Limited Government & Representative Government

Limited Government

The Magna Carta, 1215

The Magna Carta limited the power of the king (government) by guaranteeing certain rights to the nobles. These rights were later extended to all citizens. This document placed the power of government beneath that of the law. Some specific limitations were:

1. protection against cruel and unusual punishment.
2. protection against loss of life, liberty, and property.
3. the right to a fair and speedy trial by a jury of one's peers.
4. the king could not levy certain taxes without approval of the people.

The English Bill of Rights, 1689

The English king and queen, William and Mary, agreed to accept the Bill of Rights establishing the supremacy of Parliament. Some specific guarantees included:

1. freedom of speech and debate in Parliament.
2. guarantees of individual freedoms against the power of government; protection from excessive bail, right of petition, and reaffirming the right of trial by jury.

Representative Government

The people elected representatives to make laws and govern. Only Parliament, the elected representatives, had the power to pass laws.

1. The upper chamber of Parliament was called the House of Lords and was comprised of the aristocracy.
2. The lower chamber of Parliament was called the House of Commons and was comprised of property owners and merchants who elected other property owners and merchants to represent them.
### Important Features of the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights: Limitations on Government Power

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<td><strong>Dates</strong></td>
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| **Limitations on King or Government** | Guaranteed certain rights to nobles  
Power of government (king) beneath the law  
Could not tax without approval of people | Parliament is supreme over the monarch |
| **Guaranteed Individual Rights** | Fair trial and speedy trial by jury  
No cruel or unusual punishment  
Protections against loss of life, liberty and property | Right to petition government  
Trial by jury  
No excessive bail |
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