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General Certificate of Education  
January 2011

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## Government and Politics

### Assessment Unit A2 2

#### Political Power and Political Ideas

[AQ221]

MONDAY 31 JANUARY, MORNING

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AQ221

#### TIME

1 hours 30 minutes.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided. Choose **either Option A: Political Power or Option B: Political Ideas.**

From your chosen option, study the source provided and answer questions **1, 2,** and either **3(a)** or **3(b).**

#### INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 60.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in questions **2** and **3.**

Figures in brackets printed down the right-hand side of pages indicate the marks awarded to each question or part question.

#### ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to take account of the marks for each question in allocating the available examination time.

You are advised to study the source before attempting to answer questions **1** and **2,** and to refer to the source in your answers to these questions.

## Option A: Political Power

Study the source below and answer the questions that follow.

### Source

If we are to understand where power lies in any society it is essential that we consider the economic level. Specifically, we need to examine who it is that owns and controls wealth in society because it is this that determines access to political power. The greater the wealth an individual has the greater their political power and their ability to shape events in their own interests.

Wealth is not equally distributed in society and nor is political power. Although universal suffrage may exist, individuals such as Rupert Murdoch, Silvio Berlusconi and Bill Gates exercise much more power than others. They are, therefore, able to pursue their class interests at the expense of the rest of the population. This challenges the idea that we really live in a democracy.

- 1 Which theory of political power is put forward in the source? With reference to the source and other relevant material you have studied, explain **three** features of this theory. [10]
  
- 2 With reference to the source and any other relevant material you have studied, explain how the theory of political power you identified in question 1 can be criticised. [15]
  
- 3 **Either**
  - (a) Evaluate the view that states that rely upon coercion are bound to fail. [35]

Or

  - (b) Evaluate the view that societies with major social divisions are likely to experience low levels of legitimacy. [35]

## Option B: Political Ideas

Study the source below and answer the questions that follow.

### Source

The desire to be free from state domination and to have control over one's own life is something that all human beings have in common. Consequently, human history provides one example after another of people struggling to break free from oppression and tyranny. Those systems that offer the greatest degree of individual freedom succeed. Those systems that deny freedom and human rights will eventually fail. This desire for human liberty is what motivated the American and French revolutions in the past. Today, it continues to motivate those who campaign for the removal of restrictions on human liberty.

- 1 Which ideological view is put forward in the source? With reference to the source and any other relevant material you have studied, explain **three** features of this view. [10]
  
- 2 With reference to the source and any other relevant material you have studied, explain how ideological opponents of the view you identified in question 1 would criticise it. [15]
  
- 3 **Either**
  - (a) Evaluate Burke's vision of the ideal political system as set out in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. [35]

Or

  - (b) Evaluate the view, expressed by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, that capitalism will create its own "gravediggers" in the form of the proletariat. [35]

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**THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER**

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