

## No. THEY did not give US human rights.

### The Right to a Fair Trial.

The 39th clause of Magna Carta (1215) gives all 'free men' the right to justice and a fair trial. This was extended by the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679.

### The Right to Privacy.

Privacy is a broad term so by its very nature is difficult to define. There is no single privacy law in the UK, instead it's covered by several acts of Parliament.

The earliest example (I am aware of) of British law protecting someone's privacy was *Thompson v Stanhope* (1774) which granted an injunction preventing the publication of private letters. This case was followed by various others and by the mid-twentieth century the modern tort of 'breach of confidence' was established.

The Theft Act (1968) made blackmail a crime.

The Protection from Harassment Act (1997) created both criminal sanctions and civil remedies for harassment.

The Data Protection Act (1998) deals with the handling of private and personal information.

The Sexual Offences Act (2003) added a criminal offence of non-consensual voyeurism

### Freedom from Torture.

English common law has always, in principle prohibited the use of torture. Indeed one of the distinguishing features of English common law writing from its earliest inception was its rejection of torture as a method of proof, and the House of Lords has accepted that this can properly be said to be a defining characteristic of English common law and as such a true constitutional principle. Furthermore the U.K. was well ahead of many other European jurisdictions in abolishing its use.

### Freedom from Degrading Treatment.

The English Bill of Rights criminalised 'cruel and unusual punishments' in 1689.

### Freedom of Religion.

The 'Declarations of Indulgence' were a pair of proclamations made by James II of England (and VII of Scotland) in 1687 and 1688. It was the first step in establishing freedom of religion in the British Isles.

### Freedom of Expression.

Free expression is a very broad subject which encapsulates many aspects of life. Whilst none of Magna Carta's clauses make reference to free expression, by curbing royal powers and strengthening individual protection they extended liberties to the 'freeman of England'.

The 1689 Bill of Rights granted free speech for MPs in the confines of Parliament.

Between 1765 and 1769 Sir William Blackstone published his landmark common law texts stating that any book or pamphlet need not be subject to prior approval by a government before it was published, but that if it contained 'improper, mischievous or illegal' words the author could be prosecuted thereafter.

In 1872 the Government introduced the Parks Regulation Act that gave people the legal right of 'public address' at Hyde Park.