

Plato's Communism

Plato's Communism like his education was a handmaid of his justice. If education was a positive remedy for the operation of justice in his Ideal state his Communism was a negative remedy. Plato had an excessive distrust of human nature. In spite of so much education and training Plato could not be convinced that members of the ruling and military class were completely reformed, so as to work on altruistic motive. He could not be convinced that education had accomplished its task; for the remaining task he advocated Communism as a sure remedy.

Justice as Plato had put it was the very objective of the ideal state. The ideal state Plato went on to say, consisted of the three classes- rulers ,Warriors and the producers each doing their own assigned job. Justice would usher as Plato argues, if the Guardians that is ,rulers ,Warriors do away with property. For property represents the elements of appetite and to do away with property demands the communism of families. As private property and family relationships appeared to be the main source of dissension in every community ;neither is to have recognition in the perfect state . According to Sabine so firmly was Plato convinced of the ill effect of wealth upon government that he saw no way to abolish the evil except by abolishing wealth itself. The same is also with Plato's purpose in abolishing family as excitement for one's children is more dangerous than the desire for property.

Plato's Communism very briefly takes two forms .

Firstly is the abolition of private property- house,land or money.

Secondly, abolition of family with provision and substitution of regulated breeding at the behest of the rulers for the purpose of securing the best possible offspring.

This system of Communism invents a new social order meant to be applied only for the Guardians while the third social class that is producers are left in possession of their families, property and wives. The unity of the state is to be secured; property and families stand in the way therefore, property and marriage must go . Plato's Communism therefore, had a strictly political purpose. Plato's idea of communism thus, has been described by many as a very bold scheme. It was not meant for the people who had no knowledge and wisdom but only for those who are guided by philosopher king who had reason.

Plato's Communism has been criticized by many from Aristotle down to Karl Popper. Aristotle criticizes Plato for having ignored the natural Instinct of acquisition. However ,the strongest criticism is that it is totalitarian in nature . It leads to the complete subordination of the individual to the state. Further the members of the third social class- largest enjoys no political rights . They simply have to live by their appetative nature the spiritual element in them are neglected. Also Popper in his 'the open society and its Enemies' volume 1 says that, the political program of Plato far from being superior to totalitarianism is fundamentally identical with it . He identifies it as so because it vests monopoly of things like military virtue and training in the ruling class and excludes the producing class completely from political participation. Thus, Plato identifies **'Justice with the principle of class rule and class privilege'**.

Marxist Theory of revolution

Marxist theory of revolution is an integral part of dialectical materialism. According to the dialectic mode of analysis development of thesis and antithesis takes place slowly and gradually . But as a result of clash between the two synthesis appears in a sudden stroke. No state of historical development would end until it has become a fetter on the forces of production. The productive forces inherent in any society develop completely before a change can take place and the change itself, would be sudden, as when Ice turns into water or water turns into steam. In that sudden revolutionary change the entire structure of society would be eventually transformd; until the new society in its turn is overthrown and remoulded. Thus, any significant social change the epic -making change is always the product of a revolution. Revolution is the indispensable midwife of social change.

Each stage of social development evolves a set of Ideas,attitude and moral values to sustain the existing pattern of social relationship. More over ,the dominant class always has the vested interest in the existing system however ,outmoded it may be ; when the existing system is no longer capable of meeting the demand of the new productive forces It would still resist any attempts to change it, so that the vested interest of the dominant class are not adversely affected . But the new productive forces must overcome all resistance and have the way, they must smash the existing sub- structure along with the entire superstructure in order to lay the foundation of a new social economic, legal political order . The dominant class will not be prepared to part with its power until forced by the new revolutionary class to do so .

Revolution is therefore, an essential concomitant of class struggle .Revolution is an essential condition of an effective transfer of power and the inauguration of a new period. Each new period of social history is therefore ,a product of revolution the Capitalist system was established by a revolutionary over throw of the feudal system as symbolised by the French Revolution . But as the capitalist system has now become a fetter on the new forces of production, this must be overthrown by the new revolutionary class -the Proletariat (working class) in a revolution.

Marx and Engels made it clear in the concluding part of ' the Communist Manifesto' the communist disdain to conceal their views and aims . They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by forceable overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communist Revolution. Marx and Engels also called for the development of a revolutionary class- consciousness and strong organisation of the Proletariat to fulfil their historic mission. Although revolution was inevitable yet a conscious effort on the part of the Proletariat would speed up the process leading to revolution.

The Proletarian revolution would be distinct from all previous revolutions of human history. A revolution in the past was accomplished by a small class in its own interest to establish its own supremacy for the exploitation of another vulnerable class; which came into existence with the introduction of the new mode of production. Thus the Bourgeois revolution was made by a tiny Bourgeois class which sought to establish the capitalist system for exploiting the Proletariat . But Proletarian Revolution would be a different revolution because it would be a revolution of the majority against the minority; of the masses against the class of exploiters . It is not designed to win

power for exploitation of any class but to put an end to the system of exploitation itself. This would be the final revolution in history to establish socialism in place of Capitalism .

