Property rights shall be defined by law, in conformity with the public welfare. Private property may be taken for public use upon just compensation therefor.

ARTICLE 30. The people shall be liable to taxation as provided by law.

ARTICLE 31. No person shall be deprived of life or liberty, nor shall any other criminal penalty be imposed, except according to procedure established by law.

ARTICLE 32. No person shall be denied the right of access to the courts.

ARTICLE 33. No person shall be apprehended except upon warrant issued by a competent judicial officer which specifies the offense with which the person is charged, unless he is apprehended, the offense being committed.

ARTICLE 34. No person shall be arrested or detained without being at once informed of the charges against him or without the immediate privilege of counsel; nor shall he be detained without adequate cause; and upon demand of any person such cause must be immediately shown in open court in his presence and the presence of his counsel.

ARTICLE 35. The right of all persons to be secure in their homes, papers and effects against entries, searches and seizures shall not be impaired except upon warrant issued for adequate cause and particularly describing the place to be searched and things to be seized, or except as provided by Article 33. Each search or seizure shall be made upon separate warrant issued by a competent judicial officer.

ARTICLE 36. The infliction of torture by any public officer and cruel punishments are absolutely forbidden.

ARTICLE 37. In all criminal cases the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial tribunal. He shall be permitted full opportunity to examine all witnesses, and he shall have the right of compulsory process for obtaining witnesses on his behalf at public expense. At all times the accused shall have the assistance of competent counsel who shall, if the accused is unable to secure the same by his own efforts, be assigned to his use by the State.

ARTICLE 38. No person shall be compelled to testify against himself. Confession made under compulsion, torture or threat, or after prolonged arrest or detention shall not be admitted in evidence. No person shall be convicted or punished in cases where the only proof against him is his own confession.

ARTICLE 39. No person shall be held criminally liable for an act which was lawful at the time it was committed, or of which he has been acquitted, nor shall he be placed in double jeopardy.

ARTICLE 40. Any person, in case he is acquitted after he has been arrested or detained, may sue the State for redress as provided by law.



*The Constitution of Mexico 1917,
As amended through 1972*

Title I, Chapter I Individual Guarantees

ARTICLE 1. Every person in the United Mexican States shall enjoy the guarantees granted by this Constitution, which cannot be restricted or suspended except in such cases and under such conditions as are herein provided.

ARTICLE 2. Slavery is forbidden in the United Mexican States. Slaves who enter national territory from abroad shall, by this act alone, recover their freedom and enjoy the protection afforded by the laws.

ARTICLE 3. The education imparted by the Federal State shall be designed to develop harmoniously all the faculties of the human being and shall foster in him at the same time a love of country and a consciousness of international solidarity, in independence and justice....

ARTICLE 4. No person can be prevented from engaging in the profession, industrial or commercial pursuit, or occupation of his choice, provided it is lawful....

ARTICLE 5.1. No one can be compelled to render personal services without due remuneration and without his full consent, excepting labor imposed as a penalty by the judiciary.... Only the following public services shall be obligatory, subject to the conditions set forth in the respective laws: military service and jury service as well as the discharge of the office of municipal councilman and office of direct or indirect popular election.... The State cannot permit the execution of any contract, covenant, or agreement having for its object the restriction, loss or irrevocable sacrifice of the liberty of man, whether for work, education, or religious vows. The law, therefore, does not permit the establishment of monastic orders, whatever be their denomination or purpose....

ARTICLE 6. The expression of ideas shall not be subject to any judicial or administrative investigation, unless it offends good morals, infringes the rights of others, incites to crime, or disturbs the public order.

ARTICLE 7. Freedom of writing and publishing writings on any subject is inviolable. No law or authority may establish censorship, require bonds from authors or printers, or restrict the freedom of printing, which shall be limited only by the respect due to private life, morals, and public peace. Under no circumstances may a printing press be sequestered as the instrument of the offense....

ARTICLE 8. Public officials and employees shall respect the exercise of the right of petition, provided it is made in writing and in a peaceful and respectful manner....

