



HUMAN RIGHTS

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WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

They are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death.



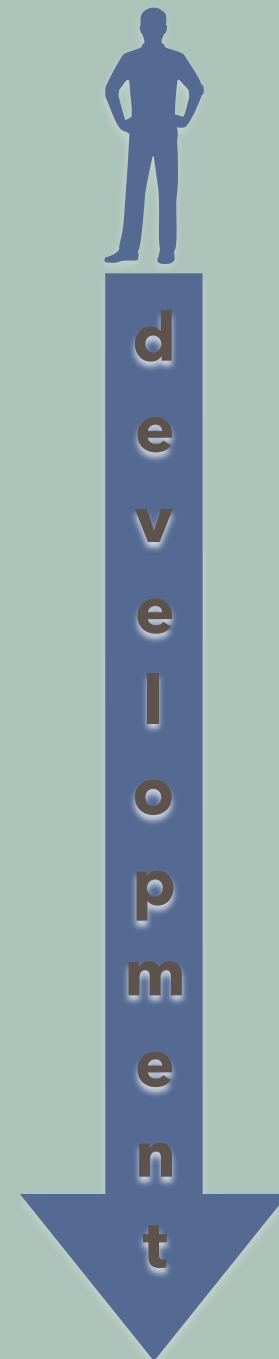
WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

They protect you in many areas of your day-to-day life, including:

- your right to have and express your own opinions
- your right to an education
- your right to a private and family life
- your right not to be mistreated or wrongly punished by the state

THE BACKGROUND OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- The Cyrus Cylinder
- The Magna Carta
- Petition of Right
- United States Declaration of Independence
- The Constitution of the USA and Bill of Rights
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
- The First Geneva Convention
- The United Nations
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights



THE CYRUS CYLINDER (539 B.C.)

- Cyrus the Great conquered the city of Babylon and freed the slaves
- He established racial equality and the right to choose your own religion
- Decrees were recorded on a baked-clay cylinder
- It is the first charter of human rights



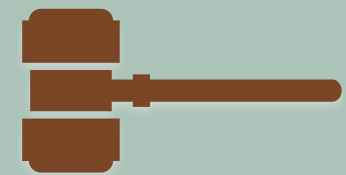
THE MAGNA CARTA (1215)

- It is a series of written promises between the king and his subjects
- It is an attempt to stop the king from abusing his power
- It was a turning point on human rights



PETITION OF RIGHT (1628)

- Statement of civil liberties sent by the English Parliament to Charles I



- It asserted four principles:

(1) No taxes may be levied without consent of Parliament

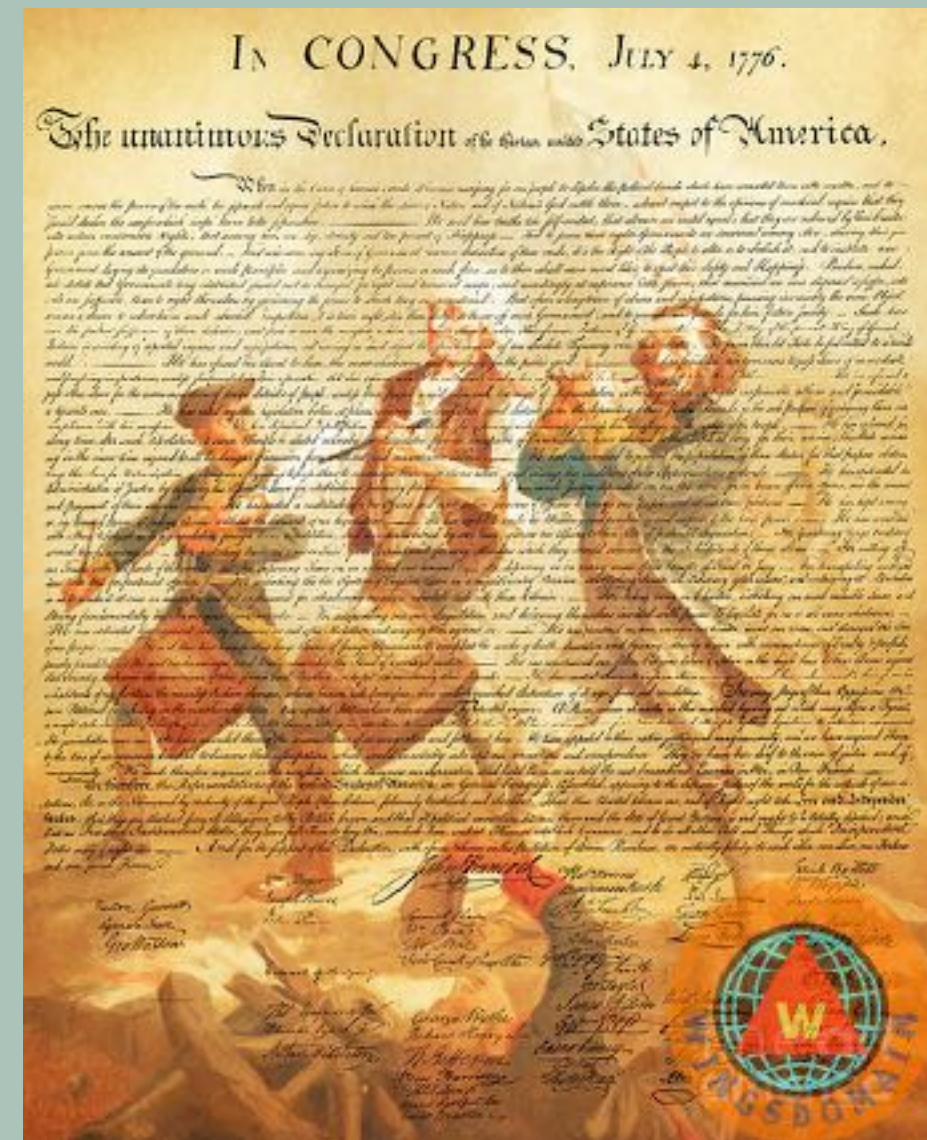
(2) No subject may be imprisoned without cause shown

(3) No soldiers may be quartered upon the citizenry

(4) Martial law may not be used in time of peace.

UNITED STATES DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)

- The main writer was Thomas Jefferson
- It stated that the United States were now an independent country
- It stressed two themes: individual rights and the right of revolution.



THE CONSTITUTION OF THE USA (1787) AND BILL OF RIGHTS (1791)

- The constitution of the USA defines the principal organs of government and their jurisdictions and the basic rights of citizens.
- The first ten amendments are known as the Bill of Rights



It protects the rights and liberties of all American citizens



DECLARATION OF THE MAN AND OF THE CITIZEN (1789)

- It followed the French Revolution
- It proclaims that all citizens are to be guaranteed the rights of "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression"
- The Declaration sees law as an "expression of the general will"



THE FIRST GENEVA CONVENTION (1864)

- Sixteen European countries and several American states attended a conference in Geneva, held for the purpose of adopting a convention for the treatment of wounded soldiers in combat.
- Main principles:
 - (1) extend care without discrimination to wounded and sick military personnel
 - (2) the red cross on a white background as a mark



THE UNITED NATIONS (1945)

- Formed by fifty nations after the World War II
- The goal of the United Nations Conference was to fashion an international body to promote peace and prevent future wars.



THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1948)

- Created by the United Nations
- It lists the rights that all people have
- It inspired a number of other human rights laws



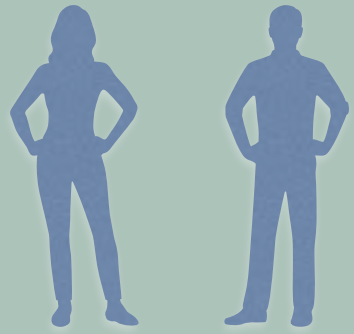
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC (1947)

- It regulates the legal condition of italian and foreign citizens reaffirming fundamental human rights
- It wants to favor foreign citizens' integration



principle of equality

"The Republic recognizes and guarantees inviolable rights of man, for the individual, and for social groups where personality is expressed, and demands the fulfillment of the fundamental duties of political, economic, and social solidarity." (article 2)



RIGHT TO EQUALITY...

- "All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, or personal or social condition. It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic and social nature that, by in fact limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, impede the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country."
(art. 3 of the Italian Constitution)
- "Working women have the same rights and, for equal work, the same wages as working men." **(art. 37 of the Italian Constitution)**

... IN LITERATURE

- In **Growing up** the reader understands the different society's expectations between men and women. Women were supposed to be nothing but mothers, wives, school teachers or nurses while men were supposed to become presidents.
- In **The Reluctant Fundamentalist** Changez had the same possibility to study and work compared to a common American citizen.



RIGHT TO EDUCATION...

- "Schools are open to everyone. Elementary education, imparted for at least eight years, is compulsory and free. Capable and deserving pupils, even those without financial resources, have the right to attain the highest levels of education. The Republic makes this right effective through scholarships, payments to families and other provisions, which must be assigned through competitive examination." (**art. 34 of the Italian Constitution**)
- "(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. [...]" (**art. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**)

... IN LITERATURE

- In **The Reluctant Fundamentalist** Changez had the possibility to study at Princeton University despite his finances.
 - In **Revealed: child slaves powered industrial revolution**
 - In **Oliver Twist**
 - In **Child labour today**
 - In **Growing up** Doris received an education but not directed to the full development of her human personality. The best she could hope for was a career as a nurse or school teacher.
- Children's exploitation interfered with their education.



RIGHT TO RELIGIOUS CONFESSIONS...

- "All religious confessions are equally free before the law. Religious confessions other than Catholicism have the right to organise in accordance with their own statutes, in so far as they are not in conflict with Italian laws. Their relations with the State are regulated by law on the basis of agreement between the respective representatives." (**art. 8 of the Italian Constitution**)
- "All have the right to profess freely their own religious faith in whatever form, individual or collective, to propagate it and to exercise it in a private or public cult, provided that the rites are not contrary to public morals." (**art. 19 of the Italian Constitution**)
- "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. " (**art. 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**)

... IN LITERATURE

- In **The Reluctant Fundamentalist** Changez had to deal with prejudices and discrimination due to his religion, especially after the Twin Towers attack.
- In **Lispeth** Lispeth's family turned Christian and baptized her as a means of survivor.

In the same text there is an example of discrimination: after Lispeth's conversion and adoption her own people started to hate her because "she had become a white woman".

At the end of the short story Lispeth went back to her own people, abandoning Christianity.



RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT...

- “(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.” (**art. 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**)

... IN LITERATURE

- In **The Reluctant Fundamentalist** Changez moved to America and later return to his own country, Pakistan.

The right to freedom of movement can be connected to the **theme of migration**.

According to Salman Rushdie migration is what makes men free (**About Movers**, extract taken from Shame)

According to Mohsin Hamid migration will become a right too: the movement of people has always been part of the human condition but due to the recent notion about the boundaries of nation-states something has changed → RIGHT TO MIGRATION TO STOP DISCRIMINATION



RIGHT TO MARRIAGE...

- "The Republic recognizes the rights of the family as a natural association founded on matrimony. Matrimony is based on the moral and legal equality of the spouses within the limits laid down by law to guarantee the unity of the family." (**art. 29 of the Italian Constitution**)
- "(1) 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.
(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." (**art. 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**)

... IN LITERATURE

- In **Lispeth** Lispeth couldn't marry the man she loved because of their different social status and nationality ("it was wrong and improper of Lispeth to think of marriage with an Englishman, who was of a superior clay").

