

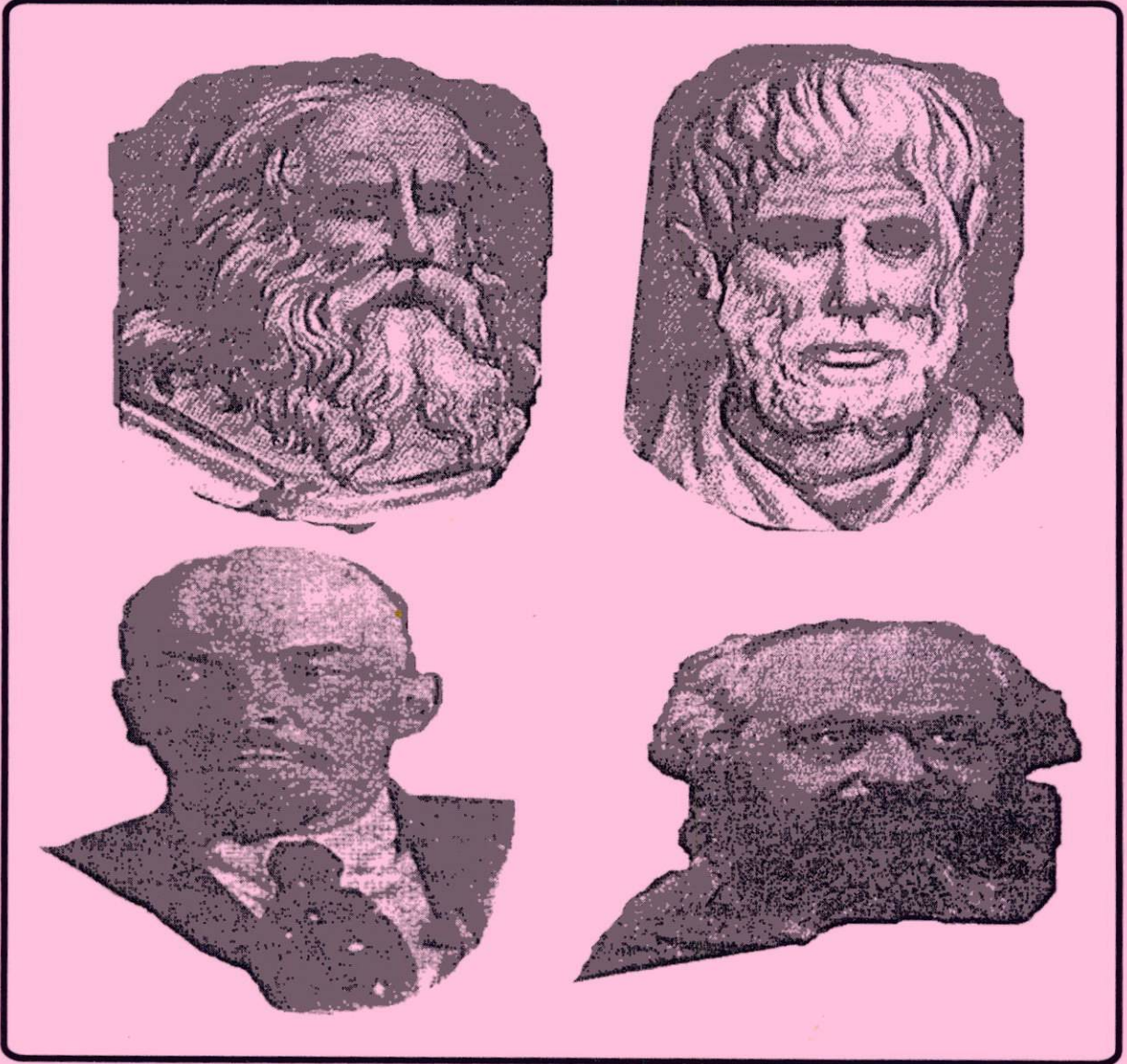
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ  
ಮಾನಸಗಂಗೋತ್ರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು - ೫೭೦ ೦೦೬



KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY  
Manasagangothri, Mysore - 570 006

**POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**MA [PREVIOUS]**

**2869**



**Course - I**  
**Paper - Western Political Thought**

**Block - VII**

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ಉನ್ನತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಇರುವ ಅವಕಾಶಗಳನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಶಿಕ್ಷಣವನ್ನು ಪ್ರಚಾರಂತ್ರಿಕರಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಆರಂಭಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ನೀತಿ 1986

*The Open University system has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education and as instrument of democratizing education.*

*National Education Policy 1986*

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ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯವು ದೂರಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬಹುಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳನ್ನು ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.  
.....ವಿದ್ಯಾಕಾಂಕ್ಷಿಗಳನ್ನು ಜ್ಞಾನ ಸಂಪಾದನೆಗಾಗಿ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಕೊಂಡೊಯ್ಯುವ ಬದಲು, ಜ್ಞಾನ ಸಂಪತ್ತನ್ನು ವಿದ್ಯೆ ಕಲಿಯುವವರ ಬಳಿ ಕೊಂಡೊಯ್ಯುವ ವಾಹಕವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಡಾ. ಕುಳಂದೈಸ್ವಾಮಿ

*"The Open University system makes use of Multimedia in distance education system.  
..... it is vehicle which transports knowledge to the place of learners rather than transport to the place of learning.*

*Dr. Kulanandai Swamy*

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## ವಿಶ್ವಮಾನವ ಸಂದೇಶ

ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಮಗುವು ಹುಟ್ಟುತ್ತಲೇ - ವಿಶ್ವಮಾನವ. ಬೆಳೆಯುತ್ತಾ ನಾವು ಅದನ್ನು 'ಅಲ್ಪ ಮಾನವ'ನನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತೇವೆ. ಮತ್ತೆ ಅದನ್ನು 'ವಿಶ್ವಮಾನವ'ನನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮಾಡುವುದೇ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯ ಕರ್ತವ್ಯವಾಗಬೇಕು.

ಮನುಜ ಮತ, ವಿಶ್ವ ಪಥ, ಸರ್ವೋದಯ, ಸಮನ್ವಯ, ಪೂರ್ಣದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಈ ಪಂಚಮಂತ್ರ ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದಿನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾಗಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಂದರೆ, ನಮಗೆ ಇನ್ನು ಬೇಕಾದುದು ಆ ಮತ ಈ ಮತ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಮನುಜ ಮತ. ಆ ಪಥ ಈ ಪಥ ಅಲ್ಲ; ವಿಶ್ವ ಪಥ. ಆ ಒಬ್ಬರ ಉದಯ ಮಾತ್ರವಲ್ಲ; ಸರ್ವರ ಸರ್ವಸ್ವರದ ಉದಯ. ಪರಸ್ಪರ ವಿಮುಖವಾಗಿ ಸಿಡಿದು ಹೋಗುವುದಲ್ಲ; ಸಮನ್ವಯಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು. ಸಂಕುಚಿತ ಮತದ ಆಂತಿಕ ದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಭೌತಿಕ ಪಾರಮಾರ್ಥಿಕ ಎಂಬ ಭಿನ್ನದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಎಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ಭಗವದ್ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಕಾಣುವ ಪೂರ್ಣದೃಷ್ಟಿ.

ಕುವೆಂಪು

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## Gospel of Universal Man

Every Child, at birth, is the universal man. But, as it grows, we turn it into "a petty man". It should be the function of education to turn it again into the enlightened "universal man".

The Religion of Humanity, the Universal Path, the Welfare of All, Reconciliation, the Integral Vision- these *five mantras* should become View of the Future. In other words, what we want henceforth is not this religion or that religion, but the Religion of Humanity ; not this path or that path, but the Universal Path ; not the well-being of this individual or that individual, but the Welfare of All ; not turning away and breaking off from one another, but reconciling and uniting in concord and harmony ; and, above all, not the partial view of a narrow creed, not the dual outlook of the material and the spiritual, but the Integral Vision of seeing all things with the eye of the Divine.

*Kuvempu*

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**Karnataka State  
Open University**

**Political Science  
Course - I**

**Block**

**7**

**Introduction**

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**Unit 27**

**Edmund Burke**

**1 to 18**

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**Unit 28**

**Karl Marx (1818-1883)**

**19 to 51**

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**Unit 29**

**Lenin**

**53 to 78**

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**Unit 30**

**Harold J. Laski (1893-1950)**

**79 to 113**

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**Course Design and Editorial Committee**

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Reader

Kuvempu University

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## **Block VII Introduction**

Block VII has been divided into 4 units dealing the political philosophies of Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, Lenin and H.J. Laski. Unit 27 contains the discussion on Edmund Burke's views on state, rights, conservatism, equality, revolution and his contribution to western political thought. Unit 28 throws a light on various aspects of the political ideas of Karl Marx like Dialectical materialism, Materialistic interpretation of history, theory of surplus value, class struggle dictatorship of the proletariat, withering away of the state and his views on religion and revolution. Unit 29 involves the explanation on the various political ideas of Lenin like revolution, imperialism, party organisation, class consciousness, democracy, religion and state. Unit 30 deals with the political ideas of Laski like his views on rights, pluralism, liberty and equality sovereignty, property, socialism and his place in the western political thought



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## **UNIT – 27 EDMUND BURKE**

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### **Structure**

- 27.0 Objectives
- 27.1 Introduction
- 27.2 His life and works
- 27.3 His views on State
- 27.4 His ideas on rights
- 27.5 Conservatism
- 27.6 His views on Equality
- 27.7 Revolution
- 27.8 Contributions of Edmund Burke
- 27.9 Let us Sum up
- 27.10 Key Words
- 27.11 Some Useful Books
- 27.12 Answers to check your progress exercises.



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## 27.0 Objectives:

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After going through this unit you will be able to know

- Life and works of Edmund Burke
- Burke's views on state
- Critical analysis of Burke's conservatism
- His ideas on rights
- Conservatism
- Equality and
- his theory of revolution

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## 27.1 Introduction

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Edmund Burke is one of the important philosophers. Perhaps the most influential and certainly the most eloquent spokesman for the conservative reaction to the age of enlightenment was Edmund Burke. He is remembered for his studied opposition to the French Revolution. Also, he is remembered for his attack, in the British Parliament, on the corrupt British rulers in India.

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## 27.2 Life and Works:

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He was born in Dublin in 1729. An Irish by birth, Burke's father was a Protestant Solicitor while his mother was a Catholic. He entered Trinity College at Dublin in 1743. He took his degree from this college in 1748. He went to London to study law. In 1756, he published his first treatise, **A Vindication of Natural Society** in which he satirized revealed religion. In 1765, he became secretary to Rockingham, the newly appointed whig Prime Minister of England. He held this post till 1782, and it is from this position that he exercised some influence in shaping policies. In 1770, he published his thoughts on "**The Causes of the Present Discontent**", in which he criticized, George III's attempt to revive some of the royal powers, and built up the theory that parliamentary government should be run on the basis of party system. **In 1774, he was elected from Bristol**

as a Member of Parliament a seat he retained until 1780. He was one of the outstanding parliament leaders of the Whig party. He was a great orator of his time. Edmund Burke fought for many causes. He was also associated with the impeachment of Warren Hastings.

Of the many political battles, which Burke fought, three are most important. These are his futile twelve year struggle for sanity and liberalism in the treatment of American colonies. His epic impeachment of Warren Hastings for high crimes and misdemeanors in the government of India, and his thunderous barrage against the French Revolution. Regarding India his famous speeches are on *Fox's East India Bill (1783)*, on *the Navob of Arcot's Debts (1785)* and *the impeachment of Warren Hastings (1787)*. His other famous treatises are: *Appeal from the new to the old Whigs (1791)* and *letters on a Regicide peace (1796-97)*. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. (1790)* *Reflections on the Revolution in France, Proceedings in Certain Societies in London, and Thoughts and Details on scarcity. (1800).* The sudden death of his son gave Burke a severe blow. He could not stand the shock and gave up his seat in the House of Commons. Edmund Burke died in 1797 at the age of 68 years.

Several factors influenced Burke in shaping his political philosophy. Prominent among them are –

- ◆ The American Revolution
- ◆ The French Revolution
- ◆ East India company and Its Rule in India
- ◆ The Ambitious George III

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### 27.3 Views on state

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Like Montesquieu, Burke approached the study of the state through history and through philosophy. Burke considered history as a great means for improving the capacity of man for



understanding his surroundings so that he may act with wisdom. The study of history furnished a varied experience of a far wider range of human affairs. It is, therefore, of great value for the formation of the mind of the statesmen. **But lessons of experience, it may be noted, though indispensable are not conclusive.**

He did not believe in the idea of natural rights, which seemed to him to split the society into individual fragments. He condemns the doctrine of natural law and the social contract theory. **Stability is absolutely essential for ordered progress, which should be a natural change, not inspired by anything alien to the law of evolution, which is both Divine and natural.**

Burke followed the historical method in the solution of problem. He held that the present state or society was a result of steady growth or development. He held the view that political institutions might have originated with the consent of the governed, but in regard to contemporary political society, he deemed such original acts of agreement utterly meaningless. According to Burke, the state was not a creation of any social contract.

Burke has criticized the social contract theory by describing it as chaff and rags. He says **“The state is not a man made machine but an immensely complicated organism which the efforts of individuals have certainly helped to shape, but whose evolution and destiny cannot be wholly understood by any individual.** Burke believed that the way in which a state evolved and develops is largely determined by forces which no individual can fully comprehend, and that when men make changes they should do with restraint and caution, since the consequences of their actions cannot be foreseen and may conflict with the most fundamental interest of the community as a whole.

Since government is established by the people for their own good, it must in some sense, demand upon the consent of the people.



Burke said that in all forms of government, the people are true legislators. The consent of the people is therefore not a meaningless phrase. It means at least that a law to which the people did not give their consent is no law at all. But the point is whether the people are capable of knowing their difficulties. **Burke's answer is in the affirmative.** The mass of men, says Burke, are capable of knowing their suffering; **they are also capable of indicating the means by which their sufferings may be mitigated.** Government should therefore, listen to their cries of distress with great attention. But should not be consulted for appropriate remedy. Why this exclusion of men from the councils of state? Burke says that the people are not capable of forming an opinion.

**State, embodies common good and represents an agreement on ends as well as norms.** State, therefore, acts best as a unity, and its constitution is the protector and guardian of the intrinsic rationality of all the parts and members of the state. **All members cannot equally participate in political activities but the inherent principle constantly at work is that aggressive self-interest be made compatible with the common good.**

Says Burke in his *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*:  
“A true natural aristocracy is not a separate interest in the state, or separable from it. It is an essential integral part of any large body rightly constituted. It is formed out of a class of legitimate presumptions, which are taken as generalities, must be admitted for actual truths. **To be bred in a place of estimation; to see nothing low and sordid from one's censorial inspection of the public eye; to look early to public opinion; to stand upon such elevated ground as to be enabled to take a large view of the widespread and infinitely diversified combinations of men and affairs in a large society; to have leisure to read, to reflect, to converse; to be enabled to draw the court and attention of the wise and**



2) Examine his views on State.

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**27.4 His Ideas on Rights**

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**Burke in fact opposes all formal rights and his positions uniformly consistent, even when it came to prescriptive rights. All formal rights are abstract and universal and “no national man ever did govern himself by abstractions, and universals”. Prudence counsels moderation in all things, even in the exercise of prescriptive rights.**

Burke says that “prudence” and “Prescription” is the same thing, for prescription is prudence multiplied – it is prudence of past generations. **Prescription, therefore, implies customs; moral precepts and ancient rights and these determine accepted standards.** It is, according to him, safer to appeal to them, rather than to abstract theories and legal rights. These standards have a reason and this reason is not the reason of one man but is grounded upon experience of generations. “We are afraid”, he argues, “to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages”. That being so, there can be no better title than prescription. **“Prescription”, he writes, “is the most solid of all titles, not only to property but what is to secure that property, to government”** and the prescriptive title is “not the



creature but the master of positive law. It is the soundest, the most general and the most recognised title between man and man that is known in Municipal or public jurisprudence". Thus, Catholicism in Ireland is justified by prescription. **Truth which leads to disorder is bad and peace is far better, for peace is the companion of charity – the highest virtue.**

Society is more secure when its members are accustomed to refer to inherited wisdom, the legacy of civilization, rather than to weigh every ephemeral issue on the basis of private judgement and private rationality. **"The individual", says Burke, "is foolish but the species is wise"**. In politics, therefore, we are advised to refer often to precedent and precept and even prejudice for "the great mysterious incorporation of the human race" has learnt truths about the soul and about community living that no single man can hope to attain unaided in his short span of life. **A state whose constitution is permanently in question is permanently on the brink of revolution for then the constitution would be held in low esteem and this done, power would be unbridled by opinion and government would assuredly fall into the hands of the most vigorous and ruthless minority.** People would then be crushed and crushed by law. And "people crushed by law", he argued, "have no hopes but from power. If laws are their enemies, they will be enemies to laws; and those who have much to hope and nothing to lose will be dangerous, more or less." **To Burke, custom is the source of law and prescription is the source of right.**

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### **27.5 Burke's Conservatism:**

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**Burke was a conservative philosopher.** Iver observes, "Burke gave to the philosophy of conservatism perhaps the fullest and most eloquent expression the world has ever heard". Hearnshaw says; he was always a reformer and never a revolutionary always a

conservative and never a Tory. **Burke laid emphasis on tradition, and favored old institutions.** Burke thought that all old things are valuable because they existed for a long time and attained maturity. The state evolved itself and arrived at its present position. **It is easy to destroy. Creation is impossible.** Any attempt to disturb the existing state of affairs is to open the floodgates of anarchy. **Burke also said that religion is the foundation of the state. It is the basis of the civil society. It is the source of all good and comfort.**

**Burke contended that reason is not the basis of the State.** He hated abstraction. While he did not belittle the value of reason, he was always impressed by the immense part played by prejudice in the determination of policy. **He would not discuss America in terms of rights.** Political philosophy is nothing for him except accurate generalizations based on experience. While he did not belittle the value of reason, he was impressed by the immense part played by prejudice in the determination of policy. Burke opposed revolutions and condemned the French Revolution. He had no sympathy with radicals. He considered them as schemers who did infinite mischief by persuading many sober and well-intentioned people to accept new ideas, which had no foundation.

