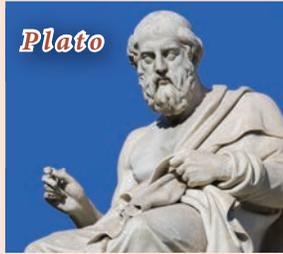




## 7.1 Plato

(428/427 – 348/347 BCE)

- ❖ **Socrates's Student**
- ❖ **Founded the Academy-**  
First institution for higher education.
- ❖ **First Western philosopher**  
whole writings have survived
- ❖ **Most of what we know about Socrates** comes from *Plato's* writings
- ❖ **Agreed with Pythagoras that Mathematics were essential in understanding the world.**



Plato

He was a disciple of **Socrates** who was one of the foremost philosophers of Greece. During his time there was great chaos in the political life of Athens which was a Greek City State. This resulted in the Athenian government condemning **Socrates** to death because of his teachings. This greatly affected **Plato's** views on politics especially in Athens.

In about 387 BCE **Plato** founded his 'Academy'. The name 'Academy' comes from the name of a famous Athenian hero called 'Akademos'. Here **Plato** taught Political Philosophy which contained politics, ethics, mathematics and sociology.

**Plato's Works**

The three most important works of **Plato** are 'The Republic' (386 BCE), 'The Statesman' (360 BCE) and 'The Laws' (347 BCE). Apart from these works, he has written a number of other smaller books.

**Plato's Thought**

The important ideas of **Plato** are found in his three major works and can be summarised as follows:

**Ideal State**

In Political Science, the most important concept around which the subject is built is 'The State'. According

**Learning Objectives**

- ❖ To understand the Political thought of **Plato**.
- ❖ To apply in the present context.
- ❖ To gain knowledge about **Plato's** ideas on state, government, Justice, Education, Communism.

**Plato** was born in 427/428 BCE. He belonged to an aristocratic family in Athens a Greek City State. **Plato's** real name was '**Aristocles**'. Some historical sources say his wrestling coach Ariston of Argos dubbed him 'Platon' meaning 'Broad' on account of his large build.

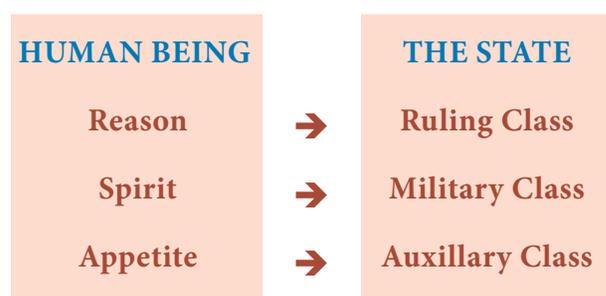


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to him in an Ideal State (i.e., the most suitable State for a human being to live in according to *Plato*) should be made up of three classes namely Ruling Class, Military Class and Economic Class. He gives details of how this is possible in his subsequent ideas of Justice and Education.

### Idea of Justice

He believed that justice resided both in one single human being as well as the State. He said every human being is endowed with three qualities though in different proportions. He said these qualities are Reason, which resides in a person's head, Spirit which resides in a person's heart and Appetite which resides in a person's stomach. He said these are the three parts of the human soul. Firstly, he said true justice is that, these three parts should do their rightful business in order to make a human being whole. Secondly, these three parts existing in every individual, should be faithfully reflected in the State which is a collective of human beings as a whole through the formation of the three classes namely, Ruling Class, Military Class and Economic Class by which his Ideal State is formed.



### Concept of Education

*Plato* designs an education system based on various stages suited to the age of the students from childhood to adulthood.

He also devises methods of eliminations as higher stages of education is reached by human beings depending on the proportion of the three parts of their souls namely reason, spirit and appetite. Persons who are found suited to fulfil economic duties of the State are separated from the ones suited for Ruling and Military services. In the second process of elimination the persons suited for ruling are given special training to become what *Plato* calls 'Philosopher Kings' to rule his 'Ideal State'.



Every philosopher is the child of his/her own time. The execution of *Socrates*, the wisest man in Greece, filled *Plato* with contempt for democracy and believed that it had to be replaced by the rule of the wisest.

### Views on Democracy

In his work 'The Republic' *Plato* had practically condemned Democracy. He had developed the idea that all were not fit to rule and that only the philosophers who had been specially trained for the purpose should rule. He said this because it was Athenian Democracy which condemned his teacher *Socrates* to death.

### Classification of Constitutions

*Plato's* idea of a constitution is much different from the modern understanding of this term. By constitution he meant a particular way of life the people of a society have designed for their wellbeing. This included social customs, traditions, practices and also politics and government to oversee all these. *Plato* discussed about constitutions as they existed in many parts of the world during his time and as they

ought to be. He classified constitutions as Aristocracy, Timocracy, Oligarchy, Democracy and Tyranny. He also said that there is a tendency of Aristocracy to degenerate into Timocracy, Timocracy into Oligarchy, Oligarchy into Democracy and Democracy into Tyranny.

### Bringing up of Children

According to **Plato**, children were national possession and as such it was obligatory on the part of the State to bring them up according to their attitudes.

### Plato's dialectical Method

**Plato** used this method in his book 'The Republic'. He writes this book as if he is asking questions as a student and **Socrates** is answering as his teacher. Unlike 'Didactics' i.e. a teacher authoritatively teaches a subject because the teacher knows it and the students don't, 'Dialectics' is a question and answer type of method where the student has a vague idea about something and throws questions to the teacher about it and the teacher's answers are again questioned. By this the teacher facilitates the student to formulate and reformulate his idea in order to arrive at the best possible understanding of the idea.

### Assessment

**Plato**, though by no means the first philosopher, undoubtedly is one of the earliest to leave us a significant body of work. He spent most of his time asking and providing answers to questions that have always troubled people. Even centuries after his death, **Plato** is considered the most influential political philosopher of all times.

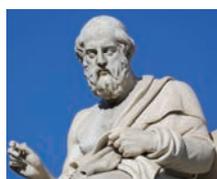
## 7.2 Aristotle

(384 – 322 BCE)



### Learning Objectives

- ★ To understand the Political thought of **Aristotle**.
- ★ This will help to compare thinkers on similar concept
- ★ To gain knowledge about **Aristotle** ideas on Ideal State, Citizenship, normal and perverted forms of constitution and Monarchy, forms of *government and democracy*



Man is by nature a political animal and he, who by nature and not by mere accident is without state is either above humanity or below it.

-**Aristotle** in his book **Politics**

### Life and Times

William Ebenstien says” In the history of political philosophy no one has surpassed **Aristotle** in encyclopaedic interest and accomplishment”.

**Aristotle** was **Plato**'s student at his 'Academy'. After **Plato**'s death, **Aristotle** found his own school called 'The Lyceum'

in 335 BCE. It is here that Alexander studied under *Aristotle*. The teaching and research program included every branch of knowledge. *Aristotle* was born in Stagira in 384 BCE. Unlike *Plato*, *Aristotle* came from an upper middle class family. His father Nicomachus was the personal physician to king Amyntas of Macedon.

'*Aristotle*' whose name means 'the best purpose' stood true to his name when he proposed the 'Best Practicable State' as opposed to *Plato*'s 'Ideal State'. According to *Aristotle*, "the State exists for an end and this end is the supreme good of man in both moral and intellectual life".

### **Aristotle's Works**

He wrote many books on subjects ranging from Greek literature to Zoology. But his most famous work is called 'Politics' from which modern Political Science has grown. Thus he is called as the 'father of Political Science'. Though the exact date of its publication is not known, it is a voluminous work consisting of 8 books and having more than 1000 pages. Unlike *Plato*'s agreement with his teacher *Socrates*, *Aristotle* did not agree on many things his teacher *Plato* had to say.

**Quotable quote**  
The whole is more than the Sum of its parts - *Aristotle*

### **Aristotle's Thought**

Almost all his political ideas are known through his book 'Politics'.

