

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BA EXAMINATION 2007

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

3.(b) Political Philosophy

Answer THREE questions, including at least ONE from EACH section. Candidates taking Optional Paper (r) Marxism may NOT attempt question 8, marked with an asterisk. Avoid overlap in your answers.

SECTION A

1. EITHER (a) What, if anything, can we learn from Plato's discussion of justice in the *Republic*?

OR (b) Why does Plato advocate communism and eugenics for the Guardians?
2. EITHER (a) Is it right to view Aristotle as a founder of 'civic republicanism'?

OR (b) Explain and assess Aristotle's position regarding democracy.
3. EITHER (a) Does contemporary game theory help or hinder us in understanding Hobbes's argument for the creation of civil society out of the state of nature'.

OR (b) What is Hobbes's definition of power? Critically examine the role the concept of power plays in Hobbes's argument for the absolute sovereign.
4. EITHER (a) Can Locke's theory of political obligation be defended by an appeal to the distinction between tacit consent that is 'voluntary' in the sense of being 'willing' and tacit consent that is 'free' in the sense of being 'not too difficult or costly to avoid'?

OR (b) 'Nor was this appropriation of any parcel of land, by improving it, any prejudice to any other man, since there was still enough, and as good left; and more than the yet unprovided could use' (*Second Treatise*, Ch. 5.). Discuss.

TURN OVER

5. EITHER (a) 'Hume's political philosophy is sceptical about the existence of equality as a determinate political value; but this is a strength, not a weakness.' Discuss.
- OR (b) Was Hume right to suppose that personal liberty can be enjoyed without political liberty?
6. EITHER (a) What are the background conditions, according to Rousseau, which would allow for the formation of the General Will? How likely are these conditions to be achieved in practice?
- OR (b) Why does Rousseau claim that we must sometimes be 'forced to be free'? Does this expression show that his is an authoritarian conception of the state?
7. EITHER (a) What is the relation between Hegel's theology and his political philosophy?
- OR (b) Critically examine Hegel's distinction between the state, civil society and the family.
- 8.* EITHER (a) Explain and assess Marx's concept of alienation.
- OR (b) Does the Labour Theory of Value explain how profit is possible?
9. EITHER (a) 'The consequence of the literal application of Mill's harm principle would be an extreme, and unacceptable, form of libertarianism. It is astonishing that Mill proposed such a thing.' Discuss.
- OR (b) Explain and assess Mill's opposition to the secret ballot.

SECTION B

10. EITHER (a) Assess the claim that Rawls provides a compelling case for the difference principle even though he fails to show that it would be in the rational self-interest of the parties in the original position to choose this principle.
- OR (b) 'Rawls does not call himself an intuitionist; but he certainly is one in the usual sense' (R.M. Hare). Discuss.
- OR (c) Explain and assess the following criticism of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*: '[The original position] may not be fair. The suppression of knowledge required to achieve unanimity is not equally fair to all the parties, because the primary goods are not equally valuable in pursuit of all conceptions of the good. The model contains a strong individualistic bias' (Nagel).

TURN OVER

11. What does Rawls mean by a 'reasonable overlapping consensus'? Why should one think that there can be any such thing?
12. Do duties of distributive justice end at a nation's borders?
13. EITHER (a) Are private property rights compatible with individual freedom?
- OR (b) 'Liberty is the absence of coercion, which is "the control of the environment or circumstances of a person by another such that in order to avoid greater evil he is forced to act not according to a coherent plan of his own but to serve the ends of others"' (Hayek). Discuss.
14. What is multi-culturalism? Is it compatible with equality?
15. EITHER (a) Is it true that defenders of equality must, at least in principle, accept 'levelling down'?
- OR (b) How should a theory of equality accommodate the fact that some people are born with disabilities which prevent them from working and earning a living?
17. 'Representative democracy is not really democratic.' 'Representative democracy overcomes the defects with direct democracy.' Is either of these views correct?
18. In what ways, if any, do 'gratitude' theories and 'fairness' theories amount to distinct approaches to the problem of political obligation? Is either of them an adequate solution?
19. 'No society can survive without an extensive market, even if it pretends otherwise.' Discuss.
20. 'Justice is a "male" concept.' Discuss.
21. 'Rights ground duties. Positive rights do not ground determinate duties. Therefore, there are no positive rights.' Discuss.

END OF PAPER