Burke says "the disposition to preserve and the ability to improve taken together, would be any standard of a statesman... if I cannot reform with equity. I will not reform at all... All the reformations have hitherto may have proceeded upon the principles of reference to antiquity. **"Since men are equal by nature it must follow that they have equal rights to self-government.** The admission of this principle meant for Burke the overthrow of the British constitution. The implication was that every institution, which is not based on popular consent, should be destroyed. **Burke said that no rational being ever did govern him by abstractions.** He was not concerned with abstract rightness of the system based upon



apriority principles. He was only concerned whether the existing system promoted the happiness of the community. **To overthrow a structure that was tested by the pressure of events in favor of some apriority theories outside historic experience seemed to him ruinous to society.** Principles are thus unimportant. Therefore, Burke did not respect abstract natural rights. He upheld prescription. **Prescription is the most solid of all title not only to property, but also to government. The state is built on the wisdom of the past.** Since it is based on the past, we should preserve it.

Burke favored political changes but held that **“the contemplated change must be in harmony with the habits and the spirits of the people.** Thus Burke’s limitation was his tendency to worship the system that existed and to underrate the value of ideas as a stimulant to progress. He did not realize that many of the institutions he praised were already outworn. He represented in England the reactionary philosophy, which set in all over Europe after the reign of terror and the Napoleonic wars. This line of thinking was common to all thinkers of Burke’s time. They said that we must not break custom. Men have been trained to its taste. New food may create trouble and may not be digested at all. Laws are the offspring of the original genius of the people. While we may renovate we must not unduly reform. **Without loyalty to inherited institutions, the fabric of society would be dissolved.** If we should obey these novel impulses of right, which contradict our inheritance, we will be disturbing beyond repair the intricate equilibrium of countless ages.

**Burke’s Conservatism is clear from the following facts:**

- 1) Burk held that the state was an organic growth and it did not come into being as the result of contract.
- 2) Burke’s defense of the British constitution also shows his conservation at its best. He says, **“Our constitution stands on a wise equipoise (balance) with steep precipices and deep**



waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous learning towards one side there may be a risk of oversetting it one the other. Every project of a material change in a government so complicated as ours is a matter full of difficulties, in which a considerate man will not be too ready to decide, a prudent man too ready to undertake or an honest man too ready to promise.

- 3) Burke denied the validity of the idea of the rights of man. According to him men were placed on earth with their relationships already specified and arranged by God. "The lawful author of our being is the author of our place in the order of existence and that having disposed and marshaled in by a divine tactic, not according to our will but according to His, He has in and by that disposition, virtually subjected us to act the part which belongs to the places assigned to us". They arise from the relations of man to man and relations of man to God which relations are not matters of pact. On the contrary, the force of all the facts that we enter into with any particular person or number of persons, amongst mankind depends upon these prior obligations. So duties not the rights of man were fixed irrevocably by divine law.
- 4) Burke says that equal political rights could not be given to all.
- 5) **Burkes condemnation of revolutionary reforms and his stress of tradition also show his conservatism.**
- 6) Burkes opposition of democracy on the ground that in democracy the people demand changes, also confirms that he was a staunch conservative.

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## **27.6 His views on Equality**

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Burke was no believer in equality. He conceived the life of feeling and the spiritual life of man as a harmony within the larger order of the universe. Thus, seen, natural impulse would seem to contain within itself the twin principles of "self-restraint and self-

criticism". Natural impulse, thus seen, itself demands a moral and spiritual life which calls for society as well as state. State, therefore, embodies common good and represents an agreement on ends as well as norms. State, therefore, acts best as a unity, and its constitution is the protector and guardian of the intrinsic rationality of all the parts and members of the State. All members cannot equally participate in political activity but the inherent principle constantly at work is that aggressive self-interest should be excluded so that "the rational conciliatory self-interest" be made compatible with the common good. To Burke, therefore, natural right is natural in that it refers to "the whole potentiality of human nature and comprises an acceptance of both the rightness and wisdom of the life of feeling, the reality of moral obligation and the need for inner or outer restraint on mere appetite". This is possible only when birth is given its due importance and "natural aristocracy" is admitted as an essential ingredient in the State.

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### **27.7 Revolution**

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**Burke made a distinction between innovation and reform. Reform was an honorable word. Therefore, Burke was no enemy of reform and improvement.** But he was opposed to innovation, because he meant by that word revolutionary or radical change. **Instead of innovation, he accepted the principle of renovation and renewal. Burke said that we must obey the great law of change.** Thus, Burke admits the possibility and desirability of constitutional changes. Furthermore, Burke said that when reform became necessary it should be made promptly and thoroughly.. Burke's interpretation of nature and the natural order implies deep respect for the historical process and gives a central place to usage, custom, social achievement, property as the rightful index to power and prescription as the supreme guide to all political and economic



problems, does not stand for complete halt to change; he does not advocate an inflexible or uncritical adherence to the inherited order. Change is inevitable even if not wholly desirable. But the scope of deliberately engineered change is limited. From the above it is clear that Burke is a gradualist and conservative because he was concerned with the concrete and actual rather than with the abstract and speculative. The purpose of reform was to secure and expand the existing advantages and not to realize abstract rights or to achieve an ideal order of society. **A true reformer should remember that he had a state to preserve as well as a state to reform.** He must, therefore, look backward and forward and strive to follow precedents, not mechanically, but analogically. The true reformer must remember that social changes are rarely simple changes.

The objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity. In a large and complicated society, no one thing could bring changes without changing many other things. **Burke also points out that the amount of good that may be realized is limited and imperfect.** Even that can be achieved only gradually and over a period of time with the co-operation of many minds. Sound reform must concern itself with the remedy of real grievances and with the realization of concrete and limited benefits. **Therefore, although reform must be undertaken in time and thoroughly, it must show respect to the past. Instead of abolishing the existing order, reform must strive to adjust it to changing circumstances.**

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## **27.8 Contributions of Edmund Burke**

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**Burke made a substantial contribution to political thought.** Burke's political theory is not completely consistent. At one stage he said that changes should be made whenever necessary and at the same time he was opposed to the reform of representation in Parliament. He assumed that order is the work of reason. **That**



**reason is not primarily human reason but Divine reason. The social order was not the work of abstract deductive reason but of practice reason, which assumed its premises from natural law. Society is made by man under the direction of divine providence by man's practical reason.**

The practical reason, which built the society, was concerned with means in their relation to ends. It lays emphasis on experience, bestows constant attention to the actual situation. **Principles are essential but not sufficient.** Compromise in politics is legitimate and necessary and moderation is a political virtue. He also says that no one structure of society or form of government is the only legitimate one. Social and political forms are determined by convenience and expediency. The factors, which determined the distribution of powers and the representation of the people, were practical factors. **The best form of government is designed not by doctrinaire principles but by history.**

His influence was great, though according to Maxeys, **"A a creative and systematic political thinker Burke cannot be rated high.** However his contribution and influence must not be underestimated. Maxey observes, "Nevertheless he takes rank as one of the ever luminous orbs in the galaxy of political thought. **Burke thought that society is not a collection of individuals, each sovereign in his own right. It is an organized moral whole.** It exists by common consent. It is rooted in the common opinion. But it does not depend upon the revocable consent of a majority of the people. It is ruled by a government, which had a prescriptive right to rule. It must be ruled by a natural aristocracy. Burke finally recognized that change was the law of the life of society.

Burke not only rejected the doctrine of inherent, absolute and indefeasible rights, he shattered it beyond repair showing that the

more perfect such rights are in the abstract the more difficult they are to realize in practice. He stressed that only such rights can be enjoyed by men as are created, recognised and protected by the society. **Burke's philosophy is not free from difficulties. His picture of the British constitution was remote from facts when he wrote.** Every change he opposed was essential to the security of the next generation. These changes had taken place without disastrous consequence he had prophesied.

**Burke insisted that the foundation of the state should not be examined, but he did not realize that such a refusal means ignoring facts.** Burke himself said that the Whig oligarchy was obsolete. Yet he did not realize that the alternative to aristocratic government is democracy and that its absence is the cause of disquiet. He also did not realize that the monopoly of political power by a small class of persons was coming to a close during his own lifetime. The rights that were demanded were not the child of metaphysical fancy, but the result of determination of the people to end the malignant wrongs of centuries. **Burke pleaded for prescriptive privileges.** But French and all other revolutions that followed condemned such privileges.

His historical method is significant, he is the founder of philosophical conservatism and he developed its first principles such as natural inequality, continuity, and continuous change, prescription, prudence and regard for long run consequences, variety, imperfect of social and political order, and divinity of state and society.

Burke by pointing out the defects of the democratic government, rendered a great service. **It was Burke who said that rebellion against a popular regime is more than treason it is sacrilege.** Burke thought a classless society is impossible and if it all possible it would be an instrument of despotism. **He argued that**

if the whole population is levelled to one class; it would pave the way for the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth.

### Check Your Progress - 2

*Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

#### 1) Write short notes on Rights

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#### 2) Examine Burke's views on conservation

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### **27.9 Let us Sum up**

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- 1) He propounded the philosophy of conservation.
- 2) He gave the historical method its proper place.
- 3) His views on colonial and imperial issues, though not radical, were definitely liberal in that he insisted that government should be co-operative, mutually restraining relation of rulers and subjects; and that tyranny in colonies would lead to tyranny at home state.
- 4) While his ideas on constitution were reactionary, he is the first exponent of the idea of political parties, of constitutional



conventions, and of a statesman type of representative.

- 5) He developed his idea against the background of British political life and his membership of the Whig party; they had a wider application than the defense of Whig oligarchy. **The reaction which he had against the French revolution was the beginning of a shift which carried the prevailing social philosophy from attack to defense and therefore, a new emphasis on the value of stability and the power of custom on which stability depends.**

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### 27.10 KEY WORDS

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Apriority	- Using facts and principles, which are known to be true.
Abhorred	- To hate something for example a way of behaving or thinking, especially for moral reasons
Affirmative	- Positive
Boroughs	- Municipalities
Bequeathed	- To say in a will, that you want somebody to have your property, money etc., after you die
Collectivism	- Political system in which all the people own industries.
Chaff and rags	- Poverty
Conciliatory	- Compromising
Contemptible	- Not deserving any respect at all

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### 27.10 Some useful books

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MacCunn, John	The Political Philosophy of Burke London :Arnold, 1913.
Magnus ,Philip M,	Edmund Burke and Ireland, Cambridge Hardvard,1939

- Osborn Annie M, 1940 Rousseau and Burke : A Study of the Idea of Liberty in Eighteenth- Century Political Thought. Oxford University Press.
- Parkin Charls 1956 The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought. Cambridge University Press.
- Stanlis Peter J. 1958 Edmund Bruke and Natural Law, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Catlin G History of Political Philosophers, Whittlesey, New York 1939
- Gettel Raymon, G History of Political Thought, Allen and Unwin, London, 1936.
- Hallowell, John, H Main Currents in Modern Political Thought, Holt, New York 1963.

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## **27.12 Check your progress Exercises**

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### **Check your Progress - 1**

- 1) See Section 27.2
- 2) See Section 27.3

### **Check Your Progress - 2**

- 1) See Section 27.4
- 2) See Section 27.5

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**Unit - 28 Karl Marx (1818-1883)**

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**Structure:**

- 28.0 Objectives
- 28.1 Introduction
- 28.2 His Life and works
- 28.3 Dialectical Materialism
- 28.4 Materialistic Interpretation of History
- 28.5 Theory of surplus value
- 28.6 Theory of Class Struggle
- 28.7 Dictatorship of proletariat
- 28.8 Withering away of the state
- 28.9 His views on religion and revolution
- 28.10 Let us Sum up
- 28.11 Key words
- 28.12 Some Useful books
- 28.13 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises



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## **28.0 Objectives:**

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After going through this unit you will be able to comprehend and understand

- the life and works of Karl Marx
- dialectical materialism.
- materialistic interpretation of history
- theory of surplus value
- theory of class struggle
- dictatorship of proletariat
- withering away of state and
- his views on religion and revolution

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## **28.1 Introduction:**

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The greatness of Marx is difficult to estimate. Marxian philosophy shook the world. Marx was independent, stubborn and ruthless in his rationalism. He was a pioneer in relating political and social phenomena to their economic substructure. The important thing about the works of Marx was not its originality, but its synthetic power. However, his works had greatest influence on the practical politics of the world.

Karl Marx was greatly impressed by the Hegelian way of explaining evolution. Marx believed that there is no such thing as infallible dogmas and there is no such thing as a complete truth. Every truth, like religious dogmas, is only half-truth.

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## **28.2 Life and Works of Karl Marx :**

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Marx was born in 1818 at Treves in the Prussian Rhineland. His father was a lawyer. His parents had embraced Christianity when Marx was still a child of six years age. In fact, neither the influence of religion nor of race seemed to make itself felt in the development of his character and growth of his temper. It is true he was independent, stubborn, ruthless in his rationalism, sure of himself but

he was not impetuous, irascible or opinionated.

After graduating from the gymnasium in Trier, he entered the university of Bonn at the age of 17 to study law in accordance with his father's wishes. One year after, he went to the University of Berlin where he studied philosophy, History and Literature. A little earlier he was engaged to Jenny Von West Phalen whom he married seven years later (1843).

He was particularly attracted by the philosophy of Hegel, which dominated the university, though Hegel himself had died five years earlier. Marx became a leading member of group university people called young Hegelians who maintained that Christianity was incompatible with Hegelianism. Feuerbach was an important member of this group. It was from him that Marx derived his belief that it is not God who has created man but man who makes his own God. Feuerbach held that God is nothing but a projection of human hopes and aspirations and that the central theme of real religion is not the relation between man and God but the relation of man and man.

Marx received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Jena at the age of 23. His association with the young Hegelians and Bruno Bauer in particular, precluded (prevented) his appointment to a university position in Germany. Indeed, Baueer lost his own post at the university in Bonn as a result of questioning the historicity of the New Testament. If he had succeeded in getting the job, he wanted; Marx would have had a brilliant career as professor and written profound treatises on philosophy, but he would not have attained historic immortality as the author of proletarian socialism.

In October 1842, he became the editor of "Zeitung" which was ultimately suppressed by the Government for its leftist views. In January 1842 he wrote his articles on the "Latest Prussian Censorship Instructions" which was published in Switzerland in February 1843. In October 1843, he went to Paris and began to edit the "Tahrbucher"



and wrote his article on the Jewish question and Criticism of Hegel's philosophy of law. And there he also established close contacts with French socialists and the leaders of the German Secret Society. He read the history of England, Germany, France and the United States, and the works of Machiavelli, Rousseau, Montesquieu and the utopian socialists namely Saint Simon and Fourier. In 1844 Marx left Germany for Paris where he met the French Utopian communist Cabet and anarchist Proudhon. There he became one of the editors of France – German year Books. The venture, however failed, and Marx was out of job. He met Engels, the son of a wealthy textiles manufacturer having mills in both England and Germany who later became a life long friend. Marx thus became a degraded bourgeois "deprived of a stable source of income and dependent for his livelihood and that of his wife and children on the generosity of his life long friend, Friedrich Engels, the son of a wealthy manufacturer. In 1845 Karl Marx visited England in the company of Engels where he came in contact with a body known as workers education union of German residents. It was the influence of Engels, whose supreme interest in life was socialism, which turned Marx to the left. Not only that, it was Engels again who drew the attention of Marx whose thought was still centered upon Germany, to the important role England was playing in the development of the capitalist system: From 1844 onwards the two worked together in the development of scientific socialism, Marx playing the role of the theorist and Engels that of the propagandist and organizer of socialism. In January 1845 he was expelled from Paris and went to Brussels where he published in collaboration with Engels 'The Holy Family' and theses on Feuerbuck. He went to England for a month to study economics, political life and working class movement. In 1847 he replied to proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* by his *Poverty of Philosophy*", shortly they organised the German workers society in Brussels to propagate the ideas of



socialism. In *Socialism* in 1948, he published "*The manifesto of the communist Party*" from London, which contains the basic essentials of the Marxist theory. In March Marx was arrested and expelled from Brussels and reached Paris where Engels joined him and from where both went to Germany to participate in the revolutionary activity. On August 24, Marx immigrated to London, having been expelled from everywhere. There he was joined by Engels in October. Marx now resumed his work on political economy, working in the library of the British Museum. The remaining 34 years of his life he passed in London. The life of Marx was a life of poverty and overstrain the generous Engels always gave him monetary help without which he would not have been able to pore over books in the British Museum and other libraries.

He was closely associated with international working men's associations in England and countries of continental Europe. The London years were filled with grinding poverty, sickness and personal tragedy for Marx and his deeply devoted wife. The family was constantly hounded by bill collectors, pawn-brokers and landlords. Once, when a child died in infancy, Marx had to borrow the money for a coffin from a stranger in the neighbourhood. From time to time he worked as a journalist and for a while was the English correspondent of the "New York Daily Tribune, but most of his meager income came from his friend, Engels. In his dispatches to the New York Daily Tribune, he analysed the nature of the British rule in India, and the India Bill, the Misrule of the East India Company, the future results of the British rule in India, the basis and disintegration of India's economy, the British methods of robbing the Indian peasants, the revolutionary trends in Germany, and the liberation movement in India, China, Spain, France and Italy. In 1860 appeared a classic – *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. In 1875, he wrote his critique of the Gotha programme. In December

1881 wife of Marx died; early in 1883 died his eldest daughter whom he loved most. Marx died on March 14, 1883 and buried at Highgate Cemetery, London. He held a number of conferences and congresses in various cities, but never got enough of success in achieving goals.