It would establish a temporary dictatorship of the Proletariat to suppress the possible counter revolution and to liquidate the remnants of capitalism. Under dictatorship of the Proletariat the state still exists but this state is different from the previous ones. It is the state of the property less working class for the liquidation of private property along with ideology and culture. In the absence of property there will be no classes, in the absence of classes there will be no state for it will "wither away " . Thus the new classless and stateless Society termed as Communism will be blossom from the soils of socialism which itself is a product of Proletarian revolution.

Besides some later Marxist like Mao- ze-dong pointed out that contradictions will prevail even in communist states -contradictions between progress and conservatism, between advanced and backward even productive forces and conditions of production, which must be fought in order to achieve the goal of Communism .Revolution according to Moa is therefore a continuing process.

Criticism:

Marxist Theory of revolution is severely criticized by liberal thinkers. In particular by Karl Popper in his book The open society and its enemies considers Marx theory of class war and revolution as a myth. It is contended by the critics that class war and violence will create chaos in society, even the makers of revolution may not survive to guide it

successfully and consolidate its gains. Also the supporters evolutionary socialism maintain that socio political changes can be brought about through peaceful and piecemeal methods and that revolution is not necessary for bringing about socialism .Revolution is destructive and hence should we avoided besides, during revolution one generation has to be a heavy price. It is illogical that one generation has to bear the burnt of aggressive violence for another.

Machiavelli's is contribution to Western political thought.

Nicholo Machiavelli lived and worked at a time when the Italian renaissance was at the heights of its glory and since renaissance symbolised the reawakening of man from a world of artificial ,spiritual illusions a world carefully constructed by the church to a realistic world ,where earthly achievements were more treated as an outcome of human will and personality, he is characteristic to a very considerable extent to the modern mind. Machiavelli give a new up to outlook by unfettering the shells of scholastic dogma and domination of religion and morality over politics.

He built up his assumptions need neither with philosophical transcendentalism nor on the basis of so called religious fetishism worshipped for supposedly magical powers. They are the result drawn from hard human facts -facts gathered from historical lessons and from his personal experiences. In other words, his data are drawn from man as he is or he has been and not from man as he or to be in this respect Machiavelli certainly is a political analyst and not political philosopher he treats politics not philosophically but empirically. Modern political thought and thinking begins with Machiavelli the reason is that, Machiavelli more than any individual and despite the fact that he is hardly a political theorist is called the father of modern Political Theory makes the first decisive break-through with the thought of the Catholic middle ages on political problems. For him the state as against the medieval thinking is a natural entity . It rises out of and exist in the midst of a play of natural forces which the ruler or the Prince must understand and make use of if he and his state are to survive in the

ruthless competition which is underplay. Here Machiavelli lays the foundation for Marx and those later theorist who reduced politics to the study of power conflicts and their control.

Basing his analysis on historical evidences he set forth realistic maxims for princes to follow for ensuring stable administrative governance. The role and importance which Machiavelli ascribed to the prince, his insistence on military aspect of government, the whole science which he developed for the preservation and increase of the reputation of the prince really represented in him a great practical wisdom.

Machiavelli introduced certain new possibilities in political philosophy. Previous to him, political power was considered as a means for attaining higher ideal such as justice, good life ,freedom etc. Machiavelli burnt all these ethical, religious ends of the state. He considered political power as an end in itself and confined his enquiry to the means suited for its retention and expansion.

Machiavelli looks forward clearly to the concept of sovereignty and to the corresponding notion of the national territorial state . He completely rejects the feudal conception of a complex hierarchy of relatively autonomous entities and for it substitutes and all powerful Central authority, who is supreme over all Institutions within the region. Thus, he may rightly be regarded as the precursor of the doctrine of absolute sovereignty.

Economic determinism was one of the most prominent features of Machiavelli's political thought . In all political behaviour ,according to him whether it be idealistic or the opposite the influence of the economic factor usually maybe perceived. Though Machiavelli was not a political theories in its truest sense, for he had scant interest in

questions like legitimizing the authority of the state etc ; yet modern Western political thinking got from him its starting point, for he set the perspective for the development of political theory with a novel content. He was more a man of action, keen on suggesting concretely as to what was to be done rather than building up theoretical model. And he gave his suggestions quite candidly without any touch of hypocrisy but for his frank advices he had to pay a great price. Most of the modern Western thinkers who owe him all perspective of their political theorisation have completely disowned him; to their eyes Machiavelli indeed remains a much hated outcaste.

