

Unit 3 - Absolutism and Constitutionalism

Practice Multiple Choice—Answers

Questions 1-3 refer to the following excerpt:

"He, the said Charles Stuart, for accomplishment of such his designs, and for the protection of himself and his adherents in his and their wicked practices, to the same end has traitorously and maliciously levied war against the present Parliament and people therein represented, as with the circumstances of time and place is in the said charge more particularly set forth. He has hereby caused and procured many thousands of the free people of this nation to be slain; and by divisions, parties, and insurrections within this land, by invasions from foreign parts endeavored and procured by him, and by many other evil ways and means, he, the said Charles Stuart, has not only maintained and carried on the said war both by sea and land, but also has renewed, or caused to be renewed, the said war against the Parliament and good people of this nation in this present year 1648 in several counties and places in this kingdom in the charge specified; and he has for that purpose given his commission to his son the prince and others, whereby, besides multitudes of other persons, many such as were by the Parliament entrusted for the safety of this nation, being by him or his agents corrupted to the betraying of their trust, and revolting from the Parliament, have had entertainment and commission for the continuing and renewing of the war and hostility against the said Parliament and people.

"For all which treasons and crimes this court does adjudge that he, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body."

Parliament's Sentence of Charles I, 1649

- 1. Charles I's sentence in the passage was a result of the**
- A. Glorious Revolution
 - B. The Defeat of the Spanish Armada
 - C. The 30 Years War
 - D. The English Civil War

The Correct Answer:

D. Charles I was defeated by the Roundheads, led by Oliver Cromwell in the English Civil War. The actions that his sentencing refers to are the actions he took against the Parliament that unified the members of Parliament against him and led to his overthrow and ultimate execution.

Incorrect Answers:

- A. The Glorious Revolution, which occurred in 1688, 40 years after Charles I was executed, was a result of the poor rule of Charles I's son James I. James I, who followed in his father's missteps was also overthrown, but his life was spared, as he was allowed to live out his years in exile while his daughter Mary and her husband William were given the throne of England.
- B. The Defeat of the Spanish Armada under Elizabeth I, was a proud moment in English History, unlike what is described in this passage, as treasonous acts by a monarch against the people of England.
- C. The English role in the 30 Years War, which ended in 1648, was on the side of the victors who defeated the Hapsburgs and ended their hegemony over Europe. Even though Charles and his

father James I were at the helm of the British Government during this war, since it ended in victory for the English, it is not what led to the execution of Charles I.

2. Based on the document, what did Charles I violate with his actions?

- A. The Act of Supremacy
- B. The Magna Carta
- C. The English Bill of Rights
- D. The Peace of Augsburg

The Correct Answer:

B. Signed in 1215 by King John, the Magna Carta established the Parliament in England, and gave the Parliament the power of the purse. By dismissing Parliament and then by levying “war against the present Parliament and people therein represented” Charles violated the agreement that King John had been forced to sign in 1215.

Incorrect Answers:

A. The Act of Supremacy was signed by Henry VIII and made him the head of his newly established Church of England. There is nothing in this passage that refers to Charles’ role as the head of the Anglican Church, but rather it focused on his abuse of power over the Parliament.

C. The English Bill of Rights was not signed until 40 years later, by Charles I’s granddaughter and her husband, William and Mary, after they had succeeded in the Glorious Revolution.

D. The Peace of Augsburg was signed by Charles V in 1555 just before he abdicated his position as Holy Roman Empire. The Peace of Augsburg was not related to England, but was rather passed in order to end the religious disputes among the German Princes by allowing them to choose between Catholicism and Lutheranism.

3. Of the following, who would approve of the actions that Parliament took against Charles I?

- A. John Locke
- B. Thomas Hobbes
- C. Machiavelli
- D. Erasmus

The Correct Answer:

A. John Locke believed that if a ruler or government was not protecting the natural rights of the governed, then it is the responsibility of the governed to overthrow that government and replace it with one that will. Since this passage references the removal of Charles I, by means of execution, because of the abuses he made on the Parliament and the people of Britain, this would be supported by Locke.

The Incorrect Answers:

B. Although Hobbes did believe that the power of the government came from the governed, he did not believe that once in power the governed should be able to overthrow said King. Hobbes believed that the best form of government was an Absolute Monarchy.

C. Machiavelli was concerned with a ruler's ability to maintain power and keep the state strong. Neither the actions taken by Charles I which led to the revolt against him, nor the actual revolt would have aligned with the theories of Machiavelli.

D. Erasmus was a Northern Humanist and was not as concerned with the monarchies as he was with the church and the lack of piety he saw spreading into the church.

