



## The Social Contract (Penguin Classics)

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

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**The Social Contract (Penguin Classics)** Jean-Jacques Rousseau

**"Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains"**

These are the famous opening words of a treatise that has not ceased to stir vigorous debate since its first publication in 1762. Rejecting the view that anyone has a natural right to wield authority over others, Rousseau argues instead for a pact, or 'social contract', that should exist between all the citizens of a state and that should be the source of sovereign power. From this fundamental premise, he goes on to consider issues of liberty and law, freedom and justice, arriving at a view of society that has seemed to some a blueprint for totalitarianism, to others a declaration of democratic principles.

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