### **State as a Natural Institution**

According to him authority of the State is moral and the State is natural. Since the family could not satisfy the ever increasing needs of the people, they had

to come out of their limited circle and thought of creating the State. The families combined together to make the State and made it a perfect association. *Aristotle* believes that the State is an individual writ large because the individual can think of perfection only in a State.

### **Functions of the State**

According to *Aristotle* the foremost function of the State is to promote good life and create essential conditions for mental, moral and physical development of the people. The State should also function in such a way that good habits of individuals are converted into good actions and promote good, happy and honourable life.

### **Theory of Citizenship**

*Aristotle* did not believe that mere residence or enjoyment of legal rights or birth should confer the right of citizenship on a person. He said, "It is the function which entitles a person to become citizen". A person should participate in the popular assembly which was vested with the authority of exercising sovereign powers. A citizen should be able to partake in decision making process of the government.

### **Classification of States**

He classifies States on quantitative as well as qualitative basis:

Quantity	Quality	
	Good Form	Perverted Form
Type	Monarchy	Tyranny
One	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
A Few	Polity	Democracy
Many		



According to *Aristotle*, if sovereignty resides in one person it is Monarchy. It degenerates into Tyranny. Thus the people wrest the State from the tyrant and give it to a few rulers and thus Aristocracy comes into being. Then it perverts into Oligarchy, people again revolt and transfer power to many rulers by which the State becomes a Polity. When this degenerates, it becomes a Democracy because these rulers no longer have sight of the common good for which the State came into being. This again gives rise to Monarchy.

### Views on Slavery

According to *Aristotle*, the slave is the first of the animate property of a Master, i.e., the slave is first among all living property of the household of which the master is the head. He says those who are not virtuous are slaves. The slave is an instrument of action and not that of production because as soon as he starts performing productive functions, he loses his character as a slave and becomes virtuous.

### Views on Family

*Aristotle* believes that the family is a natural institution and in fact it existed prior to the State. It is natural as individuals become members from their very birth. It is the starting point of moral life and the nucleus of the State.

### ACTIVITY



Is it true that *Aristotle* tutored Alexander the Great?

Yes, he did, at the request of Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great.



### Views on Property

*Aristotle* supported the possession of private property which is essential for good and normal life. However, he prescribed limits to private property. He also objected to the abolition of private property.

### *Aristotle* and Leisure

The reason *Aristotle* says the citizens of a State must have property as well as slaves is because the citizens must have leisure, so that the citizen may spend useful time in thinking and deliberating on furthering the good life of all though the State.

### Views on Revolution

*Aristotle* is of the opinion that revolutions occur firstly due to constitutional changes. This change could be large or small. For e.g.: change from Monarchy to Tyranny could set off a revolution by the people. Secondly he says revolutions could occur due to loss of purpose of the State though there may not be any change in the State's constitution.

### *Aristotle's* Six Forms of Government

Thus, *Aristotle* is still considered one of the greatest thinkers in politics, psychology and ethics. His intellectual range was vast covering most of the sciences and many of the arts. His works have laid the foundation of centuries of philosophy. Even after the intellectual revolution of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment, Aristotelian concepts remain embedded in world philosophy. Therefore, he is undoubtedly one of the most influential philosophers of all time.

### 7.3 St. Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225-1274)



#### Learning Objectives

1. To study about the Political thought of *St. Thomas Aquinas*
2. This will help to understand *Aquinas's* concept of law
3. To gain knowledge about *Acquinas's* ideas on Origin of State, Functions of the State, Classification of Government, Classification of Laws, Relations between Church and the State.

#### Life And Times

In Western Europe the thirteenth Century was regarded as the golden age of western philosophy. Catholicism emerged as the universal religion in Western Europe. Eventually *Aristotle's* Politics, re-emerged during the thirteenth century. Sharp differences arose between *Aristotle's* secular views and Augustine's religious ideas on sin, the Fall, and political society which were accepted by the church and as a binding doctrine. However, some philosophers faced the challenge of how to accommodate their theological views and a set of secular political assumptions, which finally resulted in the reconciliation of two different ways of understanding the

world. They finally succeeded by terming politics and political theorizing as a trivial pursuit vis-à-vis people's higher calling of getting right with God. *St. Thomas Aquinas* was the greatest among these Christian theologians who architected this major philosophical triumph.

*St. Thomas Aquinas* (1224 or 1225-1274) was born in the family castle of Roccasecca, north of Naples. His father was Landulf of Aquino, who headed a minor branch of an important land owning family and his mother was Theodora Rossi belonging to Neapolitan Carracciolo family.

#### Aquinas' Works

In the nineteenth century, Pope Luis XIII declared that the philosophical system which Aquinas founded to be official Catholic theology, which made reading his works not only important for Catholics but also for those who sought a more than surface understanding of that branch of Christianity. Aquinas works included commentaries that stem from his theological design. Some of his important works include, (i) *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1264), (iii) *Summa Theologica* (1274) and (iv) *On Kingship*.

#### Aquinas' Thought

##### *Summa Contra Gentiles*

It has often been said that Aquinas wrote the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) as a manual or text book designed to be used by the Dominican missionaries working in Spain where Islam was then a force to be reckoned with by Christians. The SCG is evidently an apologetic work, since it defends a series of Christian beliefs that were under criticisms or that could come under potential criticisms.

## Summa Theologica

In his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas establishes the existence of four levels of law which had an underlying unity which is reason. What differentiates one form of law from the other is the level of reason involved. The highest and most comprehensive among them is eternal law which is reason that is operative in the universe as a whole. It is the natural and the ethical order which God had established. The next is divine law which is a special category of eternal law which is the revealed word of God in the Scripture.

The next level of law, Aquinas identifies as the natural law. The idea of natural law goes back to the stoics and refers to moral law that is discovered by reason alone. It assumes that man has the capacity to reason and arrive at certain ethical conclusion that would be binding on them whether it is specified in the law or not. For example, we do not need to have a criminal code to understand that murder is wrong and behave accordingly. The uniqueness of Aquinas' theory of natural law is that it establishes a link between the natural and the supernatural – between nature and spirit. This is so because, says Aquinas, that right and wrong are determined by God's eternal law and hence natural law is nothing else that the rational creature's participation in the eternal law. Human's moral reasoning is in short the extension of the spiritual principle that transcends nature. Finally, human law is the application of human reason to the precepts of natural law in specific earthly conditions.

## On Kingship

The political theory of Aquinas closely parallels *Aristotle's*. His writings 'On

Kingship' can be considered as the most methodical political work. Aquinas largely follows the pattern of arguments that were adopted by *Aristotle* in his 'Politics'. He argues that the State is natural because it is natural for man... to be a social and political animal, and to live in a group. Consequently he emphasizes that political activity is necessary and good. Aquinas further like *Aristotle*, roots people's political nature in their capacity to reason and to speak. Subsequently he emphasizes that it is through reasoned action in the political sphere that humans achieve virtue and there for happiness and fulfilment. Like *Aristotle*, he believes that the state is a moral community where the moral good of its members are considered as its objective. Thus, he argues that the state should be based on justice and the best should rule for the good of the public which should be under the constraints of law. Such an argument leads us directly to the problem of classifying constitutions and yet again Aquinas follows the principles of *Aristotle* by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. He classifies constitution by the number of those who rule and the quality of their rule.

### Quotable quote

Law is nothing other than a certain ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by the person who has the care of the community.

- *Thomas Aquinas*

## Assessment

*St. Thomas* Aquinas who is regarded as one of the great figures of medieval thought founded a tradition which came to be known as Thomism. The basis of his political theory can be found in his commentary on *Aristotle's* Politics in

de regimine principum (on the Rule of Sovereigns) while he was at the papal court in Italy (1259-68). Following *Aristotle* he held that the state is a natural and not a conventional institution and it is a perfect society (communities perfecta). He argued that it is natural and not conventional because human beings were social animals. They needed to form a society to survive, prosper and for their cultural development. Gregarious animals do this by instinct but humans on the other hand do it by reason.