The most important works of Marx are :

- 1) The Poverty of Philosophy, 1847.
- 2) The Communist Manifesto 1848.
- 3) Wage Labour and Capital Volume – 1, 1849.
- 4) A contribution to the critique of Political Economy, 1859.
- 5) Capital : A Critique of political Economy, (1861-1866)

*"The Communist Manifesto"* (1848) for the first time delineated not only a complete doctrine of social revolutions but also a strategy to achieve it.. It substituted for the old slogan: "All men are brothers" by the single purpose of "the forcible overthrow of the whole existing social order". It presented all history as the story of class struggles and depicted modern society in the grip of great revolutionary forces. Technical advances, in the methods of producing wealth, change the nature and balance of social classes, it argued Modern industry and commerce gave power to the bourgeoisie, the industrial commercial and financial capitalists who own the means of production and ruthlessly exploited the world's resources and the labour of those who did not own the means of production. This dominant enterprising class controled the liberal state and used it for exploiting and repressing more fully those who had only their labour to sell. The proletariat was destined, by the remorseless process of history, to grow in size, misery, and self-consciousness, until it was able to overthrow its oppressors. "What the bourgeoisie produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable". According to Marx Democracy is a sham; parliamentary government is a mere mask for the class-rule of the capitalists. The destined proletarian revolution will be a world



revolution, inevitably victorious, inaugurating, first, a proletarian state (dictatorship of the proletariat) and, eventually, a classless society where the state would wither away.

The *communist Manifesto* contains the clearest and most compact statement Marx's conceptions of the past struggles between classes, the modern bourgeois-proletarian conflict, the inevitable movement of present-day capitalism towards its own destruction. The programmes of action workers must adopt in order to fit in their efforts with the actual march of events.

"*The Poverty of Philosophy*" Here he advances the argument of the economic struggle and economic organisations of the proletariat. Large-scale industry, he says, concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. **Competition divides their interests.** But the maintenance of wages, the common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance-combination. Combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups. In the face of united capital, the maintenance of association becomes more necessary to the workers than the wages. In this struggle which is a veritable civil war, they are united and they organise all the elements necessary for the coming battle. Once it has reached this point, association takes a political character. the proletariat will muster its forces for "the coming battle". If the *Communist Manifesto* deals with the tactics of the political struggle, the *Poverty of Philosophy* deals with the tactics of the economic struggle.

In his "*Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*", Marx gives the integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as extended to human sociality and its history. The argument is that the relations of production (property, institution, religion etc.) correspond to a definite stage of development of material productive forces (means of production). At a certain stage of



development, the latter would come into conflict with the former. The *productive relations* become a fetter on the *productive forces* and epoch of revolution begins. In the *Critique* Marx also spelled out his theory that the value of a commodity was measured by the amount of labour which had gone into its production.

In the "*Das Capital*" he produced his famous theory of Surplus value. This work is in three volumes. Volume one has eight parts and deals with commodities and money, transformation of money into capital, the production of absolute and relative surplus value, wages and accumulation of capital. Volume Two, has three parts, and deals with the metamorphoses of capital and their circuits, the turnover of capital and the reproduction and calculation of the aggregate social capital. In Volume Three, Marx analyses the conversion of surplus value into profit, the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, conversion of the commodity capital into merchant's capital, division of profit into interest and profit of enterprise, transformation of surplus profit into ground rent and revenues and their sources. All the three volumes present an unusual combination of abstract theory and realistic observations.

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### **28.3 Dialectical Materialism :-**

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Marxian dialectic is claimed to be Hegelian dialectic turned right side up, it would be desirable to examine Hegelian dialectic first.

According to Hegel, Spirit or Reason is the ultimate reality in this universe since, reality is dynamic and evolutionary in nature, it cannot be understood by means of the static concepts of formal logic. Changing universe must be different from the old traditional logic. Hegel formulated this new logic for the purpose of explaining change and development and called it dialectic which seeks to explain evolution through the law of contradictions.

Thus Hegel propounded the belief that reality can only be comprehended by a method of contrasting one thing with its opposite. Thus goodness was only comprehensible, when it was compared with badness, heat with cold, want with wealth. Hegel called the first assertion made by the mind the thesis, its contradiction, the antithesis "The State of negation", he said, is the very heart beat of progress and life. He further argued that once the thesis and antithesis were perceived by the mind, the apprehension of these two aspects of reality, produced a new concept by their Junta – position. Thus Hegel called this composition or reconciliation of the two opposites into a third and new idea as a synthesis. According to Hegel, all life proceeded by this method of assertion, negation and reconciliation. Thus, according to Hegel the dialectic method was not a process by which logical ideas developed. It was a process by which all ideas in the world developed. History showed a continuous and orderly unfolding. Each of its periods had its own character which united all the institutions of that period, its religion, its philosophy, its art and its political History. **Marx therefore, defines dialectics as "the science of the general laws of motion; both of the external world and of human thought"**. On the one hand, he believes in *historical materialism*; on the other, in *dialectical materialism*. The two concepts are joined by Marx by the argument of class struggle, that is to say that there is a sequence in history, of successive stages dominated by successive means of production and their control exercised by successive classes. It is argued in the *Communist Manifesto* that this dialectical process is intrinsically and inherently necessary and that it occurs as a result of laws of history which eventually culminate in the take-over by the last of these classes, the proletariat. While all other classes have been minorities, this class is for the first time the majority class. In short, the dialectical principle (thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis) is applied to social struggle between



the bourgeoisie (thesis), the proletariat (anti-thesis) leading to the classless society (negation of negation = synthesis). He regarded the historical process as intrinsically comprehensible and reducible to a logical principle.

Marx was greatly impressed by the Hegelian way of explaining evolution, but he was repelled by Hegelian idealism which regarded ideas as the principle causes of the Historical evolution and the absolute idea fully, conscious of itself as the good of the evolutionary process. The dialectical principle, therefore, shows that all history moves and that the prime mover is not "the idea" or "God".. He shows that human societies have developed dialectically because of the interactions between the continually changing methods by which men have performed the most essential business of their lives (have kept alive-have, in a word, produced) and the tendentially static forms of the societies which they have organised. For Marx there is no such thing as infallible dogmas and there is no such things is complete truth. Every truth like religious dogmas is only half truth.

For Marx, matter and not the spirit was the ultimate reality and a socialist society organized for production in which there shall be no exploitation of one class by another; the goal of evolutionary process. He thought that he could unite his belief in dialectic with his belief in matter as they ultimate reality. By this expedient, Marx not only discovered the great force which drives humanity forward from negation to negation but also claimed to have turned Hegelian dialectic right side up.

Marx and his friend Engels refuse to accept the idea that eternal reality was a mere mirror or image of something inside the human mind. While the idealists believe that only mind exists, the materialists believe that matter is an objective reality existing outside and independent of mind. **The matter is primary and is source of sensations and ideas. Mind is only secondary and is reflection**



**of matter.** Unlike idealism which regarded the world as they embodiment of an absolute idea, a universal spirits; Marx developed the theory of philosophical materialism. According to him, **“The World is by its nature material”**. **The world develops in according with the laws of movement of matter.** The different social ideas and theories which appeared at various periods of history were merely a reflection of the material being of society. The material being of society included nature, geographical movement, population, its density etc., but the chief force which determined the Physiognomy of society was the method of procuring the means of life necessary for human existence.

The difference between Hegelian dialectic and Marxian dialectic proceeds from the fact that whereas for Hegel the ultimate reality is spirit or reason; for Marx it is matter in motion. According to Hegel, the historical developments take place under the stress of conflict between nations; its moving force are ideas. The goal towards which the dialectic materialism is moving is the society perfectly organised for production in which there shall be no class distinctions and no exploitation. It represents the final synthesis which would not give rise to its antithesis. Sabine has stated the difference between Hegelian dialectic and Marxian dialectic in the following way.

“whereas Hegel had conceived that a European history culminates in the rise of the Germanic nations and had looked forward to the advance of Germany to a position of spiritual leadership in European Civilization, Marx conceived that history culminates in the rise of the proletariat, as the chief social consequence of a developing capitalism, and looked forward to the advance of that class to a dominant place in the modern society. In Hegel’s theory of history the driving force was a self-developing spiritual principle the embodied itself successively in historic nations; in Marx’s, it was a self developing system of productive forces that embodied itself in

basic patterns of economic distribution and social classes.

Internal Contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena, for all things have a past and a future something dying away and something developing. Thus while borrowing the dialectic from Hegel, Marx made profound changes in it. Marxian dialectic is very much different from that of Hegelian. Marx borrowed from Hegel the idea that history through the law of contradiction and conflict; but has different from Hegel he conceived matter and not spirit as ultimate reality and a classless society established for perfect production and not the rise of nation - states as the final end of social evolution. Dialectic was accepted by Marx as correct description of the apparatus of social development, but with this crucial difference; for the absolute idea of Hegel, Marx substituted the 'forces of production'.

Thus by substituting matter in place of spirit, Marx claimed to have put Hegelian dialectic right side up. But did he succeed? Bertrand Russell has made the following observations on this point "but for the influence of Hegel it would never have occurred to him that a matter so purely empirical could depend upon abstract metaphysics. With regard to the economic interpretation of history, it seems to be very largely true and an important contribution to sociology; I cannot however regard it as a whole truth nor, feel any confidence that all great historical changes can be viewed as developments".

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#### **28.4 Materialistic Interpretation of History :**

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Historical materialism or the materialistic conception of History is the direct application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the development of society. Karl Marx made it corner stone of his political philosophy. This although Marx does not very much explain as to what he means by his theory of historical materialism. It is in fact an economic interpretation of history. Marx



probably used the word materialistic to contrast his theory with that of Hegel as sharply as he could. Marx's theory of interpretation of history is not monistic, for the economic factor which he treats as primary is really very complex. He does not pin his faith on environment, on nature as against man, or on social environment as distinct from the natural environment, "The powers of production" on which hangs Marx's theory, are a highly complex set of phenomena arising out of the interaction between the natural or social environment and the contemporary activity of the human mind in devising new ways of exploiting it. One thing common to all human societies is that they must find *the means of living*.

The means of production determine property relations, and property relations determine the type of law, religion, morality, culture and everything else. **Economic developments are, therefore, basic to social evolution in other areas. Ideas and institutions, law and politics, religion and morality, art and literature are parts of the social superstructure, which changes according to the change in property relations or economic foundations.** The theory of materialistic conception of history starts with the belief that economic activities are the basis of political legal, cultural, and religious institution and belief. Various forms of state or varieties of legal system cannot be taken as results of development of human minds but have their origin in the material conditions of human life. **The theory starts with the simple truth that man must eat to live and in order to eat he must produce.** Thus his survival depends upon the success with which he can produce what he wants from nature. **Production is the most important of all human activities. Society is the result of these necessities of man.** Marx grouped the efforts of man in the past to secure the necessities of life into four main stages.



1. The primitive or Asiatic stage in which the forms of production are slight and communally owned. 2. Ancient, 3. The feudal, and 4. The capitalist. In all these stages, the class which controls the means of production controls the rest.. In all stages of human life the forces or conditions of production determine the structure of society. The structure of society, breeds attitudes actions and civilizations. To quote Marx, "All the social, political and intellectual relations, all religious and legal systems, all the theoretical outlooks, which emerge in the course of history, are derived from the material conditions of life". Again, "Upon the several forms of property upon the social conditions of existence, a whole superstructure is reared of various and peculiarly shaped feelings, illusions, habits of thought and consumption of life.

**Check Your Progress - 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

**1) Describe the life and works of Karl Marx.**

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“The theory of surplus value was professedly an extension of labour theory of value already stated by Ricardo and the classical economists”. The labour theory was first formulated by Sir. William Petty in England and was later developed by the classical economists like Adam Smith and Ricardo. These economists distinguished between the natural value and artificial value of a thing. **By natural value is meant intrinsic value of a thing, while artificial values includes the human labour spent in producing the thing.** According to these economists the value of the things is determined by the labour spent upon it. In other words, **it is labour that produces value.**

Now, Marx adopted this labour theory of value and pointed out that it is labour alone that produces value. The productive power of society consists of two elements only-men and the things which are at man” disposal. These things are partly (a) natural objects which as natural objects have no “value and partly (b) things which men have created by changing the form of natural objects. Thus all “capital” is a product of past human labour, in an accumulated form. Natural objects, without human labour, have no “value”. “value”, therefore, is created by human labour when it operates on natural objects. **Thus, “value” is neither more nor less than human labour.** According to him, since the value of a thing is created by labour, the whole of the price that the thing fetches should go to the labour. The appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists is simple and pure exploitation. It is this appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists, which makes the capitalists system exploitative in nature. Marx used the theory of surplus value to prove his thesis that capitalism is by its very nature exploitative. Marx’s theory of value, therefore, is not a theory of prices but one of the social distribution of the resources of production.

Surplus value may, therefore, be defined as “the difference



between the value which labour, has created, and the value which the capitalist has paid to the labourer." This difference is usurped by the capitalist. In other words, while the capitalist pays the labourer as wages whatever *little* is necessary to maintain an adequate supply of labour-power, the labourer sells in return for his subsistence wage, his *entire* power to create value. This means that the labourer produces more than is necessary for his maintenance. It means, that is, that the value of his product *exceeds* the value expressed in his wage. The excess is surplus value and it represents the capitalist exploitation of the labour.

Marxian theory of surplus value may be criticized from numerous angles. It is wrong to say that labour alone creates value. **Production is a co-operative effort of the entire community, i.e., labour, capital, management, science and technology etc.** All have a claim to a share in the value of the commodity. **Labour cannot work without capital.** Nor can it be said that the proletarian labour is the most important factor. Even Dr. Engels admitted that "the perfecting of machinery is making human labour superfluous". Technical skill, industry, enterprise and organisational capacity are no less important for creating the value than mere proletarian labour.

Secondly, if surplus value is produced only by labour, then an industry in which the capital invested goes mainly to buy labour should produce more surplus value than one in which capital goes to buy machinery. According Bertrand Russell, the theory of surplus value is rather to be viewed as a translation into abstract terms of the hatred with which Marx regarded the present system than as a contribution to pure theory. The theory of surplus value required a lot of abstract discussion of pure economic theory without "having much bearing upon the practical truth or falsehood of Socialism".

It may, however, be noted that the purpose of Marx in writing about the theory of surplus value was not to propound a theory of

value. His purpose was only to show the exploitative character of the capitalistic system and that the theory of surplus value served this purpose well can hardly be denied. **The theory was to serve as a propaganda value and it so served in the times of Marx.** According to Max Bear, "It is impossible to set aside the view that Marx's theory of value has rather the significance of a political and social slogan than of an economic truth. In short, Marx's social philosophy was the first realistic attack on purely 'acquisitive society' and there is little doubt that this, for more than its fine spun dialectic, was what made it acceptable to his followers".

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### **28.6 Theory of class struggle**

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The Doctrine of Class is may be said to be a natural corollary of Marxian theory of materialistic. Interpretation of history if the later may be said to contain in theory of social change, the former describes mechanism, the manner in which society should progress from one state to another in the course of historical development. Hegel viewed history as a record of wars between nations, and kings as generals. Marx envisaged it is succession of struggles between the opposed classes for economic and political power. He finds in class struggle the key to the understanding of human history.

Marx says. "The History of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Free man and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppresser and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society in various orders, a manifold gradation of social ranks. In ancient Rome, we have Patricians, Knights, Plebians, Slaves. "In the



middle ages feudal lords, vassals, guild masters, Journey men, apprentices, Serf; in almost all these classes, again subordinates are in gradations. The Modern Bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away its with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones". In our epoch, the epoch of the Bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. 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".

Marxian Thesis is that in every system of production, the society becomes divided into two hostile groups with conflicting interest. We may understand now that this division has taken place. According to Karl Marx "There are three main stages in human history" i.e., The Feudalism, Capitalism, Socialism. Even before, rise of feudal society, there were classes based upon economic forces. On the one hand, there were slave owners who possessed the means of production; on the other hand, there were slaves who possessed nothing. Both these classes were opposed to each other, and there were occasional conflicts between them. This class struggle continued up to the time when slaves got emancipation from their masters. It gave birth to feudalism. In this period also the society was divided into classes. Feudal lords and vassals. The struggle between these two classes continued till the feudal form of production collapsed giving birth to capitalism. Capitalism is the most important stage in the economic growth of society. Marx points out that at no stage has the division between the two classes been so clear in the capitalist society. Now, there is on the one hand, the Bourgeoisie class as owners of the means of production, and on the other is the proletariat class, which does not own the means of production. The interests of



these two classes are directly opposed to each other. The clash between the two is inevitable. In the clash according to Marx, the proletariat class will come out victorious. That is why, the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx has been called deterministic.

Marx also asserts that the owners of the means of production control not only the economic life of the society but also the political life. According to Marx, the powerful economic class will become the ruling class. In arguments of Marx, he points out to the relation between the economic and political power. Those who possess the economic power also possess political power.

But no class structure is stable. In part, the reason for change is improvement of technology. When men learnt the art of systematic cultivation, they found that agriculture was more productive than hunting. Others found that commerce was more gainful than agriculture. Further changes showed that industry is more productive than any previous system of production. Since the previous system allows only a few people to live well, the new system makes an appeal to the masses. Those who promote the new system find that the people support them and they grow rich. This combination of self-interest of the masters of the new system of the production combined with the general support proves irresistible. After a fight, the old ruling class surrenders and indeed many of its members join the new ruling class. Marx has pointed out that the class struggle is an objective process. It is the result of the economic and social forces and cannot be stopped simply by convincing people that it is bad.

Marx says, that capitalism carries within itself the seeds of its own decay. He analyses the growth of capitalism and says that the modern Bourgeoisie society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production, and exchange, is like the "sorcerer who is no

longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells". To him further "The weapons with which the Bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against Bourgeoisie itself. But not only has the Bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself, it has also called in to existence the men who are to wield those weapons – the modern working class – the proletarians. In proportion as the Bourgeoisie is developed in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, a developed class of labourers who find work only so long as the labour increases capital. But with the development of the industry, the proletariat increases in number; It becomes concentrated in greater masses. The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing makes their livelihood more and more precarious. The collisions between individual work men and individual Bourgeoisie take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the Bourgeoisie, they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations to make provisions before and for the occasional revolts.