ARTICLE 9. The right to assemble or associate peaceably for any lawful purpose cannot be restricted; but only citizens of the Republic may do so to take part in the political affairs of the country. No armed deliberative meeting is authorized. No meeting or assembly shall be deemed unlawful which has for its object the petitioning of any authority or the presentation of a protest against any act; nor may it be dissolved, unless insults be proffered against said authority or violence is resorted to, or threats are used to intimidate or compel such authority to render a favorable decision.

ARTICLE 10.1 The inhabitants of the United Mexican States are entitled to have arms in their possession in their homes for their protection and legitimate defense, except such as are expressly forbidden by law, or which the nation may reserve for the exclusive use of the army, navy, air force or national guard. Federal law shall determine the ... conditions, requirements and places in which inhabitants may be authorized to carry arms.

ARTICLE 11. Everyone has the right to enter and leave the Republic, to travel through its territory and to change his residence without necessity of a letter of security, passport, safe-conduct or any other similar requirement....

ARTICLE 12. No titles of nobility, or hereditary or prerogatives or honors shall be granted in the United Mexican States, nor shall any effect be given to those granted by other countries.

ARTICLE 13. No one may be tried by private laws or special tribunals. No person or corporate body shall have privileges or enjoy emoluments other than those given in compensation for public services and which are set by law. Military jurisdiction shall be recognized for the trial of crime against any violation of military discipline, but the military tribunals shall in no case have jurisdiction over persons who do not belong to the army....

ARTICLE 14. No law shall be given retroactive effect to the detriment of any person whatsoever. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, property, possessions, or rights without a trial by a duly created court in which the essential formalities of procedure are observed and in accordance with laws issued prior to the act. In criminal cases no penalty shall be imposed by mere analogy or by a prior evidence. The penalty must be decreed in a law in every respect applicable to the crime in question. In civil suits the final judgement shall be according to the letter or the juridical interpretation of the law; in the absence of the latter it shall be based on the general principles of law....

ARTICLE 16. No one shall be molested in his person, family, domicile, papers, or possessions except by virtue of a written order of the competent authority stating the legal grounds and justification for the action taken. No order of arrest or detention shall be issued against any person other than by the competent judicial authority, and unless same is preceded by a charge, accusation, or complaint for a credible party or by other evidence indicating the probable guilt of the accused; in cases of flagrante delicto, any person may arrest the offender and his accomplices, turning them over without delay to the nearest authorities. Only in urgent cases instituted by the public attorney without previous complaint or indictment and when there is no judicial authority available, may the administrative authorities, on their strictest accountability, order the detention of an accused person, turning him over immediately to the judicial authorities. Every search warrant, which can be issued only by judicial authority and which must be in writing, shall specify the place to be searched, the person or persons to be arrested, and the objects sought, the proceedings to be limited thereto, at the conclusion of which a detailed statement shall be drawn up in the presence of two witnesses proposed by the occupant of the place searched, or by the official making the search in his absence should he refuse to do so. Administrative officials may enter private homes for the sole purpose of ascertaining whether the sanitary and police regulations have been complied with, and may demand to be shown the books and documents required to prove compliance with fiscal rulings....

ARTICLE 17. No one may be imprisoned for debts of a purely civil nature. No one may take the law into his own hands, or resort to violence in the enforcement of his rights. The courts shall be open for the administration of justice at such times and under such conditions as the law may establish; their services shall be gratuitous and all judicial costs are, accordingly, prohibited.

ARTICLE 18.1 Arrest is permissible only for offenses punishable by imprisonment. The place of detention shall be completely separate from the place used for the serving of sentences....

ARTICLE 19. No detention shall exceed three days without a formal order of commitment, which shall

state the offense with which the accused is charged; the substance thereof; the place, time and circumstances of its commission; and the facts brought to light in the preliminary examination. These facts must be sufficient to establish the corpus delicti and the probable guilt of the accused.... Any ill-treatment during arrest or confinement; any molesting without legal justification; any exaction or contribution levied in prison are abuses which shall be punishable by law and repressed by the authorities.