All power according to Aquinas comes from God since it involves the power of life and death which in the Church's doctrine is a prerogative of God. It is at this juncture that Aquinas deviates from *Aristotle* but returns when he turns to the question of the sovereign which is natural. It is natural in that without a governing body capable of making decisions that would be binding, it would result in anarchy and people would destroy each other. The sovereign or government in the view of Aquinas is the representative of those governed.

The state therefore, is not in any way dependent on the church. Aquinas argued that each had a separate role and an end. However, in Aquinas' view the Church is not subordinate to the state, whereas the state on the other hand must take into consideration of the Church since its end is higher than that of the state and is the ultimate end of the citizen. Aquinas likens the relationship of the church to the state to that of the soul and the body. Each has a separate role to play but ultimately the soul's purpose is loftier.

## 7.4 Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)



### Learning Objectives

1. To understand the Political thought of *Niccolo Machiavelli*
2. This will help to compare thinkers on similar concept.
3. To know about *Niccolo Machiavelli* Politics and Religion, State, Advice to the Prince.

### Life and Times

*Machiavelli* was born in Florence, the centre of Italian culture where influence of Italian culture where influence of the European Renaissance was the strongest among all areas as the third child of attorney Bernardo di *Niccolo Machiavelli* and his wife Bartolomea di Stefano Nelli. His writings reveal that he received an excellent humanist education that was informed by the Renaissance values. He entered the service of the Republican Government in 1494, the year of expulsion of the Medici. From 1498 to 1512 he was Secretary to the Chancellery an important post which was concerned with diplomatic, military and administrative affairs. In 1512, consequent upon the restoration of the Medici, *Machiavelli* lost his office

and underwent a brief imprisonment after which he embarked on a literary career. **Machiavelli** wrote his famous monograph *The Prince* in 1513 which is addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici. Simultaneously he started writing another important work- the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (in short, the *Discourses on Livy*) which was completed in 1517. However, both of these works were published posthumously in 1531. **Machiavelli** also produced some minor literary works but his reputation as a political thinker rests on these two books.

### **Machiavelli on Human Nature**

**Machiavelli's** theory of Government is determined by his conception of the study of human nature. Like **Hobbes**, he is very pessimistic about human nature and believes that men by nature are purely selfish and they, in their lives, are always motivated by selfish desires. At one place in 'The Prince' he says, "Men are ungrateful, fickle, deceitful, cowardly and avaricious." He suggests that a monarch should aim to be feared by the people than be loved. For **Machiavelli**, love implies a bond of obligation which men, being essentially selfish, break on every occasion where their own interest demands it, while fear, for the same reason, holds them indefinitely. He feels that men judge things by appearances and so the ruler should take advantage of this fact and act. For him men are weak and ignorant and are essentially vicious and become good only by necessity. He cautions the ruler never to trust his councillors but to use his own judgement.

**Machiavelli** holds the view that men have endless desires and one of the most important desire is the love for private property. He makes materialistic individualism as the explanation of love of independence and self-government. In the *Discourses* also he gives a pessimistic view of human nature. He maintains materialistic gain as the fundamental consideration of humans. He says that this motive of the people make them desire for republic and dislike monarchy. Under Republican government there are more chances for people to get material gain. This is not possible in a monarchy because the Prince takes all the gains and profits himself. An independent nation is preferred because a free nation enables the multiplication of wealth for the masses.

### **Separation between Politics and Morality**

In Greek political thought, ethics was viewed as the foundation of politics. But **Machiavelli** made a striking departure from this classical ideal. He believed that politics is governed by its own independent standards; hence it cannot be bound by the conventional ethical standards. He insisted on separation between politics and ethics. According to him the ruler should be honest, righteous and true to his word, but in reality nobody can have all these qualities and these qualities will not enable a ruler to rule over vicious people. So the Prince should focus on the preservation of the State without being bound by moral obligations. **Machiavelli** does not contend that 'ends justify the means' but he claims that a ruler's success will be judged by popular verdict, and that he will be excused for using dubious

means if he is successful in the end. If political expediency requires the Prince to set aside traditional morality, he should go ahead in the interest of successful politics.

**Quotable  
quote**

“Let a Prince set about the task of conquering and maintaining his State: his methods will always be judged honourable and he will be universally praised.”

### **Niccolo Machiavelli on separation of politics from religion**

**Machiavelli** breaks away from the tradition maintained by **Plato**, **Aristotle**, **St. Thomas Aquinas** and others who believed in the ethical purpose of the State. He separates politics from both religion and morality and gives an autonomous status to politics. According to Machiavelli, it is not a practical policy for the prince to follow the principles of religion and ethics in his statecraft.



### **Machiavelli (The Prince)**

#### **Machiavelli's Method**

According to **Machiavelli**, the right method to study political Science was historical. He says that human desires and passions remain the same always and when

the incidents of life are comparable, humanity will tend to find the same remedies and repeat the same conduct. He therefore regarded that the study of the past was very useful to understand the present and would also make it easy to make predictions for the future. He placed the study of politics on historical and realistic foundation and relied on empirical method particularly in the study of political behaviour. He has been described as a pioneer of behaviouralism. He followed this method almost in all contexts both in the *Prince* and *Discourses*. He conceived of politics as an instrument of acquisition, preservation and expansion of power which could be accomplished by harnessing the faculties of the people as they exist in the real world.

**Machiavelli's** method has been called inductive or scientific on the ground that he drew conclusions from practical or historical experiences of human nature that does not change under different political regimes. His originality lies in focussing on man's behavioural patterns instead of certain morals for the analysis of politics. However critics have pointed out that **Machiavelli's** method was only superficially scientific and historical. He did not follow inductive method of proceeding from the 'particular to general'. Nor is his method deductive, which is the method of proceeding from the 'general to the particular'. According to them **Machiavelli** never touches upon the central problems of political philosophy, such as the justification of the existence of the State, grounds and limits of political obligation etc., He never looks beyond the necessities of practical politics although his vision was broad.

“Single ruler is necessary to found and reform states; republican governments are better at sustaining them once established”.

### ***Machiavelli (Discourses on Livy)***

George H. Sabine has rightly observed that there is no inconsistency between *Machiavelli's* two leading books *The Prince* and *The Discourses on Livy*. Both deal with the same subject—The causes of the rise and decline of States and the means of making them permanent. *The Prince* deals with monarchies or absolute governments and the *Discourses* mainly with the expansion of the Roman republic.

### ***Machiavelli's Statecraft***

*Machiavelli's* enunciation of statecraft is his most notable as well as controversial contribution. It is notable because it provides unique guidelines, it is controversial because it allows the ruler to use certain immoral practices for successful governance. While *Machiavelli* advised the ruler to set aside moral bindings in order to achieve his end, he did not think that conventional morality was totally irrelevant to politics. He enunciates a double standard of morals, one for the ruler and another for his servants and citizens. The ruler's moral implies his undivided commitment to strengthen the state and enhancing his power in order to maintain law and order within the state and to ensure effective defence from foreign invaders. His performance will be judged by his success in fulfilling his responsibility. But his servants and

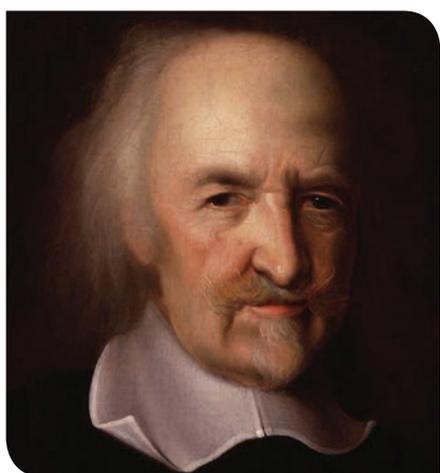
citizens are not allowed to depart from the conventional morality, otherwise the purpose of the state itself will be defeated.

*Machiavelli* wants the Prince to act so carefully that he is held in high esteem among the people. The Prince must be conscious of the prevalence of 'universal egoism'. Government is found to provide the people with security from internal offenders as well as external enemies. A wise ruler will frame his policy with a view to creating an atmosphere of security of life, property and honour of the people. He advises the Prince to provide for security of women in the state. People will be loyal to their ruler when they are sure that their life, property and women are safe in the state.