Cocker has beautifully summed up the conditions which will bring about the death of capitalism in these words. "Thus the capitalism system enlarges the number of workers, brings them together into compact groups, makes them class conscious, supplies them with means of inter-communication and corporation on a world-wide scale, reducing their purchasing power and by increasingly exploiting them arouses them to organize resistance. The capitalists acting persistently in pursuit of their own natural needs and in vindication of a system dependent upon the maintenance of the profits are all which stimulate and strengthen the natural efforts of workers in preparing for a system that will fit the needs of the working man's society".



In this way, "Marx tries to show that the class war is the direct result of his dialectic and a fact traceable of history.. Karl Marx did not regard himself as the author the of theory of Class – War. He merely took over and extended the theory of the class antagonism that had already existed. He himself recognized Augustine theory as "the father of class struggle in the French historical writings". However, Karl Marx was responsible for making the idea of class – war a major factor in world politics.

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### **28.7 Dictatorship of the Proletariat :**

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According to Karl Marx, capitalism is inevitably doomed to destruction and communism is bound to blossom. After the capitalism is destroyed communism will not spring up all at once. Its march will be preceded by what Marx calls 'proletarian dictatorship'. **The dictatorship of the proletariat is an essential stage in the course of transition from the capitalistic society to the socialistic society.** Before communism can be established, the bureaucratic and military machine erected by the bourgeois must be completely smashed and a new order must be set up in its place. Marx thus contemplated a transitional stage between the conquest of power by the proletariat and the establishment of the new social order. The first stage of this is the smashing of the capitalist state, setting up of a new legislative authority resting on the organised economic power of the working class, a new proletarian judiciary with a new socialist system of laws, a new proletarian police and army, and a new proletarian civil service. **There will now be universal suffrage; appointments will be brief and revocable; judges will be elective and subject to recall.** These measures, Marx said, are the "foundations of true democratic institutions". These institutions will work under the guidance of a proletarian party which will lead the new governing class-the working class which is class conscious The



term "dictatorship" is used by Marx to mean "revolution" – the use of force. Dictatorship of proletariat, therefore, meant not *dictatorship in favour of the proletariat* but it meant **direct exercise of force on the part of the proletariat under arms**. It meant, so to say, the actual revolution of the proletariat – "the proletariat organised as the dominating class", which used its own force to dissolve the state and defeat its enemies. As he writes: **"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other, There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat"**.

Though the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat occupies an important place in the philosophy of Marx, yet it is unfortunate that he does not lay down the organisation of the proletarian state. Beyond laying down that the proletariat would organise itself as the ruling power after the capitalist state has been smashed, the Manifesto says nothing. However, one thing is clear. **The proletarian state will be a class state**. It would not be a free society and would retain the chief features of the old order. It would preserve the coercive machinery of its predecessor, but with a difference. Whereas in the old capitalist state the minority used political power to exploit and suppress the majority, in the proletarian state the majority would expropriate the minority. The working formula of the proletarian state, therefore, shall be: ***"From each according to his capacity, to each according to his work"***.

Marx says that the proletarian revolution will destroy not only the bourgeois state, but the State itself. **The two operations should proceed hand in hand, in a parallel fashion, without the proletariat reforming a new state, even if it were a proletarian state. The dictatorship of the proletariat will, therefore,**

**increasingly become a stateless dictatorship.** The dictatorship of the proletariat, therefore, is to Marx an emergency self-government for the duration of the overt class war. As the capitalist class is liquidated, class war will cease and a stateless democracy will emerge which will be the spontaneous offspring of the happy economic harmony of a society of equals. The State will wither away. The dictatorship of the proletariat is, therefore, not a permanent affair. It is necessary as long as the capitalist class remains. On the basis of this theory, therefore, the proletarian dictatorship must continue until the social revolution is victorious everywhere, and there after until it has been consolidated everywhere by the socialization of men's minds and attitudes, as well as of their economic and political institutions. **The overthrow of capitalism cannot be effected by a proletarian revolution in one country alone; being an international economic system, capitalism can be overthrown only by a world revolution of the exploited workers in all lands.** The proletarian state, therefore, must continue till then or else it will be crushed by the enemy. A war between two bourgeois nations is of no concern to the workers except in so far as it sharpens the capitalist contradictions. **The final class struggle will therefore, be a world revolution of the world proletariat against the world capitalists.** The last "synthesis" will be world class society, world socialism, world peace. Till then the dictatorship of the proletariat will continue.

When the proletariat have succeeded in completely marking out the institutions set up by capitalists to satisfy their interests, then there shall be no need of the state and it would wither away'.

As said earlier, Marx did not fully elaborate the organisation of the proletarian state. It was Lenin who worked out it fully. **The way in which proletarian state was to actually conduct itself may be seen from what has happened in Soviet Russia during the transitional stage of communism.** It need not be said that in

working out the Marxian programme Lenin made his own contributions which greatly altered the spirit of Marxism.

Marx and not Lenin predicted the date at which the proletarian dictatorship would come to an end. Marx warned that “you will have to go through fifteen, twenty or even fifty years of civil and international war not only to change relationships but also to change your own selves, to render yourselves fit to assume the political reins”. Lenin said simply that we do not know and cannot know. Since the task of overthrowing the bourgeoisie completely is going to be a hard one, it will take a long time before complete communism can be a reality and the dictatorship of the proletariat can wither away.

### **Check Your Progress - - 2**

*Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

#### **1) Discuss the theory of Surplus Value.**

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#### **2) Write a Short note on dictatorship of proletariat**

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## 28.8 Withering away of the State

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In the *communist Manifesto*, he calls the State "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". Political power is "merely the organised power of one class for opposing another". Its origin is traced to property and class contradictions. When private property came into existence, and along with it economic inequality, society was split up in hostile classes. The system of managing public affairs changed. These affairs could no longer be settled on the basis of the agreed will of the whole or the majority of society. **The dominating power was captured by the exploiting classes.** Since they composed only an insignificant minority, these classes had to rely to direct coercion as well as on their economic power to maintain the system that suited them. For this a special apparatus was required-detachments of armed men, police, courts and prisons. Control of the apparatus of coercion was placed in the hands of men devoted to the interests not of the whole of society but of the exploiting minority.

Thus, the State was built up for maintaining the domination of one class over another. With the help of this machine the economically dominant class *consolidates the social system* to its advantage and forcibly keeps its class opponents within the framework of the given mode of production. In an exploiting society, therefore, the state always represents, in essence, the dictatorship of the class of exploiters. In relation to society as a whole, it acts as an instrument of direction and government on behalf of the ruling class. In relation to the exploiting class, it acts as the guardian of their economic interests. In relation to the exploited class, it acts as an instrument of suppression and coercion. The state is, therefore, the outcome of the irreconcilability of class contradictions. "The state of the most powerful, economically dominant class" which by using the state, also becomes the politically dominant class, thus acquiring the new means

of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Even the freest and the most progressive form of the bourgeoisie state, the democratic republic, in no way removes this fact but merely changes this form

Marx, therefore, says that the 'state' apparatus can be used in capitalist order as well as in the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat for their respective class objectives in various ways. In the capitalist society, the state serves, in general, the interests of the ruling class centered, basically in the preservation of the system of capitalist exploitation. But its very action is not solely so determined. It has to act or intervene constantly, *apparently* against capitalism but really on its behalf, to alleviate the anarchy of the market, to prevent major depression or to save capitalism from its own self-destructive consequences.. Similarly, a *proletarian state*, on the whole, acts in the interest of the working class but its actions may also be governed, in the short-run, by practical considerations which apparently may appear against socialism. Marxist theory of state, therefore, is flexible. To him the state is not the solution of all things; it is the hard core of the enemy which must be destroyed.

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### **28.9 Views on Religion and Revolution**

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Marx never accused any religious thinker of hypocrisy or of deliberate mystification. He only argues that those who hold certain religious or philosophic beliefs in all honesty may, in fact, be fighting under their banner a struggle, which has, at bottom, an essentially economic content. The religious struggles of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries had a definite economic basis. Nationalism itself had economic roots and national churches were an attempt to nationalize religion.

Marx says that science has revealed enormous secrets of nature so that the relations between man and nature are becoming every day more perfectly intelligible and reasonable. And yet, in the capitalist world, this relationship remains hidden in layers of religion



and metaphysics. Beneath the cover of religion, the companies, trusts, banks, states and empires keep on the exploitation of the workers who are called upon to attribute their poverty to their sins and to seek redemption in paradise. They are, therefore, kept in illusion about their miserable situation created for them by their capitalist tormentors. "The demand that one should reject illusions about one's situation", Marx says, "is a demand that one should reject a situation which has need of illusion". Religion is thus used by capitalist as the opium of the people. But it will go only if the need for this mystery, this illusion, this opium, vanishes. And this need will vanish only when the capitalist order, which feeds itself on this illusion, disappears. Just as Marx stood for the political and economic emancipation of man, he advocated man's liberation from the fear of the unknown, from the terrors of religion. He did not preach atheism or immortality. He advocated a correct understanding of the role which religion has played in society.

Marx says that the bourgeois state being only the executive machinery of the exploiting classes, it is incapable of being used as the instrument of proletarian emancipation. Marx, therefore, argued that its only effective method is the seizure by force of the State. "Force", he declared, "is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one". **The political seizure of power through revolution is, therefore, the essential preliminary to the establishment of socialism.** Britain might be an exception but even there socialism may not come peacefully. In fact, the class struggle should culminate in revolutions. Of course, he argued that socialism would come gradually but it would start only after the revolution and the establishment of a proletarian state.

The revolution advocated by Marx is qualitatively different from the previous social revolutions in that it seeks to abolish classes



and eliminate exploitation. The previous revolutions led merely to the substitution of one form of exploitation by another. The proletariat revolution would reorganise society from top of bottom. It will be a revolution of the mass of working people themselves which they make for themselves. It will abolish capitalist private ownership of the means of production and will destroy the obsolete property relations. **While all previous revolutions merely improved the old state machinery, the proletariat will smash it and replace it by its own, proletariat state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.**

**Check Your Progress - 3**

*Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

**1) Explain the views of Karl Marx on the withering away of the state.**

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**2) Marx's regards "religion as an opium of the masses".**

**Explain.**

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### 28.10 Let us Sum up

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The main tenets of Marxian philosophy were dialectic materialism, materialistic conceptions of history, the theory of class-war and the theory of surplus value. By substituting matter in place of spirit as the ultimate reality. Marx claimed to have turned the Hegelian dialectic upside down; but in doing so he rather made the concept of the entire dialectic meaningless. His theory of materialistic conception of history and his theory of surplus value suffer from partiality and do not give the true and full view of the phenomena. His theory of class-war is an over-simplification of the struggle that has gone on in history. Marx gave undue importance to the forces of production. Social forces are too complex to be explained in terms of any single factor 'Economic or Other wise'.

The belief of Marx that revolution is the only means to bring about permanent shifts in the distribution of social and economic power to the benefit of the worker is also open to criticism. It is exceedingly doubtful if violent revolution would succeed in endangering the attitude of social service.

Marx developed the theory of philosophical materialism in which he says the world is by its nature material, and that it develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter. Karl Marx divided society into two classes differentiated by economic conditions. One is the small privileged class owning the means of production and other the larger class of toilers who works the raw materials. There will be constant struggle between them for economic and political power and thus great movements of history are consequences of this struggle. The clash between the two is inevitable and proletariat class will come out as victorious. Marx says that capitalism carries within itself the seeds of its own decay.

The theory of surplus value shows the exploitative character of the capitalist system and that the theory of surplus value served

this purpose can hardly be denied. The theory was to serve as a propaganda value and it so served in the times of Marx.

He has disentangled the philosophical structure built by Hume, Kant and Hegel from idealism and metaphysics ; he has moved progressive thought from the quest for realization of abstract ideals to the concrete investigation of the ways in which human lives are moulded by institutions and institutions transformed by human action. He has led the modern labour movement.

When he wrote 'property' he meant 'property so far as it is power'. The small investor has remarkably little power over his invested capital".

He was an active revolutionist in the movements for the overthrow of the capitalist society and of the state institutions created by that society and for the liberation of the proletariat. He gave a scientific foundation to socialism, which was a confused heap of wishful thinking. His socialism is revolutionary in the sense that it insists upon the irreconcilable antagonism between labour and capital and the relentless class struggle. His attitude was pragmatic and his view flexible and free from dogmatism.

He was the first to see the close relationship between trade-cycles, over-production and unemployment and between industrialization and social change.. His method of analysis is of permanent value even if some of his conclusions may be challenged. For the power of his message and for his influence upon the future movement of communism, Marx can be sure of his place in any collection of the world's great masters of political thought.

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## 28.11 KEY WORDS

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- Apprentices** - A young person who works for an employer for a fixed period of time in order to learn the particular skills needed in his job.



- Antagonism** - (between a & b) Towards somebody or some thing feelings of hatred and opposition
- Antithesis** - The opposite of the something or a contrast between two things.
- Capitalism** - An economic system in which a country's business and industry are controlled and run for profit by private owners rather than by the government
- Collisions** - An accident in which two people crash into each other.
- Conjured** - To do clever tricks such as making things appear or disappear as if by magic.
- Comprehend** - To understand something fully
- Culminates** - To end with a particular result or at a particular point
- Concealed labour** - hiding somebody's labour or something labour
- Dialectical** - A method of discovering the truth of ideas by discussion and logical argument and by considering ideas that are opposed to each other.
- Epochs** - A period of time in History , especially one during which important events or changes happen
- Feudalism** - The social system that existed during the middle ages in Europe in which people were given land and protection by nobleman and had to work and fight for him in return.
- Fetch** - To go to where somebody/something is

and bring them or it back.

- Illusions** - False ideas or beliefs, especially about somebody or about a situation.
- Intrinsic value** - Belonging to or part of the real nature of the something or somebody.
- Irresistible** - So strong that it cannot be stopped or resisted.

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### **28.12 Some useful books :**

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- W.A.Dunning : A History of political theories. Two volumes.
- Sabine : A history of political theory.
- Catlin C.E.G : The story of the political philosophers .
- Barker.E : The political thought of Plato and Aristotle.
- Karl Marx : The communist manifesto
- Harold .J.Laski : A Grammar of Politics.

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### **12.13 Answer to Check your Progres Exercises**

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#### **Check Your Progress - 1**

- 1) See section 28.2
- 2) See section 28.4

#### **Check your Progress - 2**

- 1) See section 28.5
- 2) See section 28.7

#### **Check your Progress - 3**

- 1) See section 28.8
- 2) See section 28.9





**Structure:**

- 29.0 Objectives
- 29.1 Introduction
- 29.2 Life & Works of Lenin
- 29.3 Theory of Revolution
- 29.4 Theory of Imperialism
- 29.5 Theory of Party Organisation
- 29.6 Theory of Class Consciousness
- 29.7 Democracy, Religion and State
- 29.8 Let us Sum up
- 29.9 Key Words
- 29.10 Some Useful Books
- 29.11 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

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## **29.0 Objectives:**

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After going through this Unit you will be able to understand.

- ◆ His Theory of Revolution
- ◆ His Theory of Imperialism
- ◆ His Theory of Party Organisation
- ◆ His Theory of Class Consciousness
- ◆ Democracy, religion and state

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## **29.1 Introduction:**

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In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, world capitalism entered it is said, its last, imperialist stage of development. Free competition in capitalist society was replaced by the rule of the monopolies and finance capital. The exploitation of the working people and social inequality were greatly increased. In the capitalist countries, there was a significant reaction on all sides – in home and foreign policy and in ideology and culture. The world began to be carved up between international cartels, trusts, and syndicates, the dividing up of world territories by the leading capitalist countries was completed, and the colonial system of imperialism developed. Together with the overt forms of colonial exploitation of countries that lost their political independence, there appeared many forms of semi-colonial dependence and financial enslavement of many countries and people by the imperialist powers. The contradictions of capitalism – between labour and capital, between the colonies and dependent countries, on the one hand, and the metropolis, on the other became extremely acute; the increasingly uneven economic development of the main capitalist powers aggravated the struggle between them for markets and sources of raw materials, spheres of the export of capital and re-partition of their plunder. International conflicts and military clashes became more frequent, which led to imperialist wars.

The new age posed new problems of social development and

the international liberation movement, on the solution of which depended the fate of mankind. The leaders of the Second International alien to the revolutionary, creative spirit of Marxism, proved incapable of solving these problems. Lenin's great service lies in the fact that he provided an answer to the basic questions raised by the new, revolutionary age and worked out fundamental philosophical, economic and political problems of the revolutionary theory, and the strategy and tactics of the international proletariat.

In Lenin's works, we find a profound analysis of the economic and socio-political development and the revolutionary movement in such countries as France, Germany, Italy, Britain, the United States of America, and Japan. Many pages in his works are devoted to the national liberation and revolutionary movements in China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, and Middle East and the Latin American and African countries. In many of his works, Lenin studied the general laws of social development and of the liberation movement of the working people in the age of imperialism and socialist revolutions, the transition from capitalism to socialism

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## **29.2 His Life and Works:**

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Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (In 1901 he began to call himself Lenin) was born on April 22 1870, in Simbrisk, now ulianovsk, a provincial town situated on the great Russian river Volga. He was one of the six children in an educated middle class family. He died on January 21, 1924, near Moscow. He was acclaimed as a genius and creator of the communist party of the Soviet Union. He will be remembered by all progressive people, inspiring them to strive ceaselessly for a radiant future, for a free and happy life, for peace, national independence, social progress, democracy, socialism and communism.

Lenin is the great continuer of the cause of teaching of founders of scientific socialism, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. He was fond



of repeating that Marxian is not a dogma but a guide to action; all his theoretical and organising activity confirms this idea.

He was brought up in a Russian progressive intellectual family. Lenin's father, Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanow, came from a lower middle – class family in Astrakhan.

Lenin's mother was a woman of indomitable character. Hers was large family with little money. Lenin, her second son, was intelligent and conscientious student, and a good swimmer, skater, and chess player. He was much impressed by his father's talk of the "darkness" of life in the villages and of the arbitrary treatment of peasants by officials.

