On the People’s Terms

According to republican political theory, people’s freedom as persons requires that they be publicly protected against subjection or domination in the exercise of basic liberties. But there is no public protection without a coercive state and that raises a problem since, by all accounts, coercion takes away from the freedom of the coerced. In addressing this problem, Philip Pettit argues that state coercion does not involve subjection or domination if people share equally in democratic control of the direction it takes. He proposes a normative theory of democracy under which the goal is to ensure that political coercion is non-dominating and, linking philosophy with policy, he supplements the theory with a realistic model of institutions that might promote that goal. On the People’s Terms is an original account of the rationale and organization of democracy, offering a new direction for democratic thought. It fully lives up to the high ideals of the Seeley Lectures.

Philip Pettit is L. S. Rockefeller University Professor of Politics and Human Values at Princeton University and also Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Australian National University. His books include The Common Mind; Republicanism; Rules, Reasons and Norms; and Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind and Politics. Amongst his recent co-authored books are The Economy of Esteem, with Geoffrey Brennan; A Political Philosophy in Public Life, with Jose Marti; and Group Agency, with Christian List. A collection of papers on his work, Common Minds: Themes from the Philosophy of Philip Pettit, appeared in 2007.
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ON THE PEOPLE’S TERMS

A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy

PHILIP PETTIT
For Rory and Owen, in another season.
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¹ N. Kolodny, in his unpublished paper, ‘Rule Over None: Social Equality and the Value of Democracy’, offers an alternative way of developing some of the ideas that are basic to the approach taken in this book and this was a source of constant challenges as I prepared the final version of my own text.