### **Assessment**

*Machiavelli* did not intend to undermine the foundations of morality in society. As a sincere patriot, he was particularly anxious to build a strong nation-state in Italy which was then fragmented into five parts: Florence, Venice, Naples, Milan and the territory of the Roman Catholic Church. He wanted his country to win a respectable place among other nation-states of Europe. He was also worried about the then prevailing moral corruption among Italians. Though he preferred a republic, he advocated monarchy for the then existing condition of Italy.

## 7.5 Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679)



### Learning Objectives

1. To understand the Political thought of *Thomas Hobbes*
2. To know about *Thomas Hobbes* views on state of Nature, The social Contract, Laws, Rights Liberty, Sovereignty and Social Contract Theory.

### Life and Times

*Thomas Hobbes* the sixteenth century English Philosopher who lived during the scientific revolution was the first to attempt a modern theory of society. He based his views on moral relativism with a highly pessimistic view of the state of nature – a war of all against all. *Thomas Hobbes* was born prematurely in Malmesbury on 5 April 1588, when his mother was told that the Spanish Armada was spotted off the coast of England. *Hobbes* grew in the house of his well-to-do uncle after his father abandoned his family. *Hobbes* began his schooling early and entered the Magdalen college in Oxford. Upon his graduation at the age of nineteen

he became connected with the Cavendish family where he served as a tutor to William Cavendish. Although *Hobbes* showed little interest on the elements of philosophy, he began to study the classics with earnest after he went on a tour with William Cavendish in the European continent. He developed an interest in the movement of history and on the fates of nations and empires. In the year 1629, he translated Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War and published it.

### Quotable quote

“Fear and I were born twins” - *Hobbes*

Among *Hobbes*' many works, De Cive and the Leviathan were the most important. *Hobbes*' Leviathan which is his most mature and exciting work attempts to demonstrate that the Galilean physics provides a model of human psychology which on turn lays the foundation for modern politics. His conception of human nature, the state of nature, the social contract and his ideas on sovereignty have captured the interest of all who read his political philosophy. In the following sections an attempt to understand these important works of *Hobbes* will be examined.

### Human Nature

At most times, the Leviathan of *Hobbes* is taken as the starting point and begins with a coherent theory of 'Man', as a pre requisite to an understanding of politics. Very often political scientists use the term '*Hobbesian*' which probably could denote a very pessimistic view of man as essentially, anti-social, selfish, brutish and power lusting. If we agree with *Hobbes*' assumptions that man existed before there was any society or state, then, man would be concerned with doing only what will satisfy his need and wishes.

### Quotable quote

I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death. - *Hobbes*

In *Hobbes'* words human beings are driven by their passions and use their intellectual capacity simply as a means to determine what will bring them the greatest pleasure or the least pain. *Hobbes* further adds that the object of man's desire is not to enjoy only once, and for one instant only, but to assure forever the way of his future desire. *Hobbes* is careful to also state that different people desire different forms of pleasure but there is one desire which is common in man – Power. Given that all are pleasure seekers, it must logically follow that all are power seekers. *Hobbes* thus regards human nature as utterly self-interested and self-regarding. Hence innately anti-social.

### State of Nature

*Hobbes* in his theory of the state of nature provides a corollary method of understanding human behaviour. In the state of nature *Hobbes* argues, that it is a condition of absolute liberty and equality. Absolute liberty since there would be no laws to constrain individuals and thus would have a right to everything; absolute equality because human beings have roughly equivalent physical and intellectual capabilities. *Hobbes* argues that in such a condition where everyone has a right to everything and all have equal capabilities in exercising their rights, all are subject to attacks from all. The state of nature is thus a state of war where survival remains the ultimate motive for human beings to acquire power. Thus in the state of nature everyone

lives in constant fear of everyone else. It is thus by nature that human beings are by nature antisocial power seekers.

### Social Contract

*Hobbes'* view of human nature has a profound impact on his political theory. Knowing the true nature of human beings, *Hobbes* puts forward a scientific theory of politics – the 'Social Contract'. The fundamental idea of the social contract is quite simple: The state is the result of a contract between human beings in which the scope and extent of the powers of the government are to be determined by an analysis of the terms of the contract. The state is created by mutual agreement or the consent of its members. As a result government is legitimate if it corresponds to what people have consented to.

### Quotable quote

"To do unto others before they do unto you" - *Hobbes*

This is a very modern notion of the modern secular state which is contrary to medieval thought where the secular government exists by divine sanction. Such an idea was still employed by the Royalists who argued that the monarch ruled by divine right. The consent-contract flatly rejected this idea and on the contrary claimed that the government is legitimate only to the extent that people have consented to. The importance of *Hobbes* theory of social contract is that he believes that it is strictly a logical and scientific analysis of the state. He argues that human beings would consent only to that which rationally accords to their needs and desires.

## Sovereignty

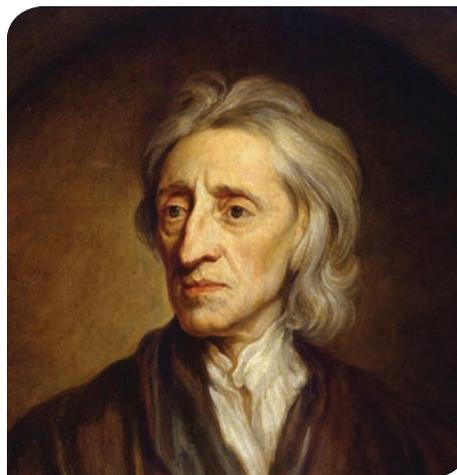
The relationship between the individual and the sovereign was one that was between the absolute absence of power and the absolute unity of power. **Hobbes** is consistent in his argument in the commonwealth the removal of all bases of power from the individual on the one hand and the concentration of it with the sovereign was essential. In other words, **Hobbes** supported the creation of an absolute sovereign which would lack no power to enforce law and order against any possibility of man's irrationality.. The key to his political thinking is found in the absolute necessity to create an absolute authority. The sovereign could be one man or an assembly of men, although he preferred the sovereignty of one man.

- ❖ Fear and liberty are consistent.
- ❖ Liberty and necessity are consistent.
- ❖ Submission consists of both our obligation and our liberty.
- ❖ Other liberties depend on the silence of the law

## Assessment

The importance of **Hobbes** lies not only on his political philosophy but also on his contributions towards the development of an anti-Aristotelian and thoroughly materialist conception of politics. It is in his work that the beginnings of understanding politics from a non-teleological point of view emerged. His political philosophy served as the basis for other political philosophers such as **John Locke**, **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**, Immanuel Kant, who followed the tradition of examining politics from a modern scientific approach.

## 7.6 John Locke (1632-1704)



### Learning Objectives

- ❖ To understand the Political thought of **John Locke**
- ❖ To know about **John Locke** views on Political Theory, Human Nature, State of Nature, The social Contract.

## Life and Times

**John Locke**, the father of philosophical liberalism, was born on 29 August, 1632 at Wrington, Somersetshire, United Kingdom. He spent his childhood at Pensford, near Bristol. His acquaintance with William, the Prince of Orange, and his ascendancy to the English throne after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, brought **Locke** back to London. **Locke** was made the Commissioner for Appeals by William III in 1689. The unfavourable political climate induced him to resign again and led to his settlement at Essex. He ended his public life with his last assignment as the Commissioner on the Board of Tea.

## Works of Locke

His important works are 'Letter Concerning Toleration' (1689), an 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding' (1690), 'Two Treatises on Civil Government' (1690), 'A Second Letter on Toleration' (1692), 'A Third Letter on Toleration' (1692), 'A Fourth on Toleration' (1693) and 'Some Thoughts Concerning Education' (1693).