From the age of nine to seventeen Lenin attended the classical Gymnasium in Simbirsk. Already at that age he displayed self-discipline and orderly habits which had been cultivated in him at home. He was also greatly influenced by his elder brother Alexander, who was an incontestable authority to him. It was from Alexander that Lenin first learnt about Marxist literature. Moreover, it was in Alexander's hands that he first saw Marx's book was Capital.

Lenin absorbed the revolutionary spirit of the writings of Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Pisarev. The writings of these revolutionary democrats aroused in him hatred for the social and political system of Russia and helped to form his revolutionary convictions. Lenin had severe blows when he was still very young. His father died suddenly in January 1886 at the age of 54.

Lenin graduated from the Simbirsk Gymnasium with a gold medal, and was a brilliant student at the St. Petersburg University, where his researches in Zoology and Chemistry had attracted the attention of eminent scientists, such as N.P. Wagner and A.M. Butlerov, each of whom wanted him to study in his faculty. One of his papers in Zoology, written in his third year, was awarded a

gold medal. He gave promise of becoming a professor. On his last summer holiday at home he spent all his time on his thesis and seemed to be completely absorbed in his studies. His comrades loved him for his fine brain, moral purity, loyalty to the cause and extreme modesty.

Lenin was interested to study social sciences. For that reason he entered, Kazan University as a law student. In Kazan University, Lenin became an active member of the illegal Samara-Simbirsk Fraternity. The authorities banned every kind of student organisation membership of, which was punishable by expulsion under the university statutes of 1884. Lenin got in touch with the progressive minded students and took an active part in the revolutionary circle of students. While in exile Lenin assiduously studied socio-economic, political and statistical literature. Through his relatives in Kazan he received books and periodicals from the libraries.

He made a profound study of the great Russian revolutionary democrat Chernyshevsky, whose writings preached class struggle, advocated a peasant revolution, a struggle to overthrow the autocracy and end serfdom, and set forth his materialist philosophical views and socialist ideas. Shortly afterwards Lenin joined one of the Marxist study circles organised by Nikolai Fedoseyew, one of the first revolutionaries who proclaimed themselves as Marxists.

In 1883, the first Russian Marxist organisation – the Emancipation of Labour Group headed by Plekhanov – was set up abroad.

Lenin devoted the months spent in Kazan mastering the theory of Marxism and making personal contacts with the young Marxists there. He made a serious study of Marx's chief work, capital, in which its great author revealed and scientifically substantiated the economic laws of development of capitalist society, gave a profound analysis of capitalism's contradictions, and contestably proved the inevitability

its downfall and of the victory of socialism. He did not merely study Capital but gave it deep thought, specifically from the angle of its application to the socio-economic conditions and the task of the working class movement in Russia. At the age of eighteen, Lenin understood that the proletariat was most revolutionary class which was to play the part of leader in the struggle against the exploiters.

His most scholarly work, "The development of capitalism in Russia (1899) was simply a tract to prove definitively the folly of the narodnik concept of the role of the peasantry in Russia. He showed that the peasantry was ceasing to be a uniform mass and was splitting into capitalist and proletarian sectors. In Lenin's view this process should be encouraged by the abolition of land lordism, which was slowing the development of capitalist relations in the village. Thus, the proletarian, "depeasantized" element in the countryside would strengthen the urban proletariat, whose lack of numbers was compensated for its concentration, fitting it to lead a mass movement of the village poor to overthrow capitalism.

In "What Is To Be Done – Against the Narodniki", Lenin developed the thought that the working class, left to its own spontaneous strivings, would never become socialist. Only the conscious efforts of "*educated representatives of the propertied classes*" i.e. the Marxists, would be able to divert the labour movement, with its spontaneous trade – unionist striving, from under the wing of the bourgeoisie and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary social-democracy. This viewpoint was embodied in the program were adopted by the Second Congress in preparation of which "*What is to be done*" had been published. It continued to dominate Lenin's thinking and actions and is perhaps the very essence of Leninism as distinct from Marxism.

"*Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*" The formulation has been hailed as the most outstanding contribution to



the treasury of creative Marxism” and as evidence of Lenin’s stature as a scholar as a genius, a most conscientious researcher, and the greatest fighter for revolution. It did indeed assert as scientific prediction that imperialism spells the doom of capitalism and because it creates the objective conditions for world revolution also represents the eve of socialist revolution.

In his “State and Revolution” he shows that the Russian Revolution and communist rule that followed it was strictly and absolutely true to Marx. He argued that the existing “*hypocritically democratic*’ was merely a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and must be replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat” a term that Lenin never ceased to think of as meaning dictatorship of the Bolsheviks. He was careful to emphasize the distinction between the two stages, socialism “(from each according to his abilities, to each according to his labour) and communism (from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs)’ a distinction that Stalin was later to cause to be written into the 1936 constitution

There are, however, differences in emphasis in the attack on modern society and there are important features in the communist programmes that distinguish it from the programme ordinarily envisaged by Marx.

1. Lenin contended that as long as there are some who live mainly by labour and others by the labour of others, hostility between the two groups is inevitable. Those who own no means of production are forced to sell their labour to those who own the means of production. Moreover, the capitalist system is not merely exploitative but also inefficient. The owners of capital cease to produce goods when they cannot sell at profit and frequently they cannot sell goods at a profit because under the unequal distribution of wealth, the people who need the goods are unable to buy them.

2. Lenin argued that the present State is inextricably associated with the capitalist order. Its historic role has been to serve the interests of those who own property, to support them in their domination over the propertyless and to suppress all attempts to shake off their domination.
3. The laws of the modern state are only the formulations of the desires of capitalists. Even when they are not, judges interpret and apply as if they are.
4. The modern State is an agency for the maintenance of status quo. It treats those who oppose the social supremacy of property owners as enemies of the State and therefore of society itself. Lenin contends that however democratic the structure of the government may be, the real repositories of political power are the owners of wealth. They are in the possession of the main organs of propaganda and education, the schools, the colleges, the Churches and the Press. All these institutions control the political opinion of the workers. Accordingly, the democracy as it actually operates is not popular rule but the bourgeoisie rule.

How can one end the modern capitalist system? Marx contends that its dissolution would come about partly through its own development and degeneration. Marx prophesied that capitalism would pave the way for socialism, both destructively – by creating those conditions of concentration of wealth, large-scale production, unemployment and poverty that prepare the workers to be ready for a socialist revolution – and constructively by developing the instrumentalities of large-scale production to a point where the proletarians can use them for socialist purposes. In the course of these developments the workers would acquire experience and develop esprit de corps that would make them competent for political rule.



The Russian Communists discussed this question – when and under what circumstances the revolution must be undertaken. It was Plekhanov not Marx or Engels who made this the central problem. Plekhanov said that any attempt to establish socialism in Russia without modern industry and a concentrated, enlightened and organized industrial proletariat would result in discrediting the very idea of socialism and in the creating of a new class.

For a decade and half this work was the gospel for Lenin. He repeated Plekhanov's dogmas concerning the industrialization of Russia and the need for a bourgeois democratic revolution before the struggle for socialism could take place. Lenin followed Plekhanov and not Marx till 1917.

The Russian Revolution broke out in a country which did not satisfy any of the conditions laid down by Marx. There was scarcely large-scale industry. The industrial labourers numbered less than one-tenth of the total population. They had very little experience in any sort of socialist activity. It is true that Marx hoped that when socialist revolutions occur in capitalist countries of Europe, a socialist revolution might break out at the same time in Russia and establish socialism and thus escape the sufferings of the capitalist system. But socialist revolutions did not break out in the industrialized countries of Europe. Thus, the Russian Revolution was not the result of long course of economic and political development in Russia. It was not supported by socialist revolutions in other European countries. Yet Lenin maintained that the Russian revolution satisfied the conditions laid down by Marx. He argued that the economic and political developments in the industrial world at large had by 1917 prepared the way for a socialist revolution in any particular country where the capitalist system was unstable. Lenin contends that conditions essential for the success of revolution in any country are three. First, there must be an organised group, aggressive, resolute and



revolutionary with a clear conception of its objective. Second, this group must be supported by positive discontent among the people generally. Finally, the revolution must be undertaken when the defenders of the old order are weak and divided. Lenin contended that Russian Revolution satisfied all these conditions, and promptly proclaimed to the whole civilised world that it was a vindication of the prophecy made by Marx.

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### **29.3 Theory of Revolution :**

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Lenin agreed with Marx that although capitalism creates conditions for its own destruction, its actual overthrow must be by deliberate political action of the workers themselves. The methods of trade unionism or even of syndicalism will not do. The wage earners will not be able to come to power by bargaining with the capitalism. It was necessary to build up a socialist society and the conquest of political power can only be by force. The application of force is necessary because the capitalists control all the vehicles of public information and discussion and thereby make it impossible for the workers to obtain political control by democratic methods. Therefore, Lenin said that the establishment of Proletarian State is impossible without a revolution.

Lenin also contended that the conditions that determine the success of any socialist revolution are worldwide. The revolution should be conducted on a worldwide scale for the establishment of an international community of the proletarian States, which should be controlled by the united workers of the world, with all racial and national boundaries destroyed forever. The principal means for the establishment of an International Soviet Republic are propaganda, agitation, energetic dissemination of communist ideas and training in the tactics of revolution.

Lenin also said that the Communist should avoid the

anti-military agitation of a pacific nature. Because the communists are not non-violent satyagrahis, they should utilise the existing army, rifle clubs, and citizens guard organization for giving military training for the revolutionary battles to come.

The Communist should not follow, said Lenin, a policy of destruction but a constructive one. The Communists, immediately after they have gained control over the Governmental machinery, should try to establish a just and rational economic system.

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#### **29.4 Theory of Imperialism:**

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Perhaps the most important contribution of Lenin is his theory of imperialism as the last stage of capitalism. During the later part of the nineteenth century, capitalist governments entered into a phase of rapid international expansion. Practically the whole world was divided into the major powers of Europe – Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, etc.,. The various great powers were manoeuvring against one another, forming blocks and counter blocs, aiming to win new colonies or to retain old ones, to gain or to retain mastery of the balance of power in the world. The world scene was dominated by the conflict among the imperialist giants. Similarly, the national capitalist enterprises were being transformed into international monopolies. There were often economic wars between these monopolies, leading to mergers that gave rise to economic empires no less vast and powerful than the political empires.

As the imperial power of the capitalist nations increased, the class struggle inside their borders declined. Even the working class in the imperialist countries became imbued with pride in worldwide colonial possessions. It thought of itself as part of the ruling nation rather than as the oppressed proletariat whose main enemy should be the bourgeois at home. This was a matter of most serious concern to socialist revolutionaries, and also somewhat of a theoretical puzzle,



for the Marxian theory had pointed out that, with the growth and spread of capitalism, the class struggle would grow in intensity. What actually happened in the industrially developed countries was that class struggle decreased in intensity. One of the charges levelled against Marxism was that its prophecies have not proved true. Marx had prophesied that with the growth of capitalism, the misery of working class will increase and that the capitalism is leading to its own destruction.. But future events had shown that what Marx took upon the task of defending the master's doctrines and explain away all the developments that had taken place after Marx falsifying thesis. This task was performed by Lenin with great skill by means of his theory of imperialism.

According to Stalin, "Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism, and the proletarian revolution. In his "Imperialism", the highest state of Capitalism" Lenin sought to explain as to why the expanding capitalism did not bring in the increasing misery of worker. According to Lenin, the lower middle classes and the skilled workmen of advanced industrial countries were saved from the increasing misery, which was predicted for them by Marx on account of the creation of empires by the countries. Had these countries not embarked upon a policy of imperialism, then the condition of their workers would have deteriorated. The exploitation of the colonial people saved them from the increasing misery. The people of dominant country became capitalists. Though the workers of the capitalist country were saved from the jaw of increasing misery; now it was the people of the colonial territories who became miserable and sank to the conditions of the proletariat. Lenin maintained that the state of Imperialism was not contradiction of the teachings of Marx but merely a fulfilment of it. As capitalism developed, units of industrial production grew bigger and combined in trusts and cartels to produce monopoly capitalism. The same was the case in the



financial world where finance capitalism developed. Monopoly finance capitalism, according to Marx, was aggressively expansionist. It resulted in the exploitation of the colonial peoples and produced wars between nations. These wars will bring the end of capitalism and usher in a new era of socialism. Thus, according to Lenin, Marx was not wrong. He only paid insufficient attention to the penultimate stage. The stage of imperialism through which capitalism will pass before giving place to socialism. Imperialism suffers from the similar inherent contradictions from which capitalism suffers and thus the argument of Marx was mainly correct. Lenin clearly states that he says that imperialism is the last stage of capitalism.

**Check Your Progress - 1**

*Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

**1) Explain Lenin's views on revolution.**

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**2) Discuss Lenin's theory of Imperialism.**

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### 29.5 Theory of Party Organisation :-

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Marx had been vague on how the working class takes over power. Rather he was deliberately silent on how an entire class could take power and what they would do with the power after they had taken it. A few remarks that he made on this were taken literally by Lenin and again by Stalin – abolition of market, universal and centralized rationing, and unimportance of the State and of the law, etc.

But Lenin, however, was an innovator. He was also a theoretician, and technician. He knew how to wield power. Conspiracy centralized organisation, military discipline, the ability to stir, manipulate and coalesce discontent and hatred. All these he had mastered.

One of the most enduring contributions of Lenin to practical politics was his theory of party organisation, which he called “Party of a New Type”. **A political party that intends to carry out a revolution successfully must be thoroughly disciplined, alert, and ably led just like an army. In fact, the party was the general staff of the coming revolution. It was an elite organisation, consisting of outstanding individuals who combined thorough understanding of theoretical issues and general aspects of the situation confronting them, with a relentless will and capacity for decisive action.** These individuals formed the core of the revolutionary party, combining theory with practice, independence of mind with the strictest discipline, freedom of discussion with a firm adherence to the party line.

Lenin’s concept of the revolutionary party was determined to a great extent by the situation obtaining in Russia during the pre-Revolutionary period. There was no political freedom, and the distance between the ruling class of landed aristocracy and of merchants and the rest of the population consisting of peasants, middle

class and intellectuals, was so great that free political activity was out of question. The Czar ruled, and had to rule, by oppression, without the consent or co-operation of the people

*Democratic centralism* means, on the one hand, that the party is democratic. Every office-bearer is elected by the membership. The full Congress of the party is the ultimate and supreme authority. The party is self-governing. And each organ of the party, whether the lowest cell or the highest central executive, conducts its deliberations and arrives at its decisions on a democratic basis. Each member of all communist bodies has full right of speech and expression. Decisions are by majority. In this sense, the party is democratic. But the party is highly centralized and in the normal course of functioning the decisions of higher organs are binding on the lower organs. Any disagreement of a lower with a higher body must be kept in abeyance until the next Congress but until that time the lower organ must obey the higher one. This solved the problem of leadership, which is so vital in political action, by legitimizing and yet fully empowering the highest levels of the party organisation.

Similarly, there is freedom of discussion while an issue is still undecided. Everyone will be heard and he may express his views, his differences with others, his doubts and misgivings. But, after full discussion, when once the decision has been taken, it is fully binding on all participants. They have to obey it as fully and unquestioningly as if it was their own. **Here again the freedom of discussion was combined with most rigid enforcement of party discipline. Such were the contributions of Lenin to the principles of party organisation and action.**

Lenin told his comrades: "if we have in the C.O. or central organ, a majority, then we will demand the firmest discipline. We will insist on every sort of subordination of the Mensheviks to party unity." When Lunacharsky asked him what he would do when



he and his comrades are in a minority in the central organ, Lenin smiled enigmatically and replied: "It all depends on the circumstances. In any case we will not permit them to make unity a rope around our necks. And under no circumstances we will let the Mensheviks drag us after them on such a rope."

When Lenin was criticized for a half decade by his opponents, he invented the fictitious term democratic centralism. It prohibited party groupings, platforms, and gathering to discuss differences. **Democratic centralism means only that representatives from the localities gather and choose a responsible organ. The responsible organ must do the administering. The main principle of democratic centralism is that the higher cells being elected by the lower cells, all the directives of the higher cell to a cell subordinate to it are absolutely binding on it.**

Lenin said that "we must centralize the direction of the movement and for this reason decentralize responsibility of each individual member as much as possible. This decentralization is the necessary condition for revolutionary centralization. In order that the centre may not only give advice, persuade, argue but may really direct the orchestra, it is essential to know exactly who is playing which fiddle and where, who is learning to master which instrument or has mastered it and where; who is playing out of tune, where and why and who should be transferred to correct the dissonance how and where?." Thus, Lenin stood for organization of the party and for the total organization of life by party. In 1918, he said that "we must organise everything and take everything into our hands". Organize everything tidily and accurately and totally. It is rather strange that a democrat should distrust the rank and file and local organizations of his party and still more stranger for a Marxist to express distrust of the very class from whom Proletarian consciousness is to come and whose mission it is to establish socialism.



2) Write a note on Democratic Centralism as expoused by Lenin.

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### 29.6 Theory of Class Conciousness

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When the ordinary socialist speaks of class war, he means little more than a struggle for universal suffrage, labour legislation, social reforms, social security, labour unions and labour party – the attempts to win men of goodwill from other classes to support labour needs and demands. It would of course be for the good of humanity but a good part of humanity must be dealt with according to the rules of war. Lenin said, **“When we get into power we will establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dictatorship is the rule of one part of society over the whole society and moreover rule resting directly on force”**. He told his opponents to remember **“The scientific concept of dictatorship means neither more nor less than the unlimited power, resting directly on force, not limited by anything nor restricted by any laws or by any subordinate rules”**. **The first great step in the establishment of a totalitarian power is the destruction of all restraints of religion, morality, tradition, institutions and laws that limit the use of force to atomize the nation.**

Lenin was working on his *Science of Terror* even before



1905. "In the matters of tactics, social democracy does not tie its hands.....It recognises all methods of struggle". In January 1901 he wrote, "Trial by the street lynching breathes a living spirit into the bureaucratic formalism that pervades our Government institutions". In May 1901, he wrote, "We have never rejected terror in principle, nor can we ever do so." In the Plan of the Battle of St. Petersburg he wrote: "Revolution is war. The workers will arm themselves. Each will strain with all his might to get himself a gun, or at least a revolver".

