

Liberalism: The influence of Ideas on the people of British North America

Liberty = freedom

ism = belief in something

Liberalism =

The Emergence of New Political Ideas

- Liberal ideas emerged from Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries from thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

Social Contract theory

- The theory begins with the belief that in a state of nature humans are born completely free.
- The population voluntarily gives up some freedom in return for good government.
- As a result, liberal thinkers believed there are an unwritten set of rules or contract between the government and the population.
- The government agrees to provide good government and the population agrees to its authority.

Government Legitimacy: Consent of the Governed

- Since humans voluntarily give up some freedom, they are agreeing or consenting to be governed.
- The population therefore should have the right to approve or disapprove of government decisions.
- If a government respects this contract, it is legitimate and should be followed.

Right to Rebellion

- When a government violates the social contract it is no longer has legitimate authority and does not have to be followed.

Liberalism [liberal Ideas]

- Belief that all humans are free and equal therefore they have basic rights
- Right to life, liberty and property
- Right to justice- everyone should be equal before the law
- right to freedom of belief and religious practice

Political [government] Liberalism

- Right to participate in government decisions- right to vote
- Right to freedom of opinion
- right to freedom of expression, freedom of speech

Constitutional Monarchy

- Liberalism opposed absolute power
- The power of a king or queen is limited by a constitution [set of rules]
- Power of the monarchy is shared with the parliament [elected members of government]

Republicanism

- Belief that government power should only come from the population
- The power of a monarchy is therefore not legitimate
- Belief that that all government power should come from elected officials