Questions 4-5 refer to the following excerpt:

“And so whoever has the legislative or supreme power of any commonwealth, is bound to govern by established standing laws, promulgated and known to the people, and not by extemporary decrees; by indifferent and upright judges, who are to decide controversies by those laws; and to employ the force of the community at home, only in the execution of such laws; or abroad to prevent the redress of foreign injuries, and secure the community from inroads and invasion. And all this to be directed to no other end but the peace, safety, and public good of the people.”

John Locke “The Consent of the Governed,” Second Treatise on Government (1690)

4. Based on what is written in this passage, which of the following would John Locke have supported and approved of?

- A. Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes
- B. Martin Luther's 95 Theses
- C. Machiavelli's philosophy in *The Prince*
- D. Charles I's decision to dismiss Parliament

The Correct Answer:

B. Although Luther was concerned with religion, and Locke with politics, the two in many ways overlap. Just as Locke believed that if a ruler does not do what is right for the people that ruler should be overruled, Luther felt that if the church clergy was not doing what was right for the people they should be held accountable and removed from their position, and the 95 Theses were a means of calling out those who were corrupt with the intention of promoting change.

Incorrect Answers:

A. Louis XIV's decision to revoke the Edict of Nantes was taking away the right of the people of France to practice their religion of choice. This move was made without consultation of the people and was an attempt to increase the power of the monarchy. These moves would never have been supported by Locke, who believed that government decisions should be based on what is best for the people, not for the monarch.

C. Machiavelli's *The Prince*, was focused on a ruler's ability to maintain power at all cost regardless of the means it takes to do so. This is very different from Locke's philosophy which explains that the people, or the community should be the most important focus of the government.

D. Charles I's decision to dismiss Parliament completely bypassed the rights of the people to have representation in the decisions of the government. This contradicts Locke's statement that the

decisions of the government should all be focused on maintaining the “peace, safety, and public good of the people.”

5. What event is John Locke responding to in this passage?

- A. The English Civil War
- B. The Restoration Period
- C. The Glorious Revolution
- D. The signing of the Magna Carta

The Correct Answer:

C. The Glorious Revolution ended with the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy in Great Britain. Locke’s writing was in defense of the process of establishing that government as well as praising that particular type of government. The standing laws that Locke refers to would be the English Bill of Rights that were signed by William and Mary when becoming the King and Queen of England.

Incorrect Answers:

- A. Although the English Civil War is what ended with the elimination of Charles I’s Monarchy, it also ended with the establishment of a military dictatorship, not something that Locke would have supported.
- B. The Restoration of the Monarchy which occurred after the death of Oliver Cromwell, was again not a government that was particularly open to the people, as Locke wrote in this passage. There were things that Charles II did, such as relaxing laws against Catholics in exchange for money from France, that were not “promulgated or known to the people.”
- D. The signing of the Magna Carta, did in fact establish a limited Monarchy, but it was not until the Glorious Revolution and the signing of the English Bill of Rights in 1688 that England established “standing laws, promulgated and known to the people.”

Question 6 refers to the following excerpt:

"It is certain that nowhere in the world one can see troops comparable with the Prussians for beauty, cleanliness, and order. Although in drill, training, and marching much is forced and affected, nearly everything is useful and efficient. Besides, it must be admitted that the army and the troops lack nothing that is needed. The soldiers number 70,000, and every regiment has at least a hundred more men than the normal figure. The Arsenal is superabundantly provided with field artillery and siege artillery, and only the teams are missing. Moreover, there is such an enormous store of powder, shot, and shells as if a great war was threatening. In Berlin and all about Brandenburg one sees as many troops moving as one saw in Vienna during the last war against the Turks. All this activity is directed by the King in person, and only by him. Besides, he looks after the whole public administration in all its branches with such care and thoroughness that not a thaler [note: a monetary unit] is spent unless he has given his signature. Those who do not see it cannot believe that there is any man in the world, however intelligent and able he may be, who can settle so many things personally in a single day as Frederick William the First, who works from 3 o'clock in the morning till 10, and spends the rest of the day in looking after and drilling his army...."

Count von Seckendorf: On Frederick William I. Sechedorf was the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin during the reign of Frederick William I (r. 1713 – 1740)

6. Whose philosophy of Government is supported by this passage?

- A. John Locke
- B. Machiavelli
- C. Thomas Hobbes
- D. Thomas More

The Correct Answer:

B. Machiavelli believed that the primary concern of any ruler should be the military. Prussia was a state that was created around the establishment of a military and this passage clearly reflects the militaristic focus of the Hohenzollern dynasty in Prussia.

