UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MPHIL EXAMINATIONS

for internal students

Political Philosophy

10:00-13:00, Tuesday 14th May, 2002

Candidates should answer THREE of the following questions.
Please avoid overlap in your answers

1. Explain Rawls's distinction between political liberalism and comprehensive liberalism. Does Rawls's own theory meet the aspirations he sets out for political liberalism?

2. Is the 'expensive tastes' objection sufficient to defeat every theory of equality which uses welfare as its metric?

3. 'The point of equality is not to eliminate the effects of bad luck, but to end oppression and exploitation, which are, by definition, socially imposed.' Discuss.

4. Nozick's distinction between patterned and unpatterned historical theories of distributive justice has been criticized on the grounds that every plausible theory of distributive justice -- even Nozick's own -- must contain both historical and patterned elements. How convincing is this criticism?

5. Many political philosophers who share Nozick's intuitions about the rights of self-ownership conclude that the state, in all its possible forms, is unjustified unless it is the result of an explicit contract

between those who are bound by it. Why does Nozick disagree, and what does he do to defend his position?

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6. In virtue of what is a society properly called 'democratic'? Is there any basis for preferring a democratic society, so defined, to all forms of non-democratic societies?

7. Rawls's account of the primary goods in *A Theory of Justice* has been criticized for being not properly neutral between competing conceptions of the good. Explain this criticism. Did Rawls adequately answer it in his subsequent writings?

8. Can the free market be defended on the grounds that only in such an economic system is our liberty adequately respected?

9. Does liberalism presuppose an untenable atomism?

10. Does the concept of 'capabilities to function' provide a basis for a universalist programme in political philosophy which can be applied to all societies in the modern world?

11. Is multi-culturalism inconsistent with the value of equality?

12. 'It is true by definition that the state has the right to rule. Hence there is no question of political obligation.' Discuss.

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