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### **29.7 H's Views on Democracy, State and Religion:**

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Lenin had no faith in the familiar institutions and methods of democracy. In the place of western democracy, he brought into existence the commonwealth of working men, representing the workers, grouped together according to their interests as workers. This commonwealth shall be entrusted to a small body of persons who can safely be entrusted with the function of framing proposals for submission to the official bodies chosen by the rank and file. So the essential institutions that Lenin brought into existence are the Soviets and the Communist Party. **The Soviets represented the working men grouped together according to their functions.**

Thus, Lenin had no belief in parliamentary democracy based on territorial representation. Lenin wrote in 1917 that the representative institutions that existed in Europe were only talking shops. They were the bourgeois institutions. The immediate task of the working class must be to destroy all the bourgeois institutions and create in their place a new representation of local soviets, composed of representatives from single-minded groups, it will reflect the various shades of interest and opinion of the several original constituencies. Further, Lenin contends that the members of the soviets are not the representatives of the views of the people concerned. They are subject to unlimited recall. On several occasions, Lenin spoke

of the transitional Socialist State—revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. But, the socialist critics of Lenin maintain that **Marx's proletarian dictatorship is nothing but popular sovereignty**. It is a government by a proletarian majority and not a despotic rule by a socialist minority. What Marx had in his mind when he spoke of proletarian dictatorship was a rule by the general body of the manual labourers who would constitute a majority of the population. This political majority should govern. Marx's is a special kind of popular sovereignty of which Rousseau spoke. **But Lenin's proletarian dictatorship is nothing but naked dictatorship of a small minority of the proletariat.**

Another vital difference between Marx and Lenin is rule by sword as a means of holding political supremacy and of conducting the affairs of Government. The old Marxian have always recognised that any working class Government must be fully prepared to suppress by force, if necessary, counter revolutionary movements. But, they did not look upon martial law espionage and the summary administration of justice as the normal methods of administration in a socialist state. The western socialists criticize the communist government on this point. But to continue the Government by sword without popular support even after the transitional period will inevitably result in the exploitation of the masses by the ruling minority.

Lenin himself said that the Soviet State would be based on direct, immediate and absolute rule of the majority. He even insisted that all the officers must be elective, all officials should be subject to recall at any time and finally that the entire administration must be built up from the bottom by proletariat themselves. **He, however, explained that political conditions compelled the communists to lay emphasis on force as an instrument of Government. That is, force is the characteristic attribute of political rule that under no circumstances there can be freedoms for the individual in a**



**socialist state.**

The proletarian state, says Lenin, is "new type of democracy; it is more democratic than bourgeois democracy.

**Lenin considers that religion is not consistent with communism.** As a matter of fact it is a definite obstacle to the realization of the programme. Communists seek to destroy religion. **The members of the communist party must take an oath that they would practise atheism.** Therefore, priests and monks are denied of political privileges. But it must be said that law does not prescribe atheism as a qualification for the right to vote. It does not prohibit the practice of religion. When priests were prosecuted, the charge has been not heresy but misuse of ecclesiastical office.

Though Lenin was hostile to religion, his followers are more religious minded. Hundreds visited his shrine every day. His statues were set up in all public places. His pictures are hung in all factories. He is cited as an authority on every conceivable subject. Ardent communists are like Jesuits. They believe in dogmas. They are the servants of ideas. But there is a difference between the two. The communists are always working for the glories to be realized in this world. The earthly glories which the communists seek for the common man are merely material glories.

Lenin's life was inseparable from the life and struggle of the communist party from the time of its establishment. He was the organizer and leader of the revolutionary Marxist party of Russia's proletariat. If the working class movement were headed by a well-organised revolutionary communist party, the opportunities would be opened up in Russia for the victory of the revolution. The Bolsheviks party, headed by Lenin, led the working class of Russia to victory in the great October socialist revolution. **Marxism is inseparable from Leninism. The three components of Marxism – Philosophy, political economy and scientific communism were developed**



and enriched in the works of Lenin. Marxism was not a dogma but a guide to action. In all his works, he approaches Marxism in a creative spirit but rejects all that is dogmatic. It is a doctrine which takes into account actual historical condition. Lenin was a faithful disciple and he accepted all the postulates of the master. According to Lenin, the philosophy of Marxism is materialism. He was in complete agreement with Marxian thesis of the inevitability of transformation of capitalist society into socialist society. The socialization of production is bound to lead to the conversion of the means of production into the property of the society. The interference of the state becomes superfluous in one sphere after another and then it ceases itself. The state is not abolished but it withers away.

, The sharp indiscriminations of colonial of oppression, the brutal exploitation of the hundreds of million in colonial countries will result in the growth of national liberation movement and make for a unified form of struggle of the capitalist's country, and the colonial dependent peoples against imperialism. It is a scientific analysis of the communication of capitalism at its last stage brought him round to the condition that imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution. Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism represents a new Leninist stage of the development of Marxian economic theory. The Marxian objectives of Lenin were to guide the Bolshevik. He is universally claimed as a great revolutionary and builder of first socialist state in the world.

**Check Your Progress - 3**

**Note:** 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

**1) Critically examine Lenin's views on Democracy and State.**

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**2) Write a Short note on Religion as envisaged by Lenin.**

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**29.8. Let us Sum up**

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- 1) Lenin was an orthodox Marxist who yet modified Marxism in important respects.
- 2) Some changes accrued from the peculiar economic and political circumstances of Russia

- 3) Others resulted from the attempt to put Marx's theory to practise in the changed circumstances of the world since the death Marx's.
- 4) The Marxist party, which Lenin formed and led, was governed by democratic centralism – elected but authoritarian leadership.
- 5) The party was well – knit like an army.
- 6) It was a middle class leadership, for workers were concerned mostly with their economic demands.
- 7) The new age was that of imperialist conflict.
- 8) Some workers were bribed with imperialist gains and turned reformists
- 9) War provided opportunity to fight the bourgeoisie. This tactic succeeded only in Russia.

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### 29.9 Key Words

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<b>Adherent</b>	-	A person who supports a political party or set of ideas.
<b>Assiduously</b>	-	Working very hard and taking great care that everything is done as well as it can be diligent.
<b>Ardent</b>	-	Very enthusiastic and showing strong feelings about something/somebody.
<b>Conspiratorial</b>	-	Connected with, or like, a conspiracy
<b>Comrades</b>	-	A person who is a member of the same communist or socialist political party as the person speaking
<b>Commonwealth</b>	-	Usually used in the names of some groups of countries or states that have chosen to be politically linked with each other.
<b>Doom</b>	-	Death or destruction.
<b>Discrediting</b>	-	To make people stop respecting something or somebody.



- Espionage** - The activity to secretly getting important political or military information about another country or of finding out another company's secrets by using spies.
- Esprit de corps** - feeling of pride, care and support for each other
- Instigation** - to encourage somebody to do something violent.

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### 29.10 Some useful Books:

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| 1. Lenin              | : | Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism. |
| 2. Lenin              | : | What is to be Done                         |
| 3. Lenin              | : | State and Revolution                       |
| 4. Herold J. Laski    | : | Communism                                  |
| 5. Sabine George, H   | : | A History of Political theory              |
| 6. Coaker, Francis, W | : | Recent political Thought                   |
| 7. Catlin, G          | : | History of political Philosophers          |

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### 29.11 Answer to check your Progress Exercises:

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#### Check Your Progress - 1

- 1) See section 29.3
- 2) See section 29.4

#### Check your Progress - 2

- 1) See section 29.5
- 2) See section 29.5

#### Check your Progress - 3

- 1) See section 28.7
- 2) See section 28.7



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**UNIT : 30 HAROLD J. LASKI (1893-1950)**

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**Structure**

- 30.0 Objectives
- 30.1 Introduction
- 30.2 Life and Works of Laski
- 30.3 Laski's views on Rights
- 30.4 Pluralism
- 30.5 Liberty & Equality
- 30.6 Laski's views on Sovereignty
- 30.7 Laski's views on Property
- 30.8 Socialism of Laski
- 30.9 Estimation of Laski
- 30.10 Let us Sum up
- 30.11 Key Words
- 30.12 Some useful Books
- 30.13 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises



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### 30.0 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit you will be able to understand and comprehend

- Biographical sketch and his writings
- his views as rights and pluralism
- his views on Liberty and Equality
- his ideas on sovereignty and property and
- his estimation in the study of political thought

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### 30.1 INTRODUCTION :

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On the one various theories such as the behaviouralist theory, system theory, equilibrium theory, elite theories have been advanced, for solving the variety of socio-economic political problems. Since all these theories claim to be empirical, they attach little or no importance to socio-cultural values of mankind, if so the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity do lose their significance in shaping the present and future of civilization. In other words, traditional political theory seems to have lost its importance. It cannot be resuscitated without faith, reason and optimism.

**1. Political theory does not remain static. It evolves in response to the needs of the situation and times** Laski, says "No theory of the state is ever intelligible save in the context of its time. What men think about the state is the outcome always of the experience in which they are immersed. Rousseau, Hegel, T.H.Green all sought to give the mental climate of their time the rank universal validity" (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics. P.1*) **"It is well known that every philosopher is situational oriented.** The Peloponesian war, the decline of Athenian democracy and the tragic death of Socrates left their impressions on Plato. His writings were the reflections on the situations. His remedy was a Totalitarian elite polity. **Again, the weak and corrupt Italian**

city states system convinced Machiavelli that men are fickle – minded and extremely selfish. And so, he prescribed a rule by a strong prince who could enforce order in society. Hobbes witnessed horrible, anarchic conditions during the English Civil War. His prescription was for an absolutist state. **John Locke had known the effects of the bloodless revolution of 1688.** His prescription was for a limited democratic government. The capitalist system of the nineteenth century creates Mill and Karl Marx. Marxism not only exposes the inherent weakness and defects of the existing capitalist system, it also informs the exploited and the oppressed class of the workers, peasants and tailors to unite so as to break the chains of slavery and win the whole world. According to Laski "A new political philosophy is necessary to a new world (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, P.15*). It may be pointed out that there is a general tendency among the political philosophers to generalize their own observations and arrive at conclusions which may later be found inadequate. This is both strength and a weakness of political philosophy.

The traditional political philosophy from Plato to Laski is mostly addressed the problem of Justice in society. Accordingly, each philosopher preferred an order that could ensure justice in society. All such attempts at order building have given room to several schools of thought, which often conflict with one another. A study of these prescriptions suggests unmistakably that none of them is valid for all time and for all situations. Their inadequacy is generally attributed to the existing social, political, economic and cultural levels of society. In fact political philosophy is never separable from the general body of ideas in a generation (*Laski, H.J., The dangers of being a gentleman and other essays P. 41*). **Obviously, with change in the generation the general**



body of ideas undergoes corresponding changes.

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### 30.2 Life and his Works :

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Harold J Laski is considered as one of the greatest political thinkers of the first half of the twentieth century. His popularity reached its zenith 1910-1945. In fact, it was described as the age of *Laski*. No other has a greater capacity to open debates and at the same time to commit himself in a demonstration of responsible thinking by taking a definite stand (*Current Biography – 1941, p. 494*). According to Frank Thukurdas, Laski, is the most representative, thinker of this period (1913-1945), whose writings mirror closely the stress and strains of every important phase of political change or development at home or abroad (*Frank Thukurdas, Recent English Political Theory, P. 283*).

Harold Joseph Laski, Political Scientist, author, a leader of British Labour party and Professor at London School of Economics (till his death in 1950) was born in Manchester, England on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1893. He was the second son of Nathan Laski. He was brought up in orthodox Jewish household. He was educated at the New College Oxford. He was graduated in 1914. later he accepted a post as a Lecturer at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. During this period he was very much influenced by the writings of Figgie's, Maitland, Gierchy, H.A.L.Fischer and Earnest Barker. He wrote his first book "Studies in the problem of sovereignty" Two years later, in 1916, as a result of meeting with Frankfurter who became a life long- friend, Laski accepted a post as instructor in History at Harvard University for the next four years. Laski was a stimulating teacher and a lively member of the Harvard Intellectual Community. He wrote several books during this period including "Authority in Modern State" (1919) and the "Foundation Sovereignty" and Other Essay (1921). Laski accepted a post of a Lecturer at the London School of Economics



and Political Science, where in 1926 he succeeded Graham walls as professor of Political Science, Laski taught at the school until his death 24 years later. He was so well-known and so influential among students that his name and the London School of Economics became almost synonymous in the minds of many people throughout the world.

Laski was a democrat individualist, socialist and a reluctant liberal inclined sometimes towards Marxism and sometime forwards democratic trade unionism. He was a rebel against every obstacle to justice, freedom and equality. He wanted to see ignorance, poverty, and suffering obliterated and he fervently believed that radical changes in social institutions would be a sufficient remedy.

From his years of adolescence, when he informed his father "I am an agnostic, not a Jew. ". He was rebel against everything which savored of darkness, superstition or bondage to an outworn past'. In his book, "*Reflections on the Revolution of our times*" written after the end of the Second World War, Laski pleads for a system of democratic planning based on libertarian and egalitarian foundations of human society, perhaps he was the first thinker in the post-war (second) period to emphasise the needs of peaceful co-existence of different political systems. And he even advocated utilization of world resources for the good of the world. On this point, the statesmen of the world never accepted his plea for a system of world order based on a democratic and libertarian socialism. Instead, the world has been spending a good deal of money and energy on arms trade, thereby maintaining a continuous state of tensions among the nations-states. The earlier books were written in response to prevalent skepticism that emerged as a consequence of the crisis in the theory of state and law. In these four books, Laski indicts the modern state system built around the legality and philosophy of the coercive power apparatus. In the early 1930's, Laski witnessed a crisis in the very assumption of liberalism and Democracy. The Books

written 1930-39 were again in response to widespread skepticism over the established political ideals and institutions. His assumption that individual freedom could be further ensured by greeting Marxism with pluralistic liberalism proved to be pious hope.

By the time Laski began to articulate his political ideas, there were three main currents running parallel to one another in Western thinking.

- a) The liberal school of thought inspired by the writings of Bentham, Austin, and J.S. Mill.
- b) The continental idealism that began with Rousseau and culminated with the writings of Hegel. The influence of idealism on British empiricists can also be noticed in the writings of Oxford idealists such as Bradley, Green and Bosanquets.
- c) Pragmatic pluralism of British intellectuals such as Figgis, Hobhouse, Barker and Lindsay.

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### **30.3 Laski's views on Rights**

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**Perhaps Laski's most important contribution to political thought is theory of rights.** He is interested in the rights both as a liberal and as a socialist; as a liberal he is great champion of individual liberty; as a socialist, he is also a believer in the ideal of social and economic equality; for unlike the previous thinkers, Laski does not think of rights are derived from nature or god; nor does he think of rights, as concessions of law. Here we find that Laski is the only political thinker who consistently holds that rights do determine the nature of the state. Laski differs both from the individualist and from the idealists. Rights, according to him are those conditions of social life without which no man can seek, in general, to be himself at his best. The state exists only to make those conditions available to the individual. Hence, the maintenance of rights is essential in order to



fulfill that purpose of the state. Since human nature changes from time to time, it is inevitable that the claims demand or rights must also change. However, every state is known by the right it maintains yet the state does not create them. "They have a content which changes with time and place. They are rights because they are useful to the end of the state.

A state is also bound by its duties, which it should carry out in order to lay claim to obedience by the community. Individuals bound by duties enjoy rights even without their demand. Both duties and rights being complementary, they are residents in them. The recognition of the rights by the state is merely formal.

He says "**Our rights are not independent of society, but inherent in it.**" It is very essential as Laski thinks that rights should always be correlated with functions. No one has any rights against common good. The state is bound to defend the community against the offenders against common good. It is also the duty of the citizen to defend the community against inertia, irresponsibility or perversion of the functions of the state. If the members of the community fail to be vigilant, which is their duty, their liberty is likely to be in danger.

Thus, Laski holds that rights and duties are reconciled in the end purpose of the state, that is the attainment of common happiness. **Laski catalogues a number of particular rights such as right to education, right to adequate wages, right to reasonable hours of work, right to political power, right to freedom of speech, right to freedom of association and public meeting, right to political safeguards and right to property.**

Following is a brief discussion of these rights.

### **1. Right to Work:**

Of all the rights, right to work draws the main attention of Laski. In a society, the individual is justified not from what he is but



in what he can become. So a citizen has a right to work. This does not imply that individual has rights for particular works. At best, it means no more than the right to be occupied in producing some share of goods and services that society is in need of. It follows then that the main duty of the State is to provide equal opportunities for all. As a safeguard to the temporary or permanent deprivation of opportunity, it is very essential that the State must maintain the principle.

### 2. Right of Proportionate Wage :

The right to work is always correlated with the right to get an adequate wage for one's labour. The wages of a labourer must be so as to maintain a standard of living without which citizenship becomes impossible. The right to adequate wage does not mean equality of wage, or equality of income but it may be urged, imply that there must be a "sufficiency for all before superfluity for some". In this connection, the citizen must be aware of the Malthusian doctrine of population. **The increase of population may hinder the rise of standard of living.** Therefore, "Just as a stringent legislation prevents the sale of impure food", writes Laski, "So must stringent legislation prevent the payment of wages below a reasonable standard of living".

