

Humanities I

Unit 12: The Good City: Plato's Republic

Discussion questions and study rates:-

- Ideas expressed by Plato in this reading are: A) that political leaders should be recruited from among those who are intellectually talented and trained to govern by studying philosophy.
B) Political decisions should be based on knowledge of an absolute ideal of justice.
C) Citizens should stay in the place for which their talents suit them.
D) The purpose of the state is to provide for the general welfare of the community which is defined as justice for all citizens.
E) Only a few select men would be capable of deciding what justice is.

For discussion of these questions refer specifically to the directive given to you at the beginning of the course--namely, Primary Analytical Questions.

Section A Comparative Political Systems.

Follow the question examples for Leadership: Decision-Making: Institutions: Citizenship: Ideology.

Question 1. If you were a political scientist, how would you analyze Plato's Republic?
The class will be divided into three groups each one taking a separate part of this question, as follows.

- Group A. Leadership: Who are the leaders? What are their attributes? How are they recruited?
Group B. Decision-Making: What factors do leaders consider when making decisions? What do they make decisions about?
Group C. Citizenship: What role does the citizen play in choosing leaders or making decisions? What are his responsibilities? What are his rights?

Be sure that you justify your answers to these questions by specific reference to the reading.

Question 2: Why did Plato choose to organize his republic in this way? What does he believe are the purposes of government?

Define the meaning of "general welfare", and how did the philosophers define "justice"?

Question 3: What does Plato assume about the nature of man?

Question 4: Are any of Plato's principles of government relevant to your own conception of the good society?

In considering this last question and reviewing the present political systems of choosing Presidential candidates it is perhaps necessary also to consider the consequences of having an ignorant man as President, governor, senator, or mayor. What do you know

about demagogues? What makes a demagogue, how does he rise to power? Who are the demagogues in American history--past and present??? Why were these apparent super-men supported by the populace when all they could offer, really, was despotism and tyranny? Discuss these questions with as much evidence as possible, submit all your information to the group so that everyone may be equipped to discuss their ideas concerning the good society, rather than a society that looks good from a distant point of vantage.

- C) Citizens should stay in the place for which their talents suit them.
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