Incorrect Answers:

- A. This particular passage is focused on military strength and the need for the ruler to focus on increasing that strength. Locke did not discuss the military so much as discussed government structures and the natural rights of the people.
- C. Hobbes saw the need to have a strong government so as to protect the people from each other, and the natural state of chaos and war. However, he did not focus on the use of the military to achieve this stability, but rather on the structure of the government.
- D. Thomas More was very critical of Henry VIII's government and how much power Henry was exerting over the people of England. In his book, Utopia, he discusses the fact that all citizens have a specific role to play in society, but he did not feel as the primary focus of society was military as is written in this particular passage

Questions 7-9 refer to the following excerpt:

It appears from all this that the person of the king is sacred, and that to attack him in any way is sacrilege. God has the kings anointed by his prophets with the holy function in like manner as he has bishops and altars anointed. But even without the external application in thus being anointed, they are by their very office the representatives of the divine majesty deputed by Providence of the execution of his purposes. Accordingly God calls Cyrus his anointed. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him." ...Kings should be guarded as holy things, and whosoever neglects to protect them is worthy of death....

...

But kings, although their power comes from on high, as has been said, should not regard themselves as masters of that power to use it at their pleasure...they must employ it with fear and self-restraint, as a thing coming from God and of which God will demand an account. "Hear, O kings, and take heed, understand, judges of the earth, lend your ears, ye who hold the peoples under your sway, and delight to see the multitude that surround you. It is God who gives you the power. Your strength comes from the Most High, who will question your works and penetrate the depths of your thoughts, for, being ministers of his kingdom, ye have not given righteous judgments nor have ye walked according to his will. He will straightway appear to you in a terrible manner, for to those who command is the heaviest punishment reserved. The humble and the weak shall receive mercy, but the mighty shall be mightily

tormented. For God fears not the power of any one, because he made both great and small and he has care for both..."

Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, "Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture", 1679

7. Based on this passage, which of the following would Bossuet most likely disagree with?

- A. Machiavelli
- B. Absolutism
- C. Revolution
- D. Gallicanism

Correct Answer:

C. Because Bossuet was the Court Preacher to King Louis XIV, he believed in the Divine Right of Kings, meaning that the power of the government comes from God. If a group of people decided to revolt against the government then they would be going against God and that would be unacceptable. This is seen in this passage where Bossuet wrote that "God has the kings anointed by his prophets with the holy function in like manner as he has bishops and altars anointed.

Incorrect Answers:

- A. In this passage Bossuet states that Kings must employ their power "with fear and self-restraint," which is very similar to Machiavelli's belief that rulers must be feared, but also that they need to avoid hatred.
- B. Bossuet was a supporter of Louis XIV who was in fact creating an Absolute Monarchy. This is apparent in this particular passage as he states that "the person of the king is sacred, and that to attack him in any way is sacrilege." This is the same as in an absolute monarchy, that the word of the king is the law.
- D. Even though Bossuet was Catholic, he seems to support the belief that the King is the voice and representative of God. Therefore when Louis XIV made himself the head of the Catholic Church in France, that would align with what Bossuet is saying here.

8. Which of the following religions would disagree with the government structure that Bossuet is describing in this passage?

- A. Anglican
- B. Calvinist
- C. Catholic
- D. Anabaptist

The Correct Answer:

D. The Anabaptists believed in the separation of Church and States, something that is clearly not reflected in this passage where Bossuet is explaining that the power of the King comes directly from God.

The Incorrect Answers:

- A. The Anglican Religion is led by the Monarchy. The hierarchy of the Anglican Church is intertwined with the Government, which is exactly what Bossuet is explaining in this passage.
- B. John Calvin created a theocracy in Geneva when he established the Calvinist church. In this case the government of Geneva was completely intertwined with religion, just as Bossuet is explaining here.
- C. The Catholic Church at this time relied heavily on the lack of separation of church and state. Bossuet himself was Catholic, and supported in this passage the idea of divine right, which had historically been a Catholic belief.

9. Whose monarchy is Bossuet supporting in this passage?

- A. Elizabeth I
- B. William and Mary
- C. Louis XIV
- D. Frederick William, the Great Elector

Correct Answer

C. The passage refers to the concept of Divine Right, and supports the implementation of a monarchy. It was also written in France in 1679, and at that time Louis XIV was the king of France. Bossuet in fact was the Court Preacher for Louis XIV.

Incorrect Answers:

- A. Once Elizabeth I became the Queen of England she reinstated the Anglican Church and reaffirmed that the monarchy was the head of the Anglican Church. However, she also passed the Elizabethan Settlement, which allowed for a semblance of religious toleration. Bossuet's passage is more reliant on the population being all one religion.
- B. William and Mary came to power at the end of the Glorious Revolution in England. This was the moment when the government of England recognized that the right to rule came from the people and not from divine right as Bossuet's passage suggests.
- D. Frederick William, the Great Elector, not only got his power from the junkers who elected him, and not from god, but he was also only in charge of the unified Prussian Military, and he had no real political control.