**Call for papers.**

**Bentham’s Political Economy: ‘Happiness—enjoyment—not money, is or ought to be the ultimate object of the legislator’s care’.**

16–17 December 2019, Bentham House, University College London Faculty of Laws

The philosopher and reformer Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) is celebrated as both the founder of classical utilitarianism and a profound theorist of law. Despite his seminal treatment of rationality as cost–benefit analysis, and his recognition of the phenomenon of diminishing marginal utility however, he is often either overlooked altogether in histories of economic thought, or relegated to the status of a footnote. The Bentham Project and UCL Faculty of Laws are therefore delighted to announce a conference, to be held on 16–17 December 2019, on Bentham’s Political Economy.

The Bentham Project is grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for funding the conference, and for their generosity in funding editorial work on the final three of five volumes comprizing *Writings on Political Economy*, a major sub-project in the new authoritative edition of *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham*. We are also grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council, whose earlier grant supported the editing of the first two volumes.

A non-prescriptive list of some of the questions which papers might explore is as follows: ‘What sort of political economist (if any) was Bentham?’; ‘What is the place of political economy in his art and science of legislation?’; ‘What are the similarities and differences between the political economy of Adam Smith and that of Bentham?’; and ‘What influence, if any, did Bentham have on the development of classical and neo-classical political economy?’

Speakers at the conference will include:

* Professor Annie Cot (Paris: I)
* Professor Richard Whatmore (St Andrews)
* Professor Marco Guidi (Pisa)
* Professor Stephen Engelmann (UIC)
* Dr Michael Quinn (UCL)

We welcome proposals for papers on any aspect of Bentham’s political economy in the form of 300-word abstracts, which should be sent to Dr Michael Quinn (m.quinn@ucl.ac.uk) by 31 August 2019. Please also direct any other queries about the conference to the same address. It is anticipated that registration for the conference will open in August 2019.

Overview of the Volumes.

*Writings on Political Economy Volume I: including Defence of Usury, Manual of Political Economy, and A Protest against Law Taxes*, ed. M. Quinn, Oxford, 2016

In the mid-1780s Bentham drafted his first sustained discussions of political economy and public finance for ‘Projet Matière’. That discussion is now lost, but the corresponding marginal contents and three related appendices open the volume. The volume continues with *Defence of Usury*, first published 1787, which established some reputation for Bentham in political economy, and five appendices drafted in 1790 in preparation for the second edition. Next comes ‘Manual of Political Economy’, an introductory handbook which Bentham never finished, and the surviving text of which is supplemented by seven appendices. The final work is ‘A Protest against Law Taxes’, a trenchant critique of the taxation of legal proceedings, and the denial of justice to the poor, printed in 1793, published in 1795, and extended in 1816.

*Writings on Political Economy Volume II: including Supply without Burthen and Proposals relative to divers modes of Supply*, ed. M. Quinn, Oxford, 2019.

The works contained in this volume, ‘Supply without Burthen’ and ‘Proposals relative to divers modes of Supply’, were drafted by Bentham in 1794 during an intense period of activity in which he set out systematically to review possible sources of public revenue. Bentham had long believed that the appropriation of a proportion of the estates of those dying without near relations offered a painless method of raising public revenue, and now developed the proposal in detail. At the end of 1795, prompted by Pitt’s introduction of a tax on collateral successions, Bentham published the précis of the work he had submitted to government, which opens the volume, followed by four Appendices of additional materials. By late September 1794, Bentham envisaged ‘Supply without Burthen’ as the first of a related series of proposals for generating revenue, which he headed ‘*Πόροι*’ (i.e. 'Resources'). The remaining proposals ranged from further painless expedients, through taxation with compensatory benefit, to taxation pure and simple. Since Bentham viewed all these proposals as connected elements of a single generic enterprise, the fruits of his labours (excepting the proposal which he did publish, namely ‘Supply without Burthen’) are published together for the first time in the present volume as ‘Proposals relative to divers modes of Supply’. This work is followed by six Appendices which shed further light on Bentham’s approach to raising public revenue, including his first articulation of what would reappear five years later as his Annuity Note Scheme.

*Writings on Political Economy Volume III: Preventive Police* (forthcoming from the Clarendon Press). Preliminary text available at: <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/10055084/>

The writings in this volume were composed in 1798–9, when Bentham co-operated with the Magistrate Patrick Colquhoun in his efforts to reform policing. The volume is divided into two parts, reflecting the two Bills which Bentham drafted. Part I. Writings on Marine Police contains Bentham’s first draft of the ‘Thames Police Bill’ and four related works. Part II. Writings on the Police Bill, contains five works written in connection with what Bentham referred to indiscriminately as ‘Police Bill’ and ‘Police Revenue Bill’. Bentham’s police bill connects the prevention of crimes directly with the provision of a revenue to the state, and prompts him to reflect on the intimacy of the ‘alliance’ between police and finance. In his ‘Calendar of Delinquency’, he provides a worked example of the application of the principle of utility to the evaluation of policy, while his advocacy of a ‘Police Gazette’ reveals the extent to which he sought both to disseminate information and to mould opinion.

*Writings on Political Economy Volume IV: Circulating Annuities and other writings on the National Debt*

This volume opens with ‘Political Prospects, or What’s to be done?’ an unfinished pamphlet drafted in October 1798 which sought to allay public alarm over the suspension of convertibility by the Bank of England. The volume continues with Bentham’s two letters ‘On the Stock-Note Plan’, that is Ambrose Weston’s proposal for increasing liquidity by securing paper instruments with existing government annuities, which prompted Bentham to develop his own Annuity Note scheme in 1799–1800. The third work in the volume, ‘Hints, respecting the mode of feeding the *Old* Sinking Fund in *War*-time’, drafted in July 1800 in the midst of efforts to complete the Annuity Note scheme, continues the focus on the National Debt. The centre-piece of the volume is formed by ‘Circulating Annuities’ itself, a work Bentham did not complete to his satisfaction before deciding rather to draft and print a précis thereof. The volume includes his surviving draft of the work, the précis or ‘Abstract’, and seven appendices containing related materials. The volume concludes with ‘Observations by Sir Fred. Morton Eden, (in form of a Letter) on the Annuity Note Plan .^.^. with Counter-Observations by the Author’, which Bentham wrote between late July and early August 1801.

N.B. The text of this volume is still being finalized, but will be made available via UCL discovery as soon as is practically possible.

*Writings on Political Economy Volume V: including ‘The True Alarm’, ‘Defence of a Maximum’ and ‘Method of an Institute of Political Economy’*

The volume will contain Bentham’s final reflections on the merits and drawbacks of paper money (‘Paper Mischief Exposed’ (1800-1), ‘The True Alarm’ (1801), ‘Discussion sur le papier monnaie à propos d’un ouvrage d’H. Thornton’ (1802), ‘Paper money for Spain’ (1819), and ‘Paper and Gold’ (1820) (the last three being fragmentary discussions of the function and limits of paper promises), together with ‘Defence of a Maximum’ (1801), wherein Bentham advises government, in a dearth, to cap the price of corn, and ‘Method of an Institute of Political Economy’ (1800–1, 1804), his second attempt to summarize the field of political economy.

N.B. Editorial work on the text for this volume (excepting annotation) is near completion, and once more, it will be made available to paper-givers and the wider public as soon as is practically possible.