

national law because the American Constitution provides that a treaty adopted by the Senate shall become the supreme law of the land and of the states.

Students of liberty, therefore, are presented with a mandate for the study of this Covenant on Human Rights; for by adopting it, we would change our form of government without the consent — or even the knowledge — of the people.

The Term Defined

SINCE we are here discussing *human rights* rather than *political rights*, let us attempt to define the term. Human rights are founded upon considerations of justice and morality; they are ordained by natural law. And while they may be defended by political law, no government brought them into existence; human rights existed before formalized government and are superior to it. Thus, no government can grant them, and no government can legitimately abolish them. The sole purpose of government should be to defend them.

In speaking of rights, we are here concerned with rights in the sense of relationships between individuals in society — rights of individuals which will be acknowledged, accepted, and defended by other individuals. More precisely, we are concerned about the

morality of persons, because there alone can be found a firm foundation for any concept of rights and justice. In the final analysis, the laws of nature are comprehended — and the resulting laws of man are perfected and respected — only within the general framework of the moral standards of those individuals who find themselves living together in society.

America is a religious nation; the overwhelming majority of the people recognizes the concept of God. Our present form of government was devised by men whose understanding of natural law and moral philosophy made it obvious to them that all men are endowed by their Creator with equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. While their idea was "that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men," they rejected the old-world concept that rights of individuals are grants from government. As we study the proposed United Nations Covenant on Human Rights, let us note the moral philosophy of those who designed that document.

Differing Concepts

IT is on record in the debates of the Commission on Human Rights that scores of compromises had to be made to secure the assent to the Covenant by nations which radically