ARTICLE 20. In every criminal trial the accused shall enjoy the following guarantees:

I. He shall be freed on demand and on furnishing bail which shall be fixed by the judge, according to his status and the gravity of the offense with which he is charged, provided, however, that such offense is not punishable with more than five years' imprisonment....

II. He may not be forced to be a witness against himself: wherefore denial of access or other means tending to this end is strictly prohibited.

III. He shall be publicly notified within 48 hours after being turned over to the judicial authorities of the name of his accuser and the nature of and cause for the accusation, so that he may be familiar with the offense with which he is charged, reply thereto and make a preliminary statement.

IV. He shall be confronted with the witnesses against him, who shall testify in his presence if they are to be found in the place where the trial is held, so that he may cross examine them in his defense.

V. All witnesses and other evidence which he may offer shall be heard in his defense... he shall furthermore be assisted in securing the presence of the persons whose testimony he may request, provided they are to be found at the place where the trial is held.

VI. He shall be entitled to a public trial by a judge or jury of citizens who can read and write and are also residents of the place and district where the offense was committed, provided the penalty for such offense exceeds one year's imprisonment....

VII. He shall be furnished with all information on record which he may request for his defense.

VIII. He shall be tried within four months, if charged with an offense whose maximum penalty does not exceed two years' imprisonment; and within one year, if the maximum penalty is greater.

IX. He shall be heard in his own defense, either personally or by counsel, or by both, as he may desire. Should he have no one to defend him, a list of official counsel shall be submitted to him, in order that he may choose one or more to act in his defense. If the accused does not wish to name any counsel for his defense, after being called upon to do so at the time of his preliminary examination, the court shall appoint his counsel for the defense. The accused may name his counsel immediately upon arrest, and shall be entitled to have him present at every stage of the trial: but he shall be obliged to make him appear as often as required by the court.

X. In no event may imprisonment or detention be extended through failure to pay counsel fees or for any other monetary obligation, on account of civil liability, or for other similar cause. Nor shall detention be extended beyond the time set by law as the maximum for the offense charged....

ARTICLE 22. Punishment by mutilation and infamy, branding, flogging, beating with sticks, torture of any kind, excessive fines, confiscation of property and any other unusual or extreme penalties are prohibited.... Capital punishment for political offenses is likewise prohibited; as regards other offenses, it can only be imposed for high treason committed during a foreign war, parricide, murder that is treacherous, premeditated, or committed for profit, arson, abduction, highway robbery, piracy, and grave military offenses.

ARTICLE 23. No criminal trial shall have more than three instances. No person, whether accused or convicted, can be tried twice for the same offense....

ARTICLE 24. Everyone is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practice all ceremonies, devotions, or observances of his respective faith, either in places of public worship or at home, provided they do not constitute an offense punishable by law. Every religious act of public worship must be performed strictly inside places of public worship, which shall at all times be under governmental supervision.

ARTICLE 25. Sealed correspondence sent through the mail shall be exempt from search and its violation shall be punishable by law.

ARTICLE 26. No member of the army shall in time of peace be quartered in private dwellings without the consent of the owner, nor may he impose any obligation whatsoever. In time of war the military may demand lodging, equipment, provisions, and other assistance, in the manner laid down in the respective martial law.

ARTICLE 27. Ownership of the lands and waters within the boundaries of the national territory is vested originally in the Nation, which has had, and has, the right to transmit title thereof to private persons, thereby constituting private property. Private property shall not be expropriated except for reasons of public use and subject to payment of indemnity.



*Republic of Nicaragua Political Constitution,
January 9, 1987*

Rights, Duties and Guarantees of the Nicaraguan People

CHAPTER I

Article 23

The right to life is inviolable and inherent to all persons. There is no death penalty in Nicaragua.