## Central Ideas

*Locke's* central ideas can be discussed as follows:

### Conception of Human Nature

Unlike *Hobbes*, *Locke* does not subscribe to a pessimistic view of human nature. He identifies reason as the factor which shapes a rational human being. He also acknowledges reason as the foundation of individual and social life. Humans were social, rational, decent, mentally stable and capable of self-rule. *Lockean* view also upholds the natural state of equality for individuals. To him, humans are entitled to natural liberty. It is qualified as an inherent privilege to be free from any superior element but to be subversive towards the "dictate of the nature". He also reaches a consensus on the fact that individuals are prone to some degrees of discrepancies in terms of intelligence, strength and their skills. Nevertheless, his reliance on similarities among individuals were outweighing the differences. *Locke* is also particular in reflecting the utilitarian trait of humans. Following the line of Bentham, *Locke* says, humans seek to strike a balance of pleasure over pain. It is this notion of pleasure or utility which forms the basis of his covenant.

## State of Nature

The *Locke* an contemplation on the state of nature can be found in his "Second Treatise". In contrast to the *Hobbesian* state of nature, *Locke* postulates a peaceful condition by virtue of the social instinct of humans. As dictated by the canons of natural law, his state of nature is based on perfect freedom. Moreover, the phase is also characterised by equality defined in terms of reciprocal power and jurisdiction. In his own words, "state of nature is a state of peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation". In short, *Locke* underscores the optimistic nature of human beings.

Natural law is considered to be the source of both rights and duties. Humans derive their rights from the domain of natural law and it expects them to respect the ordained rights on a mutual basis for safeguarding the same. *Locke* goes to the extent of denoting natural law as the moral law enacted by God, which is sensible through reason. It would not be wrong to refer his state of nature as "an anarchist's paradise".

Finally, *Locke* identifies the three fundamental demerits which threatened the balance of state of nature. Firstly, the absence of a legal framework. Secondly, the lack of a "known and impartial judge". Thirdly, the requirement of an executive agency for the enforcement of decisions. Hence, the phenomenon of state was the means of liberation from this malady. Besides, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that the *Locke* an state of nature is inconsistent with facts. It rests on a fictional premise unsupported by any historical justification.

## Social Contract

Social contract is configured as an instrument of admission to the civil society. The **Lockean** view proposes two contracts. The first one establishes the civil society and the second one calls for the constitution of government. He also recognises consent as the bedrock of the contract. To him, no individual can be admitted into this commonwealth without his/her own consent. **Locke** speaks of two kinds of consent: 1) formal or active consent, which is irrevocable in nature and 2) implied or tacit consent, which sanctions the departure of the stakeholders from the 'trust' and initiate a new order. **Locke** prefers the former as far as his version of contract is concerned, making it clear that there is no return to the state of nature. Another striking attribute of the **Locke's** contract is that individuals do not surrender their rights which they enjoyed in the state of nature. Submission of the rights would defeat the purpose of the contract itself as the state is being raised as the guarantor and protector of rights. Therefore, the contract is synonymous to a "charter of liberty" than a license for subjugation. The **Locke** an vision on social pact also authorises the option for revolution against a tyrannous system of governance. This measure is included in order to reaffirm the role of the state as the guardian of the natural rights of individuals. Furthermore, **Locke** leaves the decision on revolution to the legislature with a focus on the principle of majoritarianism and consent.

On the question of the nature of authority, he outlines the notion of limited-sovereignty. Absolute sovereignty is against his construct of civil society. **Locke** was also not hesitant to offer an

alternative blueprint on the separation of powers. According to him, the powers of the government were separated among three organs. Firstly, the legislature, which he refers as the "supreme power of the commonwealth". Secondly, the executive, which also includes the judicial powers. Thirdly, the federative, which implies the power of external relations of a state. **Locke** was also tolerant towards the idea of a single-ruler which sanctions the concentration of all powers in one hand, provided that it is an outcome of the consent of the majority.

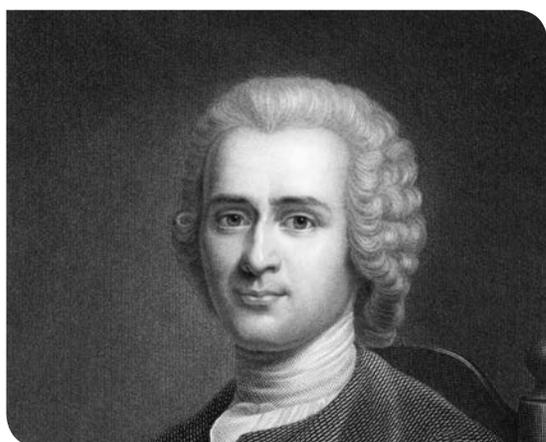
### Quotable quote

"Government has no other end, but the preservation of property". -**John Locke**

### Assessment

**John Locke**, by virtue of his scientific temper and rationality, finds a significant place in the Western Political Thought. Being an individualist by conviction, he believed that humans are the makers of their own destiny. His works were a great source of impetus and inspiration for thinkers like **Voltaire**, **Diderot** and **Rousseau**, and even for the French Revolution. According to **Parrington**, **Locke's** Two Treatises on Government "became the textbook of American Revolution". In the words of **Prof. Laski**, "**Hobbes** worked with an impossible psychology and sought no more than the prescription against disorder. Burke wrote rather a textbook for the cautious administrator than a guide for the liberal statesman. But **Locke** saw that the main problem of the state is the conquest of freedom and it was for its definition in terms of individual good that he above all strove".

## 7.7 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)



### Learning Objectives

- ❖ To understand the Political thought of *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*
- ❖ To know about *Jean-Jacques Rousseau's* views on Human Nature, Theory of General Will, Sovereignty and Social Contract Theory.

### Life and Times

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, one of the most prominent philosophers in the modern political discourse, was born on 28 July, 1712 in Geneva. Hailing from a broken family, *Rousseau* was devoid of the opportunity to enjoy the privilege of a nurtured childhood. After disengaging from a couple of apprenticeships, he fled from Geneva and found joy in wanderlust. With the help a young widow named *Madame de Warens*, *Rousseau* was introduced to formal education in a monastery based in Turin and a seminary in Annecy. The eventual aversion towards the style of pedagogy in those institutions,

induced him to abandon the same. Out of the repeated failures, she was forced to send him to Lyons in 1730. After a year of wandering, he re-joined her in 1731 and lived under her bounty till 1740. Influenced by her intellectual halo and her invaluable assistance, he joined as a teacher in the family of Monsieur de Malby. Nonetheless, he left the assignment and resorted to his journey as an aimless soul.

His second trip to France in 1744 brought significant changes in his life. Despite his unsuccessful experiments in various fields like opera, theatre, poetry and so forth, *Rousseau* sustained his determination and positive spirit. The year 1749 was a turning point in his life. The Academy of Dijon announced the prize for the best essay on “Has the progress of sciences and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals?” *Rousseau* writes in his Confessions, “Instantly I saw another universe, and I became another man”. The work he submitted had received the first prize in 1750 and it was published under the title – “A Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences”.

On his return to Geneva in 1754, *Rousseau*, a Catholic by himself, accepted Calvinistic denomination and reacquired the citizenship. After his travel to Paris, he spent 8 years of his life at Montmorency as a ward of Madame d’Epinay. *Rousseau* composed his most important works - The New Heloise (1761), Emile (1762) and the Social Contract (1762) – during this phase. Condemnation was the response received for his books which led to his further resettlements in various places. *Rousseau's* demise on 2 July, 1778, was received with a shock and was seen as a great loss to philosophy.

## Central Ideas

**Rousseau** occupies a critical position in the realm of political philosophy. He is predominantly known for his contribution towards the “theory of social contract”. As a social contractualist by conviction, **Rousseau** sought to unearth the origin of state as an expression of the “general will”. He attributed the origin of state as a consequence of two phases – “state of nature” and “social contract”.

## State of Nature

Unlike **Hobbes**, **Rousseau’s** proposition of state of nature was an epitome of perfect liberty, perfect equality and perfect innocence. He also identifies it with a more peaceful, pleasant and idyllic environment. The man in his state of nature lived in solitude characterized by a care-free living with no desires. Despite the inconsistency in terms of a settled life, and inarticulate speech, the life was shaped by contentment, independence, self-sufficiency and prosperity. Absence of wickedness paved the way for idyllic happiness. As he says, “supreme bliss” was the norm of the time.

