José Luis Martí and **Philip Pettit**
A Political Philosophy in Public Life: Civic Republicanism in Zapatero's Spain.
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Political philosophy consistently finds itself in an uneasy relationship to political practice. Though political philosophers aspire to influence politics, they are frequently left to critique practice from the outside, employing ideal models of justice. Even Plato failed in his plan to reform the constitution of Syracuse, leaving him to construct cities of the mind. More recently, noted political thinkers Amartya Sen and David Estlund have critiqued this tendency to construct ideal models at the price of relevance to a non-ideal world. This long spectatorial history makes this book by Martí and Pettit all the more amazing.

Pettit's *Republicanism* was translated into Spanish in 1999, at the same time that the Secretary General of the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party, José Luiz Rodríguez Zapatero, was searching for a new way to articulate a social democratic alternative to the incumbent party's neoliberalism. Zapatero explicitly promised to make Pettit's model the guiding philosophy of their administration, and, upon election, he asked Pettit to speak publicly on his philosophy and to return toward the end of the first administration to evaluate their success.

Pettit, the Lawrence Rockefeller Professor of Politics and Human Values at Princeton University, and Martí, associate professor of law at Pomeu Fabra University in Barcelona, walk us through an engaging and accessible account of this unusual experience. In the first chapter, Martí presents the Spanish context, from the broader historical forces at play to the finer political motivations of distancing the Socialists from previous, corrupt Socialist administrations and responding to contemporary crises like the ETA terrorist bombing in Madrid in 2004. Rather than seize upon Tony Blair's or Bill Clinton's 'Third Way', which underemphasized civic equality and engagement, they turned to Pettit's republicanism.

Republicanism is summarized by Pettit in Chapter 2. Tracing a thread that runs from ancient Rome through renaissance Italy to the mid-Atlantic Anglo-American political tradition, Republicanism makes non-domination—freedom from the arbitrary will of another and the ability to look all fellow citizens proudly in the eye—the central political value. This value requires both state intervention to prevent the domination of private citizens over one another, including protections for the aged, children, the poor and other marginalized groups, and checks on state power such as elections and separation of powers to prevent the arbitrary exercise of its own power. Non-domination

is contrasted with the neoliberalism's central political value of non-interference, which Pettit argues is too narrow in its focus on absence of direct interference and leaves room for indirect domination. The chapter's presentation of civic republicanism is, of necessity, hasty. However, it is appropriate to the intended lay audience. Those who want a sustained, philosophical argument would be better off following Zapatero's example and reading Pettit's other work.

The third chapter reproduces Pettit's evaluation of the Zapatero's first administration and some replies to one Spanish critic. Using a number of measures, Pettit concludes that Zapatero did take republicanism to heart, considering the political realities and acknowledging the work yet to do. More cynical readers may wonder, despite Pettit's attempt to respond to critics, whether he has offered all possible challenges to his story. But the facts are largely a matter of public record and there is no reason to believe that Martí and Pettit have done them a disservice.

An interview with Zapatero constitutes the next chapter. Though there are a few evasions, Zapatero engages issues of both philosophy and policy and shows an easy familiarity with republican principles. In fact, he displays an erudition that is difficult to imagine in virtually any American politician. Casual references to Jürgen Habermas, John Rawls and Hannah Arendt are certainly rare in contemporary American political discourse.

The work concludes with a return to practice but, this time, it is prospective. Pettit and Martí turn from their experience in Spain to propose republicanism as a public political philosophy for other nations. Unlike the other contending philosophies—particularly the dominant neoliberalism alternative with its exclusive emphasis on freedom as non-interference—republicanism passes the three-part test of providing a shareable, realistic and energizing ideal. Everyone understands the experience of humiliation under the will of another, so the ideal of non-domination is not factional or sectarian. It does not make unrealistic cognitive or moral demands on the citizenry, nor level citizens down to their basest natures. Lastly, it is broad, deep and non-intrusive enough to inspire citizens toward action.

This work is difficult to criticize, first because it embodies every political philosopher's dream—to be lifted out of the wilds of academia and invited to participate in the shaping of a political order. Second, the book does not attempt primarily to put forward an argument, but to recount an event. One may raise the philosophical question whether the distance between non-domination and non-interference is as great as Pettit believes, or if it is safe to conclude that, because all can understand what it is like to be dominated, they will turn to universal respect rather than resentment. But it is not fair to raise these objections when Pettit admits that this book is only an introduction to his thought. This work is a success at what it intends to do—to recount a compelling event in the history of political theory and practice, to introduce a non-professional audience to

republican thought, and to motivate citizens, Spanish or otherwise, to ask what can be done to make our own political practice more just.

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