Article 24

All persons have duties to their families, the community, the Homeland and humanity. The rights of each person are limited by the rights of others, the collective security and the just requirements of the common good.

Article 25

All persons have the rights to:

1. personal freedom;
2. security;
3. seek legal redress.

Article 26

All persons have the right to:

1. privacy and the privacy of their family;
2. the inviolability of their home, correspondence, and communications;
3. respect for their honor and reputation.

A private home may be searched only with a warrant from a competent judge or expressly authorized official to prevent a crime from being committed or to avoid damage to persons or goods, in accordance with the procedures established by law. The law shall determine the cases and the procedures for an examination of private documents, fiscal records and related documents, when such is indispensable for the investigation of matters before the Courts or for fiscal reasons. Illegally seized letters, documents and other private papers shall be null and void in legal proceedings or elsewhere.

Article 27

All persons are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection under the law. There shall be no discrimination for reasons of birth, nationality, political belief, race, gender, language, religion, opinion, national origin, economic position or social condition....

Article 29

All persons have the right to freedom of conscience and thought and to profess or not to profess a

religion. No one shall be the object of coercive measures which diminish these rights, or be obligated to declare his or her creed, ideology or beliefs.

Article 30

Nicaraguans have the right to freely express their beliefs in public or private, individually or collectively, in oral, written or any other form.

Article 31

Nicaraguans have the right to travel and to establish their residence in any part of the nation and to freely enter and exit the country....

Article 33

No one may be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned, or be deprived of liberty except in cases established by law and in accordance with legal procedures.... Therefore:... [A]n individual may be detained only by a warrant issued from a competent Judge or an official expressly authorized by law, except when apprehended in the act of committing a crime.... [A]ll detained persons have the right to be:... [I]nformed in detail without delay of the reasons for their detention and the charges against them, in a language they understand; to have their family informed; and to be treated with respect in accordance with the dignity inherent in human beings... [B]rought before a competent legal authority within 72 hours....

Article 34

All those awaiting trial have equal rights to the following minimum guarantees:... To be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to the law... To be tried without undue delay by a competent court established by law.... To be guaranteed the right to a defense, to participate personally from the start of the proceedings and to adequate time and means to prepare their defense.... To be represented by a public defender when legal counsel has not been selected by the time of the first hearing, or in the event that no prior call was decreed. The accused shall have the right to communicate freely and in private with his or her legal counsel.... Not to be obligated to testify against themselves or against a spouse or a partner in a stable de facto union, or a family member within the fourth level of consanguinity or the second of marital relations, or to admit their own guilt... To be found guilty or not guilty within the legal time period, by each of the relevant courts... To have the right to appeal to a superior court upon conviction of any crime and not to be retried for any crime for which a final judgment of conviction or acquittal has been issued... Not to be brought to trial or sentenced for acts or omissions which at the time committed had not been unequivocally established by Law as a punishable crime, and not to be given a sentence which has not been previously established by law. Criminal proceedings are open to the public, but in some cases the press and the general public may be excluded for moral considerations or for... public order or national security....

Article 36

All persons shall have the rights to respect for their physical, psychological and moral integrity. No one shall be subjected to torture, nor inhumane, cruel or degrading treatment....

Article 38

The law is not retroactive except in penal matters that favor the accused....

Article 40

No one shall be subjected to involuntary servitude. Slavery and slave trade in any form are prohibited.

Article 41

No one shall be detained for indebtedness....

Article 42

Nicaragua guarantees asylum to those persecuted for their struggle for democracy, peace, justice and human rights....

Article 43

Extradition from Nicaragua will not be permitted for political crimes or common crimes committed in conjunction with them, at Nicaragua's own discretion....

Article 44

Nicaraguans have the right to the personal property and necessary goods that is essential for the integral development of each person.

Article 45

Persons whose constitutional rights have been violated or are in danger of violation have the right to present writs of habeas corpus or amparo, according to the circumstances and the Law of Amparo (a legal procedure for the review of administrative acts).