In due course, the status quo was threatened by changes in terms of sophistication of human life. He acknowledged a number of factors ranging from the divergences in climate, season and soil to organized profession and private property as responsible for challenging the sustenance of the state of nature. In the view of **Rousseau**, human progress and rational advancement accompanied by the revolution in the conduct of life and human thought brought a new layer of evils in its wagon. He identifies the origin of inequality

with this shower of changes that shook the fabric of the state of nature. The concept of private ownership created a new cleavage at the social sphere – rich and poor. In his words, “the first man who after enclosing a piece of land said to himself ‘this is mine’ and found people simply to believe him, was the real founder of civil society”.

The period was made to witness a chain of wars, murders and rifts between the rich and poor. This new order sanctioned evils at a universal scale that were unfound in the savage state. An unavoidable culmination of these turn of events was the rise of inequality and a strata of masters and slaves. **Rousseau** opines that there are two premises on which a savage acts. Firstly, a human is driven by the need of self-preservation and out of the interest of his/her own welfare. Secondly, the fear of death. He finds the genesis of rationality and reason in this emotional consciousness. **Rousseau** is of the view of that the humans by nature are incapable of thinking. Civil society is viewed as antithetical to nature and it is apparently an outcome of the march of human reason. He insists on the slogan of “returning to nature”. His demand for the retrospection to the nature does not tantamount to a prescription for the collapse of the newly woven social fabric, but the rule of nature. Such a call necessarily unveils **Rousseau’s** revelation that it is the philosophy and reason that allured the human life to entropy.

## Social Contract

The idyllic character of the state of nature was short-lived. The emerging template of human complexities defined by economic advancement and social evolution facilitated only havoc. Humans were left with no alternative, but to constitute the civil state. It

was materialized with the provision of social contract. In the sixth chapter of the 'Social Contract' *Rousseau* says, "I assume that men have reached at a point where primitive conditions can no longer subsist and the human race would perish unless it changed its mode of existence". The state of nature is thriving on an individual's pursuit of self-interest until a point wherein he/she realises that his/her self-preserving prowess against the insecurity posed by others is not strong enough. Hence, the utility of social contract is to encompass the prospects of security deriving from the collective association of individuals with the element of liberty which was possessed until their entry into the contract. The next dilemma that grappled the individuals was the question of force with respect to preservation. To him, men are incapable of creating any new forces but only redirect and guide that already exist. Therefore, a concerted approach is what recommended by him in this direction.

### Quotable quote

"Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One man thinks himself the master of others, but remains more of a slave than they are"- *Rousseau*

He also discards any form of authority bereft of consent as volatile. In his own words, "Authority of man over man can have no rational basis, save agreement and consent". *Rousseau's* equation for the civil state can be summed as follows: "Each of us puts his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will and in one corporate capacity, we receive each number as an indivisible part of the whole". Hence, the state thus formed is a moral body with a life and will of its own distinct from its members. The government is expected

to be an agent of general will. *Rousseau* holds that state is not just an amalgamation of individuals, but a new body with an inherent identity, personality and life of its own. Above all, the state possesses a will of its own, what he terms as *volente general* or general will. Any separate or particular will shall be deemed to be subordinate to it.

The instinct-driven life of the state of nature is replaced by a life of justice and morality in the new civil state. Individuals lose their natural liberty and unlimited right to everything and in return they receive civil liberty and property rights. He condemns the liberty of the state of nature as a falsity as it is nothing but an enslavement of uncontrollable appetites. On the contrary, the moral liberty offered by the civil society make them the masters of themselves. In his own words, "obedience to a law which prescribe to our selves is liberty". Unlike *Hobbes* and *Locke*, *Rousseau* professes a total surrender of the individual to the sovereign community in pursuit of attaining equality. His idea of individual delegation of all the rights to the body-politic fosters reconciliation between liberty and authority.

### Sovereignty

*Rousseau* was particular about the inalienable, indivisible, absolute and perpetual nature of sovereignty. To him, general will was the sovereign. The assignment of administrative powers to certain people do not make them the sovereign, but merely subordinate agents. Any attempt on part of the community to transfer all or a segment of its sovereignty to one of the agents shall result in the descending of the body-politic. Sovereign was a party in *Rousseau's* contract. Furthermore, what he underscored was the notion of popular sovereignty.

## General Will

General will or the community is identical to the state. People submit their powers and personality under the command of the general will. The individuals wills are outweighed by the general will. Besides, sovereignty rests in the body-politic as a whole and it coincides with nothing, but the general will. Given the residence of general will in the community, it imposes the paramountcy and sovereignty of the people, i.e. popular sovereignty. He emphasises the transferability of power. The general will is not equivalent to the will of all since the former considers the common interest whereas the latter attaches private interest into its fold. There are two premises that determine the general will. First, it seeks general good, which refers to the objective of will. Secondly, it must come from all and apply to all, which proposes its origin. General will lacks representative character as the representative bodies have the tendency to develop particular interest of their own without paying heed to the concerns of the community. Ethical values and right consciousness do not coincide with the will of all. General will is invariably the manifestation of inner will and the product

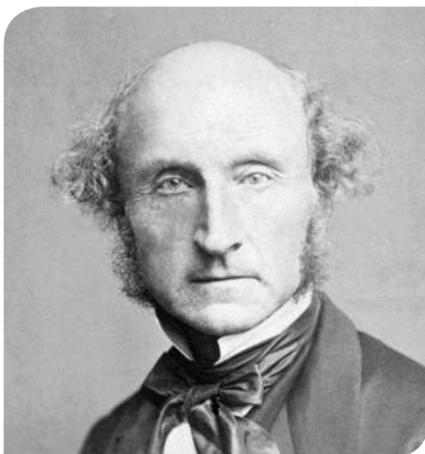
of conscience. Moreover, it is recognised as right, altruistic, universal and based on common good.

## Assessment

Opinions are manifold about *Rousseau's* personality and works. G. D. H Cole opined about his 'Social Contract' to be "still far by the best of all text-books of political philosophy". Lord Morley took up different turn in expressing the status of *Rousseau* in the philosophical discourse by saying, "Would it not have been better for the world if *Rousseau* had never been born?" He tries to say that the awful experiences of the French Revolution could be prevented if *Rousseau* had not lived as the latter's ideas were fundamental throughout the movement.

His philosophy also traces a socialistic background. Capitalism received an "ill-treatment" in the hands of *Rousseau*. He also favoured the nationalization of education and opposed the notion of private property. Besides, his discourse accommodates absolutism and authoritarianism as well. Under the pretext of general will, he is virtually favouring the "tyranny of majority". Despite all these, *Rousseau* deserves an irreplaceable position among the modern political philosophers.

## 7.8 John Stuart Mill (1806 - 1873)



### Learning Objectives

- ❖ To understand the Political thought of *J.S. Mill*
- ❖ To know about Critique of Utilitarianism, Liberty,

## Life and Works

John Stuart *Mill* was born on 20 May 1806 in Bentonville, a northern suburb of London to Harriet Barrow and James *Mill*, a Scotsman who was educated at Edinburgh University. The development of John Stuart *Mill* as a social and political thinker can be divided into three specific periods. The first period represents the training that he received from his childhood under both his father, James *Mill* and Jeremy Bentham. The second period marks his recovery from his mental crisis which started in his early twenties, with the termination and dissolution of the philosophic radicals as a distinct party towards the end of the 1830s. It was at this period that *Mill* refashioned his thinking under a variety of intellectual and emotional influences. The final period which extends to over thirty years of his career, marks the time in which he published his major works that included, *A System of Logic*, *Principles of Political Economy*, *On Liberty* and *Considerations on Representative Government*.

