

## *Social Contract* in Geneva's Conflicts: Examinations of *Représentations* of 1763

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*Social Contract*, written by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was condemned by the authorities of the Republic of Geneva, his homeland, in June 1762. They burned and banned the book. This condemnation caused conflicts between the government and certain Genevans called the "bourgeoisie." Though the bourgeoisie were entitled to vote, they could not participate in the oligarchy that was controlled by a few families. *Social Contract* was politically characterized by Geneva's historical context of struggles with the authorities and friendly relationship with Rousseau. The condemnation of Rousseau, the abdication of citizens, and protests were collectively known as the "affaire Rousseau" in Geneva. It is one of the cases in which Rousseau's ideas were applied to actual political situations. Four official lists of grievances called *Représentations* written by the bourgeoisie in 1763 were analyzed to reveal the parts of *Social Contract* that were used in Geneva's political debate in the middle of the 18th century.

This paper examined the political idea and the aim of *Représentations* by comparing it with *Social Contract*. Using terms from *Social Contract* such as "the relationship between community and individuals," "civil liberties," and "superiority of law over government," *Représentations* criticizes the political situation in Geneva. Further, these parts of texts can be considered as accusations against the opinion of the authorities, because the attorney-general of Geneva, in his *Conclusion*, rejected Rousseau's theories as they could be threats to the political positions of those in power. On the other hand, there are some differences between *Représentation* and *Social Contract*, particularly with respect to the concept of "legislator." *Représentation* strongly contended that it had lost the legislative power of the General Conseil because of the oligarchy.

These comparisons indicate that the authors did not always follow all theories of *Social Contract*, but that they cited some pieces of Rousseau's ideas as the basis for *Représentations* only to support their opinions that the General Conseil had to take back stronger power. The bourgeoisie was not obedient to the authorities but attached importance to Geneva's traditions.