Rousseau, Law and the Sovereignty of the People

Together with Plato's *Republic*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* is regarded as one of the most original examples of utopian political engineering in the history of ideas. Similar to the *Republic*, Rousseau's masterwork is better known today for its author's idiosyncratic view of political justice than its lessons on lawmaking or governance in any concrete sense. Challenging this common view, *Rousseau, Law and the Sovereignty of the People* examines the Genevan's contributions as a legislator and builder of institutions, relating his major ideas to issues and debates in twenty-first century political science. Ethan Putterman explores how Rousseau's just state would actually operate, investigating how laws would be drafted, ratified and executed, arguing that the theory of the *Social Contract* is more pragmatic and populist than many scholars assume today.

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Rousseau, Law and the Sovereignty of the People

ETHAN PUTTERMAN
To Iris
It is to law alone that men owe justice and freedom. It is this healthy instrument of the will of all that reestablishes, as a right, the natural equality among men. It is this celestial voice that tells each citizen the precepts of public reason, and teaches him to act according to the maxims of his own judgment and not to be in contradiction with himself.

_Discourse on Political Economy, 1755_
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A note on the text

The page numbers and citations from Rousseau's writings in this book refer to:


All other references to Rousseau's writings not found in these collected editions refer to the translations listed in the bibliography.
Abbreviations

C  Confessions
CGP  Considerations on the Government of Poland
CS  Social Contract
DI  Discourse on Inequality Among Men
DSA  Discourse on the Arts and Sciences
DV  Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary for a Hero
E  Emile
EOL  Essay on the Origin of Languages
EP  Discourse on Political Economy
FP  Political Fragments
JNH  Julie or the New Eloise
LA  Letter to M. Alembert
LCB  Letter to Christopher Beaumont
LEM  Letters Written from the Mountain
LV  Letter to Voltaire
MG  Geneva Manuscript
ML  Moral Letters
N  Narcissus, or the Lover of Himself
PC  Project for Corsica
RJJ  Rousseau: Judge of Jean Jacques
RPS  Reveries of the Solitary Walker