### On Liberty

*On Liberty* (1859) brought *Mill* enduring fame, and predicted that among all his works, this was destined to survive the longest. The transformation of society from aristocratic to democratic forms of organization brought with it both advantages and disadvantages. It meant rule by social masses that would be more powerful, uniform and omnipresent than the rulers of previous eras. *Mill* held that, the dominance of the majority carried with it more risks than from a monarch that had the capacity to place restrictions

over the freedoms of individuals, which could be legislatively enacted. Informal mechanisms of social pressure and expectation could in democratic societies be all-controlling. *Mill* expressed that such powers could have the capacity of stifling conformism in thought, character and action. It was in this context that *On Liberty* was written. The aim of this work is written in the first chapter which asserts one simple principle. This principle states that “the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection” (*Liberty*: XVIII 223). Thus, the practical philosophy of this argument by *Mill* is primarily utilitarian.

In his ‘*On Liberty*’ *Mill* puts forward different strategies to argue for freedom of thought and discussion, character, and action. Freedom of thought and discussion are discussed in chapter two of *On Liberty*, where arguments against the control of expression are explained. Chapter three of *On Liberty*, puts forward argument in favour of freedom of Character (individuality) where such arguments are two pronged. On the one hand *Mill* argues for freedom of space for individuals which individuals should have to develop their own character while on the other, he maintains that it is best for society too. “Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing” (*Liberty*,

XVIII: 263). *Mill* was of the opinion that mass society is self-repressive in nature which would lead to the sapping of human energy and potential. The Victorian society he claimed was governed by an ethos of propriety based on Christian self-denial while in contrast *Mill* encourages the Greek model of self-development. It is important for society to create conditions where individuals can develop their own ways of living. This will enable variety and diversity of character and culture which will become the engine of productive tension that will drive a nation forward. *Mill's* insistence throughout *On Liberty*, sought to preserve the individual's freedom against the possibility of legislative or state coercion and also from the deceptive forms of social coercion.

### Considerations on Representative Government

In 1861 *Mill's* *Considerations on Representative Government* was published which contains his views on politics. *Mill* was a convinced democrat, however, this work reveals his disappointment, doubts, and difficulties about self-government. His view is paradoxical in nature where he views that the majority ought to rule but minority rule was probably right. He argued that majority has power but the minority has wisdom. *Mill* in this work expresses the dangers posed by the tyranny of the majority undertook to provide the criterion for good government. He concluded that ideally the best form of government was one that was representative where the sovereignty is vested in the entire aggregate of the

community, every citizen who not only have the right to at least occasionally be called on to take an actual part in the government by the personal discharge of certain public function, local or general.

### Assessment

John Stuart *Mill* occupies a very important place in the history of political thought which was widespread in the nineteenth century. His works emphasized the importance of human nature for the proper study and understanding of the state. He developed his own philosophy of franchise. *Mill* states that casting one's vote is as necessary for the political animal as is the air that he or she breathes. No other political thinker has been as emphatic as *Mill* in the conception of voting. The influences that utilitarianism had on *Mill* also were important in the formulation of his ideas on the principle of economy and that of representative government where the freedom of the individual to develop his capabilities should be never interfered with. On each of these subjects *Mill* was often provocative that no student of the discipline can afford to ignore.

**DO YOU KNOW?**

- ❖ Utilitarianism: Greatest happiness of the greatest numbers.
- ❖ Even though *J.S. Mill* has been brought under the guidance of utilitarian thinkers like *James Mill* and *Jeremy Bentham*, he gave a different notion of utilitarianism.

## 7.9 Karl Marx (1818-1883)



### Learning Objectives

- ❖ To understand the Political thought of *Karl Marx*
- ❖ To know about *Karl Marx* views on Dialectical Materialism – Theory of Surplus Value – Class Struggle And Revolution – Dictatorship of The Proletariat – Withering away of The State – Assessment

### Introduction

*Karl Marx* is one of the few people who changed the way we see the world. For *Marx*, any theory should not only support in understanding the world around, but be a step towards transforming the world. His works – Communist Manifesto, Materialistic Conception of History and Das Capital, are a culmination of various economic ideas, channelled towards the single goal of self- emancipation of working class. It is important to know that, Marxism draws many elements from earlier thinkers like Hegel, Comte de Saint-Simon, J. C. L. de Sismondi, David Ricardo, Charles Fourier, and Louis Blanc.

Second half of the 18th century and 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the growth of Socialism in Europe. This period was also known as dual revolution era, wherein politically France witnessed the Revolution of 1789, which overthrew absolute monarchy and republic was proclaimed with liberty, equality and fraternity declared the right of every Frenchman. Second important revolution during this period that had a long lasting impact on Europe was the Industrial Revolution. These two events had a major impact on *Marx*'s work.

### Works of *Marx*

#### The Communist Manifesto

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle

The Communist Manifesto (1848) is a collaborative work of *Karl Marx* and Friedrich Engels. It was a product of the social, economic and political turmoil that characterized Europe before 1850. This essay explains the social change through revolution. The Communist Manifesto goes on to argue that the nature of that class struggle varies according to the nature of production. Hence in feudal societies, where the main form of production was agriculture, the class struggle was between those who owned the land and those who worked on it. In a modern industry, the struggle is between the bourgeoisie (factory owners) and the proletariat (workers in the factory). In reality the society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other – bourgeoisie and

proletariat. It is in this premise that *Marx* and Engels vouch that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle”.

In conclusion the Communist Manifesto simply places two ideas side by side; “to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class” and “to win the battle of democracy”. *Marx* in this work also emphasises that the communist should aim to replace private property with public control of all properties. *Marx* and Engels may not have changed the world, but they certainly changed the way we interpret it. The historical significance of the Communist Manifesto is that virtually all socialist parties, from the Communist Party of China to the Trotskyite sect, owe a lesser or greater debt to the ideas expressed in its pages.

### Das Capital

*Marx*'s masterpiece, Das Capital, the “Bible of the working class,” as it was officially described was published in 1867 in Berlin. Only the first volume was completed and published in *Marx*'s lifetime. The second and third volumes, unfinished by *Marx*, were edited by Engels and published in 1885 and 1894. The first volume deals with the process of production of capital; the second volume deals with the process of circulation of capital; the third volume deals with the totality of the process of capitalist production.

### Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical Materialism is a philosophical approach to reality derived from the teachings of *Karl Marx* and

Friedrich Engels. In theory dialectical materialism provides both a general world view and a specific method for the investigation of scientific problems. *Marx* and Engels look at every basic sections of society as materials and change in society takes place only through “the struggle of opposites”. Materialism principally dealt with social world. The material world has always been in constant motion, contradictions and change. *Marx* believes that friction caused by constant motion in the society leads to contradictions within the society, which eventually leads to change in the society. Dialectical Materialism relates to the process of change in the society.

### ACTIVITY

#### *Marx's Work*

Critique of Hegel  
Philosophy of Right  
The Holy Family  
Theses on Feuerbach  
The German Ideology  
The Communist Manifesto  
Critique of the Gotha Program  
Das Capital

### Theory of Surplus Value

Theory of Surplus Value, comes from the Das Capital. *Karl Marx* opines that human labour was the source of economic value, hence the term ‘surplus value’ denotes the difference between labour and labour power. The Capitalists gets surplus value for the extra labour that has been put in by the labourer. Surplus

value is produced no matter how long the working day is: even if the factory only ran for an hour the capitalist would still extract his quota of surplus labour and therefore surplus value. The capitalist pays his workers less than the value their labour, and in most occasions usually only enough to maintain the worker at a subsistence level.

### Class Struggle and Revolution

Class consciousness and struggle are related to the social relations of production. *Marx* does not look at class as a factor of ideology, but as a person who holds particular social status. The term class relates to ownership based on property, for example bourgeoisie (person who owns means of production and also the landowners) and proletariat (one who sells labour for wages).

*Marx*'s work on the "Class Struggle of France", in the years 1848 – 1850 assesses the arguments on the class struggle and the need for revolution. *Marx* bases his idea of class conflict from the French Revolution of 1848. During this revolution both bourgeoisie and proletariat fought together against the aristocracy and succeeded in the proclamation of republic. Having come to power with the support of the proletariat during the February revolution, the bourgeoisie used the election process to claim legitimacy of their rule. The bourgeoisie class instead of emancipating the working class of all bondages increasingly alienated them.