The greatest weakness of his political novelty perhaps, is his acceptance of absolute realism. He forgets the force of ideas and ideals which is properly mobilized can move earth and heaven. His philosophy was practiced by certain Princes and even by dictators of the present century but they could not achieve success. To conclude in the words of Professor GH Sabine, " he was an utter cynic, an impassionate patriot and ardent nationalist, a political jesuit, convinced democrat and an unscrupulous seeker after the favour of despots."

Contribution of Aristotle to Western political thought.

Aristotle has been described as a great intellectual colossus. No man before him had contributed as much to learning ;no man after him could hope to rival his achievement(Barnes) Aristotle was a great genius well versed in a number of disciplines- asthetics, ideology, ethics, physics logics, politics, psychology etc. Aristotle's politics has served as a foundation work for the whole Western tradition. The political ideas and philosophy have tremendously influenced the thinkers and philosophers of subsequent periods. Polibius's teachings of the forms of Government and their successive change originated from the theory of Plato and Aristotle. Cicero held high regards for Aristotle and he shared most of his views on the advantages of mixed form of government. Influence of Aristotle is also found on Christian political thought. St. Augustine placed himself upon the foot step of Aristotle and made a difference between Monarch and tyrant and insisted that the government would be limited by law. Likewise Aristotle's conception of law, justice and forms of government found place in the political ideas of St Thomas Aquinas.

Theory of state:

The heart of Aristotle's political theory as presented in his Politics -the state has found many takers in the history of Western political thought . The state to him is natural, since its roots lay into basic and natural human relations- one the relation between male and female and the other between master and the slave. It is on the basis of these two necessary relations that the family grows to meet the every day needs of men. Again several families combined together to form a village that supply something more than the every day needs of men. Later several villages together constitutes the state which is nearly self- sufficient and which all though, owing its origin to the basic necessity of life continues to exist for the sake of

good life . Aristotle thus endows the state with the natural authority as well as a moral authority.

Aristotle theory of state seems to be the most unique contribution to Western political ideas because no one before him had ever attempted at construction of such a theory based on an organic relationship with the individual; there by, justifying political control and indicating its moral authority . Dante had very little respect for Aristotle, inspite of this ,in his De Monarchia he used a number of Aristotlian arguments in support of his ideal World Monarchy. The influence of Politics is tremendous in Marsilio of Padua's Defencor Pacis which is used as a means for substantiating the doctrine of people's sovereignty, anticipating in fact the social contract theory of Rousseau.

Politics continues to be the essential background of political philosopher such as Machiavelli, Jean Bodin Richard Hookar, Thomas Hobbes. The Prince of Machiavelli is considered to be a commentary on Aristotle's theory of revolution. Bodin largely follows Aristotle in his analysis of natural and geographical factors, specificity of state power as compared with other kinds of authority. Montesquieu also is indebted to Aristotle in respect to his analysis of geographical factors, forms of government and their principles and derivations of Rule of Law. Despite the fact Rousseau and Aristotle differ on account of the origin of the state Rousseau is said to have imbibed the Idealist and moralistic stance of Aristotle's Politics.

Despotism have been severely repealed by both and the problem of relationship between the state and individual has been treated by them almost in the same manner . Rousseau's General Will is an indicator of the fact that the individual must surrender to the collective decisions. There is surprising similarity between the common good of Aristotle and that of Rousseau. To Aristotle the state was an absolute and ethically complete whole ,the concept has been borrowed by German philosopher Hegel. It is said that Hegel ,Marx and in recent years the Communitarians like Macintyre drew their concepts of an integrated ethical community largely from the vision of Aristotle.

Aristotle classification of states serves as a basis for all modern classifiers. His doctrine that the state must be based on the Rule of Law has been one of the most civilizing and liberalising political influences in the 19th Century. The concept of Rule of law ,of constitutional state is perhaps the most important legacy Aristotle has bequeathed to posterity. Even in the 20th century the interest in Aristotle has not declined at all. The reason is that the problem raised by Aristotle still haunts our world . We have yet not discovered the best of Government and constitution and are still aspiring for a well administered state and stable and enriching politics.

Aristotle has been rightly regarded as the father of Political Science for he defined the subject matter of politics and identified its core elements namely sovereignty of law, constitutionalism, faith in moderation, conception of proportionate equality and just reward ,cause and remedies of revolution and polity /middle class rule as the best practicable and stable political system reflected his empirical and inductive method . He dissected r

eality empirically in the same fashion as a physician diagnosed illness and health. Aristotle was the first to use the comparative method when offering classification of States- a method that is still relevant today . Aristotle regarded Political Science as a master science for it studied human beings in a political society implying that they can lead a meaningful life only as members of the state. Aristotle regarded aristocratic rule as the ideal but realised the difficulty in attaining this ideal . Therefore on grounds of feasibility ,accountability and efficiency he advocated a mixed form of Government where all citizens would rule and were ruled by rotation ensuring that none had monopoly over political power. Aristotle understood the importance of power sharing and elite accommodation on which all successful democracy of today are based.