### 3. Right of Reasonable Hours of Labour :

"The obvious corollary of the right to an adequate wage is the right to reasonable hours of labour." The citizen must have sufficient leisure for creative tasks. "There is physiological limit to the energy man can afford to expend. Men and women become unfit for nobler task while being all the while compelled to act as mere tenders of machines." they know only a life of endless toil, which is devoid of leisure. **Therefore, the right to reasonable hours of labour enables one to contribute towards the intellectual heritage of the race.**

#### **4. Right to Education:**

Since the contribution of one's instructed judgement to the good of the community is the main duty of the citizen, Laski holds that the individual has a right to education which will fit him for the task of citizenship. So the State should provide instruments to make possible for the citizen to understand life and to express his wants. **Education ultimately helps one to get the power, and to understand its implications. In the absence of education, one will not rise to the heights of one's personality.** "The right to education does not mean the right to an identical intellectual training for all citizens. It involves the discovery of capacity and fitting the discipline conferred to the type of capacity made known." Laski himself considers that identical training is foolish but he believes that "there is a minimum level below which no citizen can fall if he is to use the necessary intellectual instruments of our civilization". Therefore, it is the right of the citizen and an obligation on the part of the State to educate everyone at least to a minimum possible level.

#### **5. Right to Political Power:**

No democratic system of government would be justified, as Laski holds, unless the average citizen has direct access to the source of authority. Therefore everyone has a right to political power. Any other basis would leave the vast majority unparticipating. **It is generally argued that not everyone is best qualified for such political power.** Laski rejects this view because he believes that "a democracy lives by the method of trial and error". For him the only qualification essential of a citizen for such participation is the service he renders. **No democracy can afford to neglect the proven sources of efficient service because it is the very basis of its life.**

## **6. Freedom of Speech:**

A political system is justified according to Laski only when it allows its citizens to freely articulate their wants. It implies that there should be freedom of speech and all that which makes it effective. **“Freedom of speech is a right that clearly needs definition in terms of the function it seeks to serve** There people have freedom is matters of religion, political views, customs and traditions. One has the freedom to publish one’s views, customs and traditions. One has the freedom to publish one’s views or ideas in the form of books or pamphlets or in a newspaper. He may give them in form of a public meeting, in the absence of such a freedom Laski remarks that “men who are prevented from speaking as their experience teaches soon cease to think at all”. “Therefore from the stand point of the State the citizen must be left unfettered to express any opinion he happens to hold. **The state cannot prohibit any of the opinions because it is rather difficult to know which opinion is hostile to the present order.** The degree to which the state permits criticism of its authority is the surest index to its hold upon the allegiance of the community.” Prohibition of freedom of speech, according to Laski, is to drive the agitation underground and not to abolish it. Therefore, it is his firm conviction **“that a government can always learn more from the criticism of its opponents than from the eulogy of its supporters”**.

## **7. Freedom of Association:**

**The one fundamental problem which is closely connected with the freedom of speech is the freedom of association.** In the modern world, the individual cannot express his views independently. He can only express them as a member of some group. **Such associations must be given full freedom. However, there are certain limitations to it.** The freedom of speech in general matters,





2) Explain the theory Pluralism as expounded by Laski.

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### 30.4 PLURALISM

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Laski is both an iconoclast and a builder. He is an iconoclast in the sense that he demolished the monistic state; he is a builder in the sense that he laid the foundation of a pluralistic state. He is not merely satisfied with the demolition of the Austinian theory of sovereignty. **He is more interested in establishing a theory that would satisfy his concept of society as federal.**

The term pluralism is referred to specific institutional arrangement for distributing and sharing governmental powers, for the doctrinal defense of these arrangements, for an understanding of political behavior. According to HSIAO, the pluralistic state is simply a state in which there exists no single source of authority. **It is divisible into many parts and should be divided. According to Gettel, the pluralistic theory of sovereignty insists on democracy, and as a large tinge of "individualism".**

There are many factors influenced in Laski's career while developing the pluralism concept. Firstly, He lived in the period when syndicalism and Guild socialism were fast fading **these isms advocated that there should be greater decentralization.** And then he was steeped in the knowledge of Maitland and Gierke who

advocated some type of decentralization in the state. Thirdly, the interesting assumption of powers by the state in his time made him shudder at the thought that the individual will be definitely subordinated to the new mammoth state. **Laski's pluralism denies the oneness of society and the state.** It does not deny that the individual is influenced by the thousand associations with which he is in contact. Since, the loyalty of the individual is divided among various associations, the state alone cannot claim absolute and unconditional obedience from the bulk of the people. **Whether one likes it or not society is a complex web of multifarious associations which has truly exhibited its federal characteristics authority cannot and is not a Unitarian one.**

Though Laski has been influenced by Maitland, Gierchy and other pluralists, his concept of pluralism was different from those thinkers. He was more interested in economic groups whose autonomy is essential to maintain and promote social welfare. It is freedom under a legal system dedicated to a programme of helping the individual to realize his best. His pluralism areas also different from that of A.D.Lindsay, MacIvor, H.Crabbe, Paul Boncour and Leon Duguil who were mainly concerned with groups rights against the centralized authority of the state. In addition, it was more or less inspired by his love, for individual freedom. He was convinced that there was no unity in society either in the source or in the nature or application of power.

**His main idea behind a new economic structure was of the attainment of social justice.** Although he did not define his idea of social justice, it becomes clear from the implication of his words and arguments that for him, social **Justice meant both economic security and the freedom of the mind to the individual.** He therefore, thought that social justice, the main purpose of the state could be best attained in a society where the structure of the



state was completely federal and the masses, working through their voluntary associations, were allowed to participate more and more in the process of administration. **In fact, he wanted to establish a sort of democratic commonwealth in which both government and the voluntary associations would work hand in hand for the attainment of social justice.**

Associations like family, church, golf club, business firm, trade union, political party, friendly societies, research bodies are instances of their place in the society. Such associations, writes Laski, evoke a loyalty, which goes down to the very root of man. **The only difference between the state and other associations is that the associations are voluntary.** They lack the instrument of ultimate coercion. Since there are many associations in the society, no single association can fulfill all the demands of the individual. As such no single association, that is state can neither be given all the powers over man and other associations, nor can its will be regarded as the supreme will. **Every association has limited purpose and hence its jurisdiction is also limited.** No association can demand absolute loyalty from the bulk of the individuals. Each association being supreme within it can command neither the individuals nor other associations. If this be the case how can harmony be found in society? Laski answers that the state is an association which co-ordinates and regulates all other institutions within a territorial society.

The theory of pluralism as found in the writings of Laski is based upon following principles:

1. Liberty is the most important political value and this can best be preserved by power being decentralized the object of the state is not to give commands but to ensure maximum of individual freedom in any given circumstances.
2. The group or association should be regarded as a person. The groups often manifest a degree of unity. Groups are persons

just the same as individuals are persons and they must be held responsible for their actions.

3. Laski rejected the idea of state sovereignty. He rejected both the political and legal sovereign and denied that in every state there existed in some single centre of power whose dictates are irreproachable.
4. Laski thought of the state as one of the many groups in society. He maintained that the state has a personality just as other groups do, with a group will. However, this groups will consists simply in a number of individuals welling a common object and purusing common purpose.

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### 30.5 Laski's views on Liberty and Equality

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Laski does not find any contradiction between liberty and equality as De Tocqueville makes it appear. In his earlier books, he asserts that liberty is not merely a negative concept; he defines it as the "positive and equal opportunity of self-realization". (*Laski, H.J., Authority in the Modern State, p. 37*) he quotes T.H.Green's saying "that liberty is the positive power of doing and enjoying things worth doing and enjoying, something that we do or enjoy in common with other." (*Laski, H.J., Authority in the Modern State, p. 55*) At the same time, Laski endorses Lord Action's dictum that "liberty is an assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majority custom opinion." (*Laski, H.J., Authority in the Modern State, p. 45*) In other words, liberty is guarantee against encroachment of an individual's belief and actions. For Laski recognizes the co-existence of individuality and sociality in each individual; otherwise man will not be a community building animal. The very fact that man's existing society co-operating with it wherever such a co-operation is needed shows that each man wants a share in the common good for



which he actively participates. At the same time, he has a conscience, which reminds him of his individuality.

Laski is criticized by Dean for the vague expression of self-realization as the goal of liberty. **self-realization does not mean the total submergence of the individual in the collectivity; if that be so then individuality ceases to exist.** Further, creative impulses by their very nature are not anti-social or immoral. If they conflict with the social impulses of man, then, they are not to be supported for they are not creative but destructive impulses. **Moreover, it is correct to say that Laski pleads for the existence or continuation of these impulses.**

As a pragmatist, Laski believes that the meaning of liberty varies from age to age. He says, "each generation will have certain things it prizes as supremely good and will demand that these, above all, should be free (*Laski, H.J., Authority in the Modern State, p.54*) He also holds that in each age substances of liberty will be found in what the dominating forces of that age, most greatly want. (*Laski H.J., Political Thought in England, Oxford University Press, London, 1950, p. 312*).

The present system of property relations is incompatible with the conception of individual liberty; "for its result as a concentration of power which makes the political personality of the average citizen ineffective for any serious purposes." Obviously, **liberty is meaningless in the absence of equality. two concepts are "different facets of the same ideal"**, He asserts that "liberty is impossible without ensuring certain minimum standards which can get accepted by collective efforts."

After the publication of the second edition of *A Grammar of Politics* in 1929, we notice a change in Laski's exposition of concept of liberty. In his preface to the second edition, he says, "in 1925, I thought that liberty could most usefully be regarded as more



**than a negative thing.** I am now convinced that this was a mistake and that the old view of it as an absence of restraint can alone safeguard the personality of the citizen." (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, Preface to the Second Edition, October 15, 1929.*) But in the main text where he deals with liberty (chapter IV), his original ideas remain unchanged. Again, in *The Liberty of the Modern State* (Pelican Edition, 1939), he maintains the same position.

Liberty consists in the positive power of doing and enjoying things worth doing and enjoying for which the state should necessarily create a favorable condition. And men cannot be forced into freedom as Rousseau thought. I do not deny that there are types of conduct against which prohibitions are desirable. I ought, for instance, to be compelled, even against my wish, to educate my children. But I am arguing that any rule, which demands from me some, I would not otherwise give, is a diminution of any freedom. (*Laski, H.J. Liberty in the Modern State, p.49.*)

Although one can read some contradictions in the shift of ideas in Laski, one cannot deny Laski's consistent championship of individual freedom. His concern for "human freedom kept him well within the English liberal tradition. H. Soltau says that Laski was a **confirmed believer in liberalism and an egalitarian society which had ethical basis of liberalism.**

Laski defines liberty as "eager maintenance of that atmosphere in which men have the opportunity to be their best selves." (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, p.142*) In this definition, there are three interlinked ideas, viz., **a) the ultimate aim of liberty is to provide an opportunity for men to attain their best selves; b) an atmosphere for the maintenance of this opportunity should exist; and c) such a maintenance of the opportunity is qualified by the word 'eager'.** In other words, careful vigilance is necessary to preserve the conditions which are necessary for that opportunity

to flower; mere constitutional safeguards do not ensure against the invasion of liberty.

In concrete terms, such an atmosphere means the existence of rights. Laski, therefore, says that **liberty is a product of rights**. To quote Green's statement, viz., **human consciousness postulates liberty; liberty involves rights; rights inhere in State**. "Rights therefore, are built on the foundation on freedom, i.e., legality of rights are based on the ethical concept of freedom". And Laski does not accept the view that rights are concessions made by law. On the other hand legal structure of the State is to be founded on the recognition the basic rights of the individuals, which means that the legal structure is validated by its commitments to maintain rights. Emphasizing the importance of rights, Laski says, **"freedoms are inseparable from rights, because, otherwise, their realization is hedged"**. (Laski, H.J., *A Grammar of Politics*, p.144). Rights are therefore indispensable to the existence of liberty. Therefore, in the last resort, liberty consists in resisting the arbitrary authority. This implies that it is a threat of contingent anarchy that keeps alive liberty. Laski asserts that there is no contradiction between the restraints imposed by law and liberty, **He knows that the restraints are intended for the good of the people. he further observes:** "Historical experience has evolved for us rules of convenience which promote right living. To compel obedience to them is a justifiable limitation of freedom." (Laski, H.J., *Grammar of Politics*, p. 142) **Wherever there are avenues of conduct, which must be prohibited, in the common interest, their removal from the sphere of unrestrained action need not constitute an invasion of liberty. In other words, we have to enjoy liberty under the protection of law. In his subsequent books, *The Reflection on the Revolution of our Times* (1943) and *Civilization* (1944), he holds that freedom is possible only within the limits set by the over riding purposes of society. So stated,**



liberty is definitely associated with the existence of a political system in which there exists a constitutional mechanism by which the government can be called into account. The constitution checks promulgation of arbitrary laws and rules of conduct.

- a) **The laws of the State do not conflict with the rights assured to the citizens by the system.**
- b) If the political system fails to guarantee the existence of rights then right to resist the government resides with the people.
- c) It is the threat of contingent anarchy that ensures to protection of rights against encroachment.
- d) **Continuous vigilance on the part of the people is needed to safeguard the liberty.** This demands of necessity, sufficient education and sufficient room to organize their political aspirations.
- e) Liberty is closely linked with certain basic rights without which no man can be best himself. (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, p. 91*) Laski resolves liberty into a system of liberties. He says, "from this angle, it may be said that it is the purpose of social organisation to see to it that this system is adequately safeguarded." (*Laski, H.J., Liberty in the Modern State, p.34*)

Laski distinguishes three kinds of liberty which are interdependent on one another and which are possible only in an atmosphere where rights are preserved and maintained. They are (a) **personal liberty**, (b) **Political Liberty**, and (c) **Economic Liberty**.

#### **Personal Liberty :**

It means the opportunity to exercise freedom of choice in those areas of life, where the result of an individual's effort mainly affects him. He defines it as "that aspect of which the substance is mainly personal to a man's life. It is the opportunity to be fully himself in the private relations of life." (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, p. 146*) Such a thing is religion and the state should not interfere in



it. **Individual or private liberty also means legal protection to all alike. Private liberty is infringed if the law does not provide legal protection to the poor.** Laws must be such as can be taken advantage of both by the poor and the rich.

**Political Liberty :**

Political liberty, according to Laski, means the power to be active in the affairs of the State. It means that "I can let my mind play freely about the substance of public business." (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, p. 146*) There should be no discrimination against an individual. He enumerates two essential conditions which are necessary for political liberty. They are right to education and a free press. According to Laski, **everyone has a right to receive a minimum education. This would enable him to express his views to others.**

The freedom of the press is also necessary to make political liberty of the individual real. **If the press is not free and the people do not get correct news, they are not in a position to make up their own minds with regard to the problems, which confront them.** In addition, if the very basis of their judgment is wrong, the judgment itself cannot be right. Therefore, what is required is a free press, so that people are guaranteed the flow of correct and unbiased news. This will ensure political liberty of the people.

**Economic Liberty :**

Economically, liberty does not mean the absence of restraint.. **Economic liberty means that everyone has a right to earn his livelihood.** It also implies that people should be provided gainful employment by the State. According to him, economic liberty means "Security and the opportunity to find reasonable significance in the earnings of one's daily bread...I must be safeguarded against the wants of tomorrow." (*Laski, H.J., A Grammar of Politics, p. 148. Also Liberty in the Modern State, Laski still more vehemently*

*argues that, those who know the normal life of the poor, its perpetual fear of the morrow, its haunting sense of impending disaster, its fitful search for a beauty which perpetually eludes will realize, will enough that without economic security, liberty is not worth having. Men may be free and yet remain unable to realize the purpose of freedom,* Citizens should be free from the constant fear of unemployment and insufficiency.

Equality is another ethical concept, which has been the subject matter of political controversies since the days of the stoics, and early Christian fathers. **The stoic philosopher, declared that all men are equal and they are brothers to one another.** According to Saint Paul, **all men are equal before God and that God does not make a distinction between the Jew and Gentile, man and woman and the master and slave.**

**Eminent scholars like Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson, Thomas Paine laid emphasis on equality.** On the one hand, they upheld the principle of equality by birth and on the other hand, they insisted on equality before law. In other words, they laid emphasis only on civil and political equality. The ideas of social and economic equality are in their writing are conspicuous by their absence. Their importance was realized by both academicians and politicians only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several factors are responsible for the emergence of this realization.

Equality is a multi dimensional concept. It varies with the situations and conditions and political philosophers are tempted to generalize their reaction to these situations and offer their own idea of equality. With Laski, equality has only two dimensions, viz., political and economic equality. On the other hand, Lord Bryce refers to four kinds of equality, viz., civil, political, social and natural. **Barker also mentions two types of equality legal and social. (He includes economic equality under social equality).**



In the positive sense, **equality means adequate opportunities to all citizens.** It does not mean equal opportunity. As Laski observes, "since men differ in their efforts, they need different opportunities for their individual development. **In a negative sense, equality means the absence of special privileges.** That is there should be no artificial grounds of discrimination. That means, to be more precise, different opportunities are to be provided for men belonging to different professions. But there are certain opportunities that are common to all man. What they do mean is that all those opportunities should be given to individuals, which are considered to be essential for their growth and the absence of which results in frustration. This idea involves the existence of certain minimum rights, which are guaranteed by the political system.

**An opportunity is for progress, growth and development.** Since, the nature of men, their talent and proclivities differ, the kind of opportunities provided do differ. 'Every individual must have those things without which life is meaningless. **All men must eat, drink and obtain shelter.** But these needs are also proportionate to what is done by the individual concerned. That depends upon the particular function performed by the individual in society. **There can be no equality of wages as there is no equality of capacity for work.**

The absence of 'special privilege' in society, 'equality before law' and 'enjoyment of equal opportunities' are the prerequisites of 'equality' which in turn is necessary for the enjoyment of 'freedom'. In his book, "The Dangers of Obedience", Laski discusses the defect of inequality and its harmful effect on society. Laski warns against maintaining a condition of social inequality over a long period; people cannot indefinitely wait for the redressal of their grievances by men in authority when their indignation reaches climax and burst out into an open rebellion.

