

Comparison of Rousseau's Conception of Direct Democracy and The Historical Idea of National Traditions

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Abstract

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is one of the most controversial philosophers and political theorists of the Enlightenment. He has often been accused of laying the ideological foundation for many repressive and radical movements and regimes, from the terror era of the French Revolution to the right and left totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, Rousseau's novelty consisted of the denial of the identification of authority with only one individual. The main objective of this work is to compare Rousseau's ideas on the structure and principles of political power in two of his works written in different periods: "The Social Contract" and "Considerations on the Government of Poland". First, it is important to focus on the main ideas of Rousseau for the full disclosure of the topic. Likewise, it is necessary to take into account the fact that these works were written at different times and in different contexts, which played an important role in their semantic load. In the first part of the work, we will briefly consider the main concepts developed by Rousseau in his book "The Social Contract", such as general will, social contract, sovereignty and direct democracy. In the second part, we will focus on the main ideas put forward in "Considerations on the Government of Poland". Then, finally, we will try to determine the reasons for the conceptual changes in some of Rousseau's views.

Keywords: national traditions, Poland, Rousseau, social contract