Article 46

All persons in Nicaragua shall enjoy protection and recognition by the state of the rights inherent to human beings, as well as unrestricted respect, promotion and protection of human rights....

CHAPTER II POLITICAL RIGHTS

Article 47

All Nicaraguans who have reached 16 years of age are full citizens....

Article 48

Unconditional equality among Nicaraguans in the enjoyment of political rights is established. In the exercise of these rights and in the fulfillment of these responsibilities and rights and in the fulfillment of these responsibilities and obligations, there exists absolute equality between men and women....

Article 52

Citizens have the right, individually or collectively, to petition, to denounce irregularities and to make constructive criticisms to the branches of government or to any authority, and to obtain a quick resolution or response and to have the result made known within the time period established by law.

Article 53

The right to peaceful assembly is recognized; the exercise of this right does not require prior permission.

Article 54

The right to public assembly, demonstration and mobilization in conformity with the law is recognized.

Article 55

Nicaraguan citizens have the right to organize or affiliate with political parties with the objective of participating in, exercising or vying for power....

CHAPTER III SOCIAL RIGHTS

Article 58

Nicaraguans have the right to education and culture.

Article 59

Every Nicaraguan has an equal right to health care....

Article 60

Nicaraguans have the right to live in a healthy environment and it is the obligation of the state to preserve, conserve and reclaim the environment and the natural resources of the country.

Article 61

The state guarantees Nicaraguans the right to social security for protection against the social contingencies of life and work, in the manner and conditions determined by law.

Article 62

The state shall strive to establish programs for the physical, psycho-social and professional rehabilitation of disabled people, and for their job placement.

Article 63

It is the right of all Nicaraguans to be protected against hunger....

Article 64

Nicaraguans have the right to decent, comfortable and safe housing that guarantees familial privacy....

Article 65

Nicaraguans have the right to sports, physical education, relaxation, and recreation....

Article 66

Nicaraguans have the right to accurate information. This right includes the freedom to seek, receive and disseminate information and ideas, be they spoken or written, in graphic or any other form.

Article 67

The right to provide information is a social responsibility and shall be exercised with strict respect for the principles established in the Constitution. This right cannot be subject to censorship, but may be subject to retroactive liability established by law.

Article 68

The mass media is at the service of national interests. The state shall promote the access of the public and its organizations to the means of communication, and shall prevent the media from responding to foreign interests or to any economic power monopoly. The existence and functioning of public, corporate or private means of communication shall not be the object of prior censorship. It shall be subject to the law.

Article 69

All persons, either individually or collectively, have the right to practice their religion in public or private, through worship, practice and teaching.

Article 70

No one may disobey the law or prevent others from exercising their rights and fulfilling their duties by invoking religious beliefs or inclination.

CHAPTER IV FAMILY RIGHTS

Article 70

The family is the fundamental nucleus of society and has the right to protection by society and the

state....

Article 72

Marriage and stable de facto unions are protected by the state; they rest on the voluntary agreement between a man and a woman, and may be dissolved by mutual consent or by the will of one of the parties, as provided by law.

Article 73

Family relations rest on respect, solidarity and absolute equality of rights and responsibilities between the man and woman...

Article 74

The state grants special protection to the process of human reproduction. Women shall have special protection during pregnancy and shall be granted maternity leave with pay and appropriate social security benefits. No one may deny employment to women for reasons of pregnancy nor dismiss them during pregnancy or the postnatal period, in conformity with the law.

Article 75

All children have equal rights. There shall be no discrimination for reasons of filial relations....

CHAPTER V LABOR RIGHTS

Article 80

Work is a right and a social responsibility. The labor of Nicaraguans is the fundamental means to satisfy the needs of society and of the individual, and is the source of the wealth and prosperity of the nation....

Article 83

The right to strike is recognized.

Article 84

Child labor that can affect normal childhood development or interfere with the obligatory school year is prohibited. Children and adolescents shall be protected against any form of economic and social exploitation....