**Equality also does not mean uniformity.** Equality in all its



forms must always be subject and instrumental to the free development of capacity. Like Tawney Laski suggests certain remedies for the mitigation of existing inequalities. **He says that when it is possible to make conditions of health equal for all, it is similarly possible to equalise the conditions needed for mental development.** It may not be possible for a State to guarantee equal health to all, but at any rate, it is possible for every State to assure an environment equally favorable to all for the preservation of their health. **A State may not be capable of making all its people equally intelligent, but it can certainly provide opportunities to all to cultivate their intellectual powers..** Provision for old age pension, insurance, hospital services and family allowances, and free elementary and secondary education is to be made in order to reduce the evils of economic inequality. States which have the best interest of their people to protect are engaged in doing as many of these things as their funds and national tradition and energy permit. People have realised in many countries a right of equality before law, but their political equality still remains more a sentiment than a reality on account of the absence of economic equality, the increasing prestige of experts in administration and the partial breakdown of parliamentary government. **An approximate economic equality is possible, not under an individualistic regime of industry and commerce but under a system of planned economy which is becoming popular in most countries of the world.**

Laski is very much enthusiastic about socialism under which he believed that the two concepts viz. Liberty and equality would co-exist in order to create a happy and decent life in the modern world. He finds it difficult to establish a relationship between liberty and equality, for he regards that they are not antithetical but they are supplementary to each other. "The rejects the views of Toequerville

and Lord Acton who maintain that the two are incompatible. Equality, as a concept, cannot be treated in isolation. Admitting that liberty and equality are complementary to one another. Laski considers equality as one of the dimensions of liberty. Laski is also critical of political democracy for its failure to achieve its end purpose. He observes, **“the democratic political state has, so far, been curiously unable to alter the inequalities of the social fabric.** The result everywhere is dissatisfaction, a sense that political institutions are less capable of themselves in basic change, than merely of recording legislation changes that have been effected by revolutionary means”.

Liberty and equality which are so essential to Mankind and cannot be left to the freak of nature or to the whims and fancies of men in power. **Three safeguards of liberty are necessary, according to Laski, if liberty should really be enjoyed by the citizens of a State.** Freedom can never exist in the presence of special privilege. For, the existence of special privileges is disadvantageous both to the privileged and the unprivileged. To the unprivileged because they lose the will and the power to act for themselves, and to the privileged because they become selfish, and come to consider others as their inferiors, and discover special virtues in themselves while they have none. There can be no liberty where the rights of the people depend upon the pleasure of those in power, for the rules of the State must bind those who exercise power and those who are the subjects of power. **The action of those who have the fate of others in their hands should be limited and controlled in the best interests of society.** One of the effective ways of controlling men in power and to make them responsible to the community is by making the people vigilant and articulate, and by organising them to give their opinion freely. Another pre-requisite of liberty is that the people are to be intelligent enough to follow the



problems of public importance and have the necessary moral courage and sense of justice to question the doings of their governments.

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### **30.6 SOVEREIGNTY**

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Sovereignty is the central element of the state as accepted by the traditional theory of the state. The best exponent of the legislative theory of sovereignty is John Austin. According to him, sovereign is a determinate human superior to which habitual obedient is rendered by the mass of people and who would not obey any other body sovereign. This conception has three implications

1. Determinate authority acting as the ultimate source of power.
2. The authority is absolute and unlimited
3. Command is the essence of law. Besides, this concept has other common attributes like imperceptibility, indivisibility and inalienability.

**After analyzing the three implications of Austinian sovereignty, Laski tries to prove that sovereign was never unlimited and absolute in the course history. He held that legislative conception of sovereignty is outmoded and therefore it must be jettisoned. In his own words, "It would be lasting benefit to political science, if the whole concept of sovereignty were surrendered. Laski criticizes this theory of sovereignty from three angles.**

1. **Never in the course of history was there a sovereign having attributes of Austrinian conception. Even the sultan of Turkey, in the height of his power, was himself bound down by a code of traditional observance .**
2. **Law is not always the command of the soyereign.**
3. **It is impossible to discover a sovereign body in a federal state, because the component units and the center are distributed autonomy in a certain fussed field, thereby imply that sovereign**



authority is divided. Congress, President and Supreme Court and state units are all limited by the powers given by the constitution of the U.S. for example.

Men in order to satisfy their multifarious needs organize themselves under different associations. These associations are complementary to one another. Each one of them is intended to serve a particular purpose. The allegiance to it depends upon the contribution it makes towards the enrichment of its members. **No institution or association can be judged except by the purposes it seeks to serve.** Since men have diverse demands, they are members of diverse associations. **Society therefore is federal.** At best the state is a co-ordinator of these associations.

Though Laski attacks the concept of sovereignty he does not plead for the disappearance of the state as an anarchist would do. He wants to retain the state but would reduce its unlimited exercise of power. **This is evident in his assumption that authority is federal because society is federal.**

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### **30.7 LASKI'S VIEWS ON PROPERTY**

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The right to property is one of the acknowledged basic rights of an individual. In property is needed

1. To satisfy physical wants and requirements of human beings. In order to survive, one must have access to things like houses, clothes and food, as well as to things necessary to produce them"
2. Property guarantee or security for man's future Life would be intolerable and insecure if we did not know from one moment to the next what things would be available to us to meet our necessities.

Laski is severe critic of the liberal theory of property. He rejects the notion that an individual has an unlimited natural right to property

he says **“Property is the reward for ability. It is the reward only for the particular kind of ability which consists in the capacity to make profit (Laski H.J., A Grammar of politics p. 177). He did not favor the abolition of the right to property altogether. At the same time, he wanted to construct a sound theory of property. This could be done only based on some principles. They are**

**Linking the right to property with the performance of functions. Every human being has a minimum claim to property – it is the minimum which is sufficient to satisfy our needs. But no man a moral right to this basic minimum unless he performs a function and contributes to the good of society”**

**Collective interest of society.** Laski asserts that there are certain aspects of social life which must be collectively managed by the co-ordinate efforts and intelligence of the community and the formulation of theory of property must take into consideration this aspect also.

**Laski does not favour hereditary property. He makes a distinction between earning and owning.** He is of the view that when a person earns by performing socially useful functions, he has a right to have the fruit of his efforts. Laski says **“If a person gets property by heredity or as a result of other man’s efforts, he has no rights to it”** they are parasites in society. In addition, it will have far reaching consequences because such a class will dominate all the vital institutions social, economic, political and cultural in society. However, hereditary property is justified for the purposes of supporting the widows and the children of the deceased persons. He says **“Inheritance is always justified, where, it means the provision of income for widowhood, on the one hand, and the education of children on the other (Laski H.J., A Grammar of politics Pp. 185-186).**

**Check Your Progress - 2**

*Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

**1) Examine Laskis views on Liberty and Equality**

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**2) Discuss his theory of Sovereignty**

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**3) Explain Laskis views on Property.**

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### 30.8 SOCIALISM OF LASKI

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In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Laski may be regarded as the most important spokesman of the democratic socialist philosophy in the English speaking world.

His ideas of collectivism were partly derived from the English school of Fabian socialism and partly from the writings of Marx and Engels. He was not dogmatic about his collectivism. He was more interested in introducing gradualism as a method of bringing about socio-economic changes. Inside the labour Party, Laski was the spokesman and sympathizer of its left wing section; Laski's theory of democratic socialism may be conveniently studied by dividing it into three parts. **In the first place, it envisages a technique of peaceful change in the present socio-economic structure.** He does not agree with the communist view that a violent revolution is necessary for the overthrow of capitalism. Secondly, his theory involves an assumption that capitalism has outlived its day. **Moreover, the economic institutions of capitalism have become anachronistic and cannot survive when the forces of production have become incompatible with the relations of production.** Lastly, his socialistic theory includes a vision of socialist society based on a rational and equitable distribution of wealth which should replace the existing capitalist system based on glaring disparities of income. But his conception of democratic socialism envisages a happy harmonization of the social control of economic processes with the liberty of the individual in political and intellectual spheres.

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### 30.9 LASKI'S ESTIMATION IN POLITICAL THOUGHT:

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Laski established his reputation as an un-questionable champion of pluralism till 1930s, i.e., till he began to admire Marxism. At one stage he believed that in a pluralistic society individual freedom is better assured than under a monistic society. But when his belief

was shattered by the political system as such, he found that pluralism would be unworkable under a capitalistic environment. **His newfound belief in Marxism at first suggested as an alternative system which would ensure social justice which is an indispensable condition for flowering of individuality.** But with the passage of time even this belief was discarded. The only consistent faith that runs through all his works is belief in the worth and dignity of human person. It is man who builds the society. Hence, **priority must be given to the man and not to the institutions he builds.**

We see Laski not as a philosopher of the state but as a social philosopher who exalts the individual in society, instead of power apparatus of society, generally known as 'the State'. Laski regards the State as only one of the associations in society whose functions and goals are clearly defined and delimited by the purpose it is expected to fulfill. **If Laski's State were to be merely a coordinating, controlling and regulating authority, it only means it has no original power to make laws and enforce them.** If its power were to be understood as derived from the sovereign society, then theoretically it is not a State but merely a coercive authority which functions for the good of society. In other words, its authority is limited and conditioned. Laski's attack on a State in practice ought not to be equated with a State in theory which Rousseau advanced.

Terms like liberty, equality, fraternity and justice are essentially ethico-religious concepts; when applied to politics they become defined socio-political ideals such as democracy, socialism, liberalism, communism and so on. **Laski espoused the ideals of freedom, equality and justice.** But he was hesitant to advocate any ideology in its totality. He keeps himself at a distance from the doctrines whose merits he glorified and whose defects he decried. Unfortunately, neither Deane nor Frank Thakurdas appreciated this intellectual objectivity of Laski. **In support of Laski's concern for democracy,**



**the following passage may be cited.**

“We built a powerful society without adequate thought for the purposes to which its power was to be devoted. We built a wealthy society without adequate concern about the objects upon which its wealth should be expended. We thought that justice would be the inherent consequence of our acquisition of power and wealth. What we forgot is that societies are not bound together by material conquests; their unity is found in equal devotion.

Laski is not a philosopher of the State since he does not recognize the essential indispensability of a political institution which possesses absolute and unquestionable authority. In addition to this, Laski questions the validity of the legal theory of sovereignty as an explanation of political philosophy. So Laski rejects both the absolute State and its most essential element. **Like Hobhouse, Duguit and Crabbe, Laski is a champion of social justice that demands a harmony between the claims of individual freedom with the common good of the society.** His criticism of capitalism may appear to readers that he was a thorough going communist. Surely he was Marxist and not a communist; for, communism demands an unquestionable acceptance of dialectical materialism, class war and dictatorship of the proletariat. Laski did not endorse totally any one of these doctrines though he admired Marx and the Soviet experiment in planning. Thus, as against the theory of class struggle he offered a class harmony through democratic trade unionism.

Laski attempted an eclectic approach to the problems of the State and the individual. Having discussed at length Laski's ideas on a variety of topics, it is necessary to locate his place in traditional political philosophy.



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### 30.10 LET US SUM UP

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- a) He was both libertarian and egalitarian political theorist.
- b) His approach to social problem was pragmatic , not idealistic.**
- c) He believed that the coercive authority should be subservient to the purpose for which it was created .
- d) He believed that law should serve society and should not be used as a restraint upon the legitimate rights of the individual.
- e) Any impediment in the enjoyment of socially sanctioned rights and liberty should be resisted. And obedience to those laws which give full expressions to moral adequacy of individuals alone is justified. If relationship in a society or other economic factors do impede the freedom of the individuals, then it is the duty of the citizens to see that these impediments are removed. **In other words, social and economic equality are necessary accompaniments of political liberty.**
- f) Laski believed that power concentrated means power to suppress and to intimidate; and he pleaded for decentralization of authority.**

It is clear that Laski is a social philosopher brought up in a liberal atmosphere and dedicated to social justice. His arguments were all those of social philosophy but his prescriptions were political.

Laski was passionately interested in the welfare of the common man. Today the United States is the only superpower left in the world. Whether or not this overwhelming power will be exercised for the good of humanity remains to be seen. To shape a new world order based on the worth and human dignity requires a sober, realistic and an eclectic approach to political issues and problems. Laski provided such an approach. If this generation makes use of it, then Laski's relevance becomes clear.

### **Check Your Progress - 3**

**Note:** 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

**1) Discuss Laski's ideas on Socialism.**

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**2) Evaluate the contribution of Harold Laski to political thought or Estimate his position in the study of political thought.**

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### **30.11 KEY WORDS**

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- Agnostic** : A person who is not sure whether or not God exists or who believes that we cannot know whether God exists or not.
- Anarchists** : A person who believes that laws and governments are not necessary

- Apparatus** : The tools or other pieces of equipment's that are needed for a particular activity or task. The structure of a system or an organization, particularly that of a political party or a government
- Allegiance** : A person continued support a political party, religion, ruler etc.,
- Arbitrary** : Of an action, a decision, a rule etc., not seeming to be based on reason, system or plan and something seeming unfair.
- Behaviorist Theory** : (Psychology) The theory that all human behavior is learnt by adapting to outside conditions and that learning is not influenced by thoughts and feelings.
- Bewitched** : To attract or impress somebody so much that they cannot think in a sensible way.
- Bewildering** : making you feel confused because there are too many things to choose from or because something is difficult to understand.
- Culminated** : To end with a particular result, or at a particular point.
- Dilemma** : A Situation which makes problems; often one in which you have to make a very difficult choice between things of equal importance.

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### 30.12

### Some useful Books for study:

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- Harold .J.Laski, : Authority in the Modern State
- Harold .J.Laski, : A Grammar of Politics
- Harold .J.Laski, : Liberty in the Modern State



- Harold .J.Laski, : Reflections on the Revolutions of our  
Times.
- Harold .J.Laski, : The State in Theory and Practice.
- Deane, Herbert, : A Political Ideas of H.J.Laski
- Elliot,W.Y : Pragmatic Revolt in Politics
- Martin, Kingsley, : Harold J.Laski

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**30.13 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises:**

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**Check Your Progress - 1**

- 1) See section 30.3
- 2) See section 30.4

**Check your Progress - 2**

- 1) See section 30.5
- 2) See section 30.6
- 7) See section 30.7

**Check your Progress - 3**

- 1) See section 30.8
- 2) See section 30.9



## NOTES

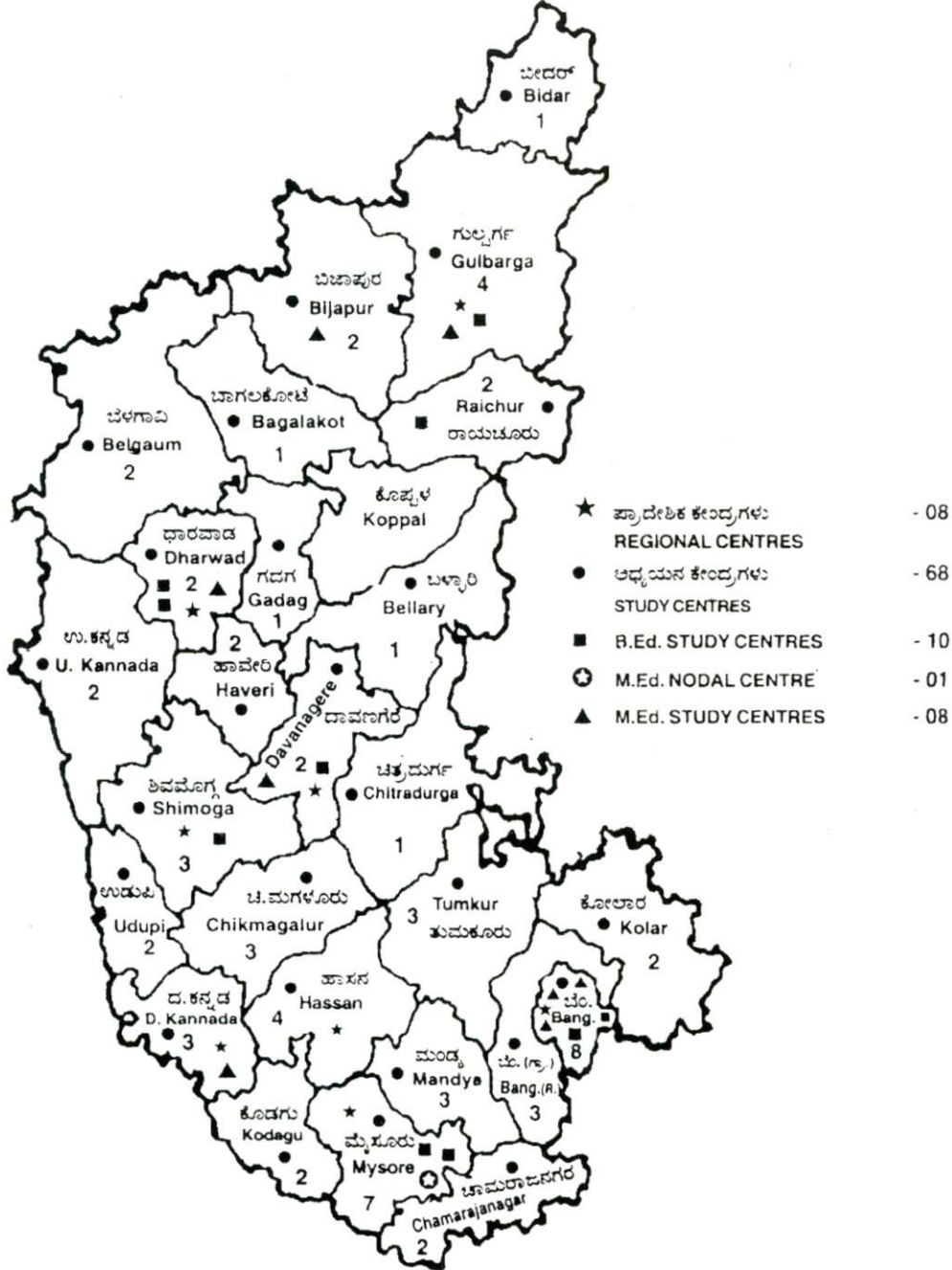
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# NOTES

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ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದ ಪ್ರಾದೇಶಿಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳು  
Regional and Study Centres of Karnataka State Open University



(ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ಅಂಕಿ - ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಒಟ್ಟು ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಸೂಚಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.)  
(The Number indicate the total number of study Centres existing in that districts.)