The bourgeoisie on coming to power started controlling the state and the army, and crushed the proletariat showing that

the former meant civil war in reality. *Marx* emphasises that the class struggle leads to revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat and the abolition of private production resulting in socialism.

### Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Dictatorship of the Proletariat is a phrase used by *Karl Marx* to refer to the assumption of state power by the working class. For *Marx*, it is a transitional period of permanent revolution between the overthrow of bourgeois political rule and a classless society. Of all *Marx*'s contribution to political thought, probably the "dictatorship of the proletariat" has had the most profound implication for actual governance.

When the first group of the workers class (proletariat) assert themselves over the traditional ruling class (bourgeoisie) capitalist forms of production is abolished and the socialist forms of production takes the lead. Establishment of socialist forms of production results in the disappearance of class groups within the society eventually bringing about Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

### Withering Away of the State

With the break-up of Society into classes, and consequently into oppressed and oppressing groups, state becomes an instrument of exploitation. The class conflict becomes even more intensive and leading to the dictatorship of proletariat. Signs of victory of the proletariat can be seen with the capture of the government. "The proletariat will take control of the State and converts the means of production

into State production. Taking control of the state and production, the proletariats, destroy all class differences and class antagonisms, and finally resulting in the 'Withering Away of the State'.

### Assessment

In 1852, *Marx* summarized his contributions into three major sections:

- Classes (proletariat and bourgeoisie) are not a permanent features of a society
- Class struggle leads to 'dictatorship of the proletariat', resulting in workers taking control of production
- 'Dictatorship of the proletariat' would lead to classless society and with the differences vanishing from the society, the state eventually withers away.

The impact that Marxism had on humanity can only be compared to the influence religion had on mankind. Nearly half of the world population was influenced by Marxist ideology. While, *Marx* himself would have not followed everything he wrote, his writings did influence leaders like Lenin, Stalin, Mao and others who used Marxist theories in order to bring about change in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, etc. In the present era most of the erstwhile communist countries have become democratic in nature. However, the society continues to witness class differences and it is increasing every year. Hence, so long there are capitalists and exploitation in the society, *Marx's* ideas can never be ignored or forgotten.



Contemporary debates on Marxism focus on relative importance of its basic tenets and identification of some new forms of dominations and conflicts emerging in the present day society. These debates led to the emergency of Neo-Marxism.

### Glossary



**Bourgeoisie:** The capitalist class who own most of society's wealth and means of production.

**Classless Society:** The ultimate condition of social organization, expected to occur when true communism.

**Dialectic:** An enquiry into metaphysical contradictions and their solutions.

**Dictatorship of the Proletariat:** In Marxism, rule by the proletariat—the economic and social class consisting of industrial workers who derive income solely from their labour—during the transitional phase between the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of communism.

**Enlightenment:** A European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition.

**General Will:** In political theory, a collectively held will that aims at the common good or common interest.

**Glorious Revolution:** The events of 1688–89 that resulted in the deposition of

James II and the accession of his daughter Mary II and her husband, William III, prince of Orange and stadholder of the Netherlands.

**Individualism:** A social theory favouring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control.

**Majoritarianism:** A form of democracy which upholds the rule of the majority.

**Political Economy:** It is a branch of social science that studies the relationships between individuals and society and between markets and the state.

**Proletariat:** The working-class people regarded collectively.

**Rationality:** The quality of being based on or in accordance with reason or logic.

**Reformation:** A 16<sup>th</sup>-century movement for the reform of abuses in the Roman Church ending in the establishment of the Reformed and Protestant Churches.

**Romanticism:** A movement in the arts and literature which originated in the late 18th century, emphasizing inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual.

**State of Nature:** In political theory, the real or hypothetical condition of human beings before or without political association.

**Statecraft:** The skilful management of state affairs; statesmanship.

**Timocracy:** A form of government in which possession of property is required in order to hold office.

## Evaluation



### I. Choose the correct answer

1. Name the philosopher who wrote “The Republic”

- |          |                       |
|----------|-----------------------|
| a) Marx  | b) Aristotle          |
| c) Plato | d) St. Thomas Aquinas |

2. Whose real name was “Aristocles”?

- |             |          |              |             |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| a) Socrates | b) Plato | c) Aristotle | d) Xenophon |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|

3. Who is called the father of Political Science?

- |             |          |              |             |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| a) Socrates | b) Plato | c) Aristotle | d) Xenophon |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|

4. Who is famously known as the Doctor of the Church?

- |                       |          |              |             |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| a) St. Thomas Aquinas | b) Plato | c) Aristotle | d) Xenophon |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------|-------------|

5. Who is the author of “Discourses on Livy”?

- |                       |                |              |             |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| a) St. Thomas Aquinas | b) Machiavelli | c) Aristotle | d) Xenophon |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|

6. Who is the father of philosophical liberalism?

- |                       |                |         |               |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------|---------------|
| a) St. Thomas Aquinas | b) Machiavelli | c) Marx | d) John Locke |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------|---------------|



**8. Who is the author of the work “Principles of Political Economy”?**

- a) St. Thomas Aquinas    b) Thomas Hobbes    c) John Stuart Mill    d) Plato

**9. Which work is called as the “Bible of the working class”?**

- a) Principles of Political Economy    b) Das Kapital  
c) Theory of Surplus Value    d) Class Struggle of France

**10. Who promulgated the idea of “Dictatorship of the Proletariat”?**

- a) Marx    b) St. Thomas Aquinas  
c) Thomas Hobbes    d) John Stuart Mill

**II Answer the following questions very shortly**

1. Who wrote the book ‘The Statesman’ and when was it written?
2. Who according to Plato would rule the Ideal State?
3. Thomas Aquinas write about which characteristics of gregarious animals.

**III Answer the following questions shortly**

1. Write a short note on Plato’s Idea of Justice.
2. How does Aristotle classify the state?
3. Write a short note on life and works of St. Thomas Aquinas.
4. How does Machiavelli separate politics and Morality?
5. Write a short note on Machiavelli’s statecraft?
6. Assess Hobbes State of Nature?

**IV Answer the following questions in detail**

1. Analyse Plato’s works on Education, Democracy and Constitution.
2. Assess Aristotle’s engagement on function and classification of State.
3. Assess in detail Machiavelli approach to human nature.
4. Write a detailed note on John Locke’s state of nature and Social Contract Theory.



## Reference books



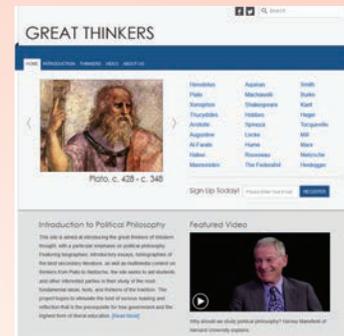
1. Barker, E, Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle, Methuen & Co., London, 1905.
2. Vivian Boland OP (2007) 'St. Thomas Aquinas', London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
3. Western Political Thought, Dr.O.P.Gauba, MacMillan Publishers India Limited, Delhi, 2011.
4. From Plato to Marx, Amal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, K.P. Bagchi & company, Calcutta, 2014.
5. Locke, John. The Second Treatise on Civil Government. Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books, 1986.



## ICT Corner

### POLITICAL THOUGHT

Through this activity you will learn about Political thinkers and their works.



### GREAT THINKERS

#### Procedure:

- Step - 1** Use the URL or QR code to open the GREAT THINKERS page, in which a list of great political thinkers names are placed on the top right of the window.
- Step - 2** Click on any name, a page which contains the details about the thinker will open.
- Step - 3** Click on the Biography button next to the Home button to know the detailed biography of the thinker.
- Step - 4** Similarly click on the consecutive buttons to explore more about the thinker such as the works, commentaries on the works, explanatory videos etc.

#### GREAT THINKERS URL:

<http://thegreatthinkers.org/plato/biography/>

\*Pictures are indicative



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