Article 87

Full labor union freedom exists in Nicaragua. Workers may organize voluntarily in unions, which shall be constituted in conformity with the law....



*The Constitution of the
Republic of the Philippines, 1986*

Article III - BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION 1. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws.

SECTION 2. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures of whatever nature and for any purpose shall be inviolable, and no search warrant or warrant of arrest shall issue except upon probable cause to be determined personally by the judge after examination under oath or affirmation of the complainant and the witnesses he may produce, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

SECTION 3. (1) The privacy of communication and correspondence shall be inviolable except upon lawful order of the court, or when public safety or order requires otherwise as prescribed by law.

(2) Any evidence obtained in violation of this or the preceding section shall be inadmissible for any purpose in any proceeding.

SECTION 4. No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.

SECTION 5. No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.

SECTION 6. The liberty of abode and of changing the same within the limits prescribed by law shall not be impaired except upon lawful order of the court. Neither shall the right to travel be impaired except in the interest of national security, public safety, or public health, as may be provided by law.

SECTION 7. The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.

SECTION 8. The right of the people, including those employed in the public and private sectors, to form unions, associations, or societies for purposes not contrary to law shall not be abridged.

SECTION 9. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation.

SECTION 10. No law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be passed.

SECTION 11. Free access to the courts and quasi-judicial bodies and adequate legal assistance shall not be denied to any person by reason of poverty.

SECTION 12. (1) Any person under investigation for the commission of an offense shall have the right to be informed of his right to remain silent and to have competent and independent counsel preferably of his own choice. If the person cannot afford the services of counsel, he must be provided with one. These rights cannot be waived except in writing and in the presence of counsel.

(2) No torture, force, violence, threat, intimidation, or any other means which vitiate the free will shall be used against him. Secret detention places, solitary, incommunicado, or other similar forms of detention are prohibited.

(3) Any confession or admission obtained in violation of this or Section 17 hereof shall be inadmissible in evidence against him.

(4) The law shall provide for penal and civil sanctions for violations of this section as well as compensation to and rehabilitation of victims of torture or similar practices, and their families.

SECTION 13. All persons, except those charged with offenses punishable by reclusion perpetua when evidence of guilt is strong, shall, before conviction, be bailable by sufficient sureties, or be released on recognizance as may be provided by law. The right to bail shall not be impaired even when the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus is suspended. Excessive bail shall not be required.

SECTION 14. (1) No person shall be held to answer for a criminal offense without due process of law.

(2) In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall be presumed innocent until the contrary is proved, and shall enjoy the right to be heard by himself and counsel, to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation against him, to have a speedy, impartial, and public trial, to meet the witnesses face to face, and to have compulsory process to secure the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence in his behalf. However, after arraignment, trial may proceed notwithstanding the absence of the accused provided that he has been duly notified and his failure to appear is unjustifiable.

SECTION 15. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended except in cases of invasion or rebellion when the public safety requires it.

SECTION 16. All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies.

SECTION 17. No person shall be compelled to be a witness against himself.

SECTION 18. (1) No person shall be detained solely by reason of his political beliefs and aspirations.

(2) No involuntary servitude in any form shall exist except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.

SECTION 19. (1) Excessive fines shall not be imposed, nor cruel, degrading or inhuman punishment inflicted. Neither shall death penalty be imposed, unless, for compelling reasons involving heinous crimes, the Congress hereafter provides for it. Any death penalty already imposed shall be reduced to reclusion perpetua.

(2) The enjoyment of physical, psychological, or degrading punishment against any prisoner or detainee or the use of substandard or inadequate penal facilities under subhuman conditions shall be dealt with by law.

SECTION 20. No person shall be imprisoned for debt or non-payment of a poll tax.

SECTION 21. No person shall be twice put in jeopardy of punishment for the same offense. If an act is punished by a law and an ordinance, conviction or acquittal under either shall constitute a bar to another prosecution for the same act.

SECTION 22. No ex post facto law or bill of attainder shall be enacted.

