

HYPOTHETICAL SOCIAL CONTRACTS

Even if we accept the idea that government is founded on the basis of a social contract, that doesn't tell us what type of government it is, what powers it has, or what rights individuals have under it. Knowing that a social contract exists is not enough; we must also know the terms of the contract, i.e., how the society view the role of government.

Consider the terms of the following social contracts. What sort of society would result under the forms of government created by each of these contracts? Then compare these social contracts to a) The Mayflower Compact and b) the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence.

1. The people hereby agree to give up all of their rights to the government, which will operate by majority rule and which may do anything to individuals that it wishes to do.
2. The people hereby agree to give up none of their rights at all to the government.
3. The people hereby establish a government whose purpose is to protect national security at all costs. The people give up any rights that would interfere with this purpose.
4. The people hereby establish a government whose purpose is to make sure that every member of society has exactly the same amount of wealth and resources and property as every other member of society. The people give up any rights that would interfere with this purpose.
5. The people hereby establish a government whose purpose is to protect everyone's private property at all costs. The people give up any rights that would interfere with this purpose.
6. The people hereby establish a government whose purpose is to eliminate all crime, at all costs. The people give up any rights that would interfere with this purpose.
7. The people hereby establish a government that will be ruled only by the richest one percent of the population.