Government Beliefs of Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Rousseau

Influences on the colonists!

SOL: 2b
The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political philosophies that shaped the development of Virginia and United States constitutional governments by a) describing the development of Athenian democracy and the Roman republic. c) examining the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu
The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which treats everyone equally... [B]eing equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, or possessions.

— John Locke
“The old [traditions] are apt to lead men into mistakes, as this [idea] of [fatherly] power’s probably has done, which seems so [eager] to place the power of parents over their children wholly in the father, as if the mother has no share in it, Whereas if we consult reason or [the Bible], we shall find she has an equal title.”

– John Locke
Whensoever... the [government] shall... put into the hands of any other an absolute power over the lives, liberty, and estates of the people, by the breach of trust they forfeit the power [of] the people... who have a right to resume their original liberty, and by the establishment of the new [government] provide for their own safety and security.”

– John Locke
• Locke

• Consent of the governed
  – A true government is only justified and legal when it gets its power from the people
• Locke

• Natural rights/ unalienable rights
  – Universal rights which everyone is born with and can’t be taken away. (doesn’t depend on laws or customs)
• Locke

• State of Nature
  – Used in social contract theories to describe the hypothetical condition of humanity before the state's foundation
• Locke

• Life, Liberty, Property
  – people have the right to life, liberty, and property.
"The safety of the People, requireth further, from him, or them that have the Sovereign Power, that Justice be equally administered to all degrees of People, that is, that as well the rich and mighty, as poor and obscure persons, may be righted of the injuries done them . . . "
“For the laws of nature (as justice, equity, modesty, mercy, and in sum, doing to others as we would be done to) of themselves, without the terror of some power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like”.

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“During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that conditions called war; and such a war, as if of every man, against every man...To this war of every man against every man, this also in consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law, no injustice”.
"I've decided I want my seat back."
"In a true state of nature, indeed, all men are born equal, but they cannot continue in this equality. Society makes them lose it, and they recover it only by the protection of laws."
BORN TO COMMAND.

OF VETO MEMORY.

HAD I BEEN CONSULTED.

KING ANDREW THE FIRST.

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
UNITED STATES

JOURNALS OF THE
CONGREGATION OF

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

• Separation of powers
  – Normal division of branches is into an executive, a legislature, and a judiciary
• Montesquieu

• Republican government
  - Government of elected individuals representing the people
• Montesquieu

• Equality under the law
  – Each individual is subject to the same laws, no individual or group has special legal privileges
• “The social compact establishes among the citizens such an equality that they all pledge themselves under the same conditions and ought all to enjoy the same rights.”
“The first man who enclosed a plot of ground and thought of saying, ‘This is mine’, and found others stupid enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society.”
• Rousseau

• Social contract/social compact
  – People give their power to a government to maintain social order through the rule of law
• Rousseau

• Civil society
  – Voluntary submission to the rule of law that forms the basis of a functioning society (as opposed to force-backed structures of a state)
• Rousseau

• Inalienable rights
  – Universal rights which everyone is born with and can’t be taken away. (doesn’t depend on laws or customs)
Rousseau

Consent of the governed

– A true government is only justified and legal when it gets its power from the people
• Rousseau

• Equality under the law
  – Each individual is subject to the same laws, no individual or group has special legal privileges
• Thomas Hobbes

• Viewed people in a negative way...
  ...they needed a government to control them
• Hobbes

• State of nature?
  – Humans are naturally selfish and wicked. They will do anything to better their position! ... Unless there is some power to rule over them.
Hobbes

State of war!

During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man
• Hobbes

• Limited government?

• The best government is a “Leviathan.” Hobbes did not believe in many limits on government, but he did not think it should do anything that would injure his or her people.
• Hobbes

• Equality Under the Law
  – Each individual is subject to the same laws, no individual or group has special legal privileges
THOMAS PAINÉ
• Paine

• “Common Sense”
  – A pamphlet in which he said the colonies should break free from Britain!
  – He argued strongly for the rights of man!