Aristotle bequeathed a great legacy to political thought but not to anyone school. He was a great pioneer in Political Science and no discussion is ever complete without reference to his brilliant insights and methods of analysis as Maxey rightly observes. "whether this be true or not. It clearly entitles him to be recognised as the father of Political Science".

Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes is one of the most colourful, controversial and important figure in the history of western political thought. In his lifetime he was almost unanimously denounced for his alleged atheism, blasphemy and impiety and was despised by many. Hobbes masterpiece the Leviathan though seriously criticized soon after its publication and thereafter became the first comprehensive work in political philosophy that placed him at once in the front rank of political thinkers and his theory became from the moment of its appearance the center of animated controversy and enormous influence throughout western Europe . He is one of those political thinkers whose name will endure as long as men trouble their minds about matters political. Today Hobbes is recognized as a master of political theory who brought in a revolution in western political science in more than one sense .

Hobbes political thinking should be viewed in the context of the legacies left by the Machiavelli and Bodin. Hobbesian approach to politics was derived from Machiavelli and the core of his political theory was taken from Bodin. After Aristotle the tradition of dealing with the Fundamental issues of politics was lost in European political thinking. It was Hobbes who fully revived this tradition. Modern systematic political theory, indeed, begins with Hobbes. He deals with things strictly political and furnishes well- reasoned to the vital questions of politics- Why do people need state government? What is the basis of their functioning, and further, why and how people living under the state and government are to remain loyal to them, these are the three fundamental political questions that receives Hobbes attention. For an answer, Hobbes however, turns neither to theology nor history. Instead, he chose to rely on a hypothesis- the state of nature. According to Hobbes prior to the state, people lived in the state of nature- a condition, he feels alone explains the emergence of civil society and government. Hobbes state of nature is a state of perfect liberty and equality for the individual. Here all men are free to do as they please. When men with this absolute liberty unrestrained by any superior force and with equal bodily and mental power look for things which they cannot enjoy in common and which are

so scarce that all who want them cannot have them, there is bound to be conflict and war. The state of nature, is thus, marked by fierce competition and perpetual war where there is no safety, no security, no culture, no industry, no arts and letters and indeed no society- where man lives in constant fear and is always threatened by violent death.

Though men's life in the state of nature is made "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" the natural law which is essentially a product of reason and which forbids men to do what is destructive to his life, in the end triumphs in such a society. It is out of this desperate urge for self preservation that man eventually becomes conscious of the need for installing a common superior power; strong enough to hold them in restraint and bring to them peace and security.

Thus the man living in the state of nature ultimately made a contract among themselves whereby they established a sovereign force to whom they transferred whatever liberty and power they were enjoying with the hope of getting permanent peace safety and protection. It is in this way, that civilized society and government came into existence. Through the contract the sovereign is free to exercise unlimited power and demand unconditional obedience. The sovereign alone has the right to make laws, repeal laws but he himself is very much above it. This arrangement Hobbes feels has got to be accepted, for without it men are thrown back into the

uncivilized, horrible and insecure conditions of the state of nature.

The state of nature for Hobbes has only a methodological use and must be understood only in the context of his general philosophical position. Hobbes philosophy bore influence of Galileo on one hand and of Euclid on the other and made a synthesis between contemporary scientific knowledge and traditional geometry that alone may account for his reliance on the state of nature as a useful step towards understanding society and government.

Hobbes's theory constructed on the foundation of this hypothetical state of nature indeed brings in revolution in western politics. Firstly, with an aggressive logic Hobbes rejects outright the divine theory or metaphysical foundation of politics and asserts that society, state and government are Institutions created by man and not by god or nature. Secondly, politics becomes a science in Hobbes's

hands politics is not merely given a secular character but also a scientific one. Thirdly Hobbe's theory clearly gives his politics a rational foundation where reason ultimately becomes an arbiter in politics. In summation, the 20th century with its complexities and problems has made it possible to appreciate the concerns that hobbes shared namely power peace and science . There was an interest trying to understand the power relation necessary possible and desirable between men. For Hobbe's was the first to lay down the science of power-politics(Macpherson). We share Hobbe's concern in trying to devise ways and means for ensuring order and accommodious living. Above all, we share an appreciate his method of science ;moreover ,with the democratic revolution of the 19th and 20th century the struggle for power has been replaced with struggle for recognition there by, drastically modifying the role of single, personalized sovereign state. But for understanding this historic transformation of human kind an understanding of Hobbes is an essential prerequisite.