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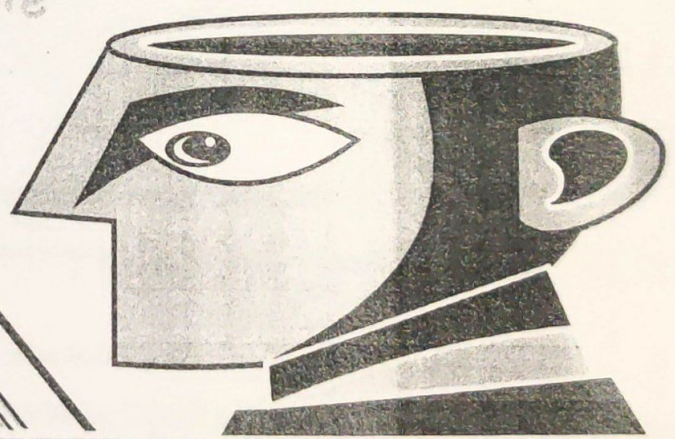
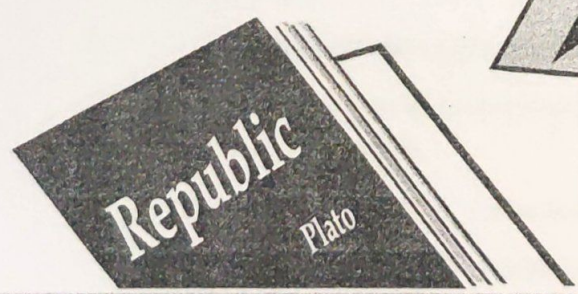
B.A.

FIRST YEAR SEMESTER - I

POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLITICAL THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Anarchism Democracy
Fascism Civil Society
Welfare State State Sovereignty
Marxism Polity



Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD

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UNIT -9: SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY AND MARXIST THEORY OF STATE

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9.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- describe the Social Contract Theory as propounded by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau
- compare the views of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau on the state of nature and social contract.
- comprehend the Marxist theory of origin of state.
- analyse the Social Contract Theory and Marxist theory for the origin of the state.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding unit we have seen that the origin of the state is a matter of historical evolutionary growth. In this chapter, Social Contract Theory and Marxist theory of origin of the state are discussed that are most important and widely acknowledged theories. According to the social contract theory, man deliberately created the state to serve certain social needs. The theory propounded by Thomas, Hobbes, John Locke and J.J. Rousseau at different places and periods of time, gained prominence as it explains the relationship between the state and the individual. It explains in a regional manner as to how the state got legitimate authority over the individual. According to Marxist theory, the state arose as a matter of necessity. The origin of

the state is the product of class antagonisms. In this unit we shall discuss the social contract theory as explained by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau and Marxist theory of origin of the state.

9.2 SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

The social contract theory is an important theory of the origin of the state. The term 'social' implies something connected with society. While 'contract' means an agreement between two or more parties of people. 'Social Contract' implies a 'contract' that makes society got together and agreed upon a contract for establishing the State. It implies that the state is man's deliberate creation to serve human needs.

In the social contract theory there are two fundamental assumptions: (a) A State of Nature and (b) A Contract.

State of Nature: The state of nature is supposed to be a pre-political condition in which men lived without government and civil law. There was no human authority or man-made law to regulate man's relations with other men. People were guided by natural law. The condition of man in the state of nature has been described in different ways by different writers. According to Hobbes, the state of nature was a condition of wild savagery, in which the guiding principle was "might is right". Locke assumed that in state of nature people lived a life of innocence and bliss. Gradually, life in the state of nature for one reason or the other became unbearable. Therefore, the people in the state of nature were compelled to change the worsened conditions by substituting it with a political body.

A Contract: According to the Social Contract theory, men came out of the state of nature through a contract or agreement that was responsible for the origin of civil society or state. By means of the contract people surrendered a part of their "natural" rights in order to secure the greater benefits of civil society. For the surrender of one's natural rights each individual received the protection of the state. Here, it may be noted that there are differences of opinion among writers of the contract theory regarding the parties to the contract, the terms of the contract and resultant sovereign authority in the civil society.

History of the Social Contract theory: The theory of social contract was the most popular theory on the origin of state during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This theory is as old as political thought itself and had found adequate support both in the works of East and West. The idea of this theory that the authority of the ruler is based on some kind of agreement between him and his subjects is quite old. Its references are found in 'Mahabharata' and also in the 'Arthashastra' of Kautilya. There are some references to it in Buddhist and Jain literature also. According to Kautilya, the king acquired his powers through a contract. Sophists described the state as an artificial institution and indicated that the state was a product of contract among people. Roman law regarded the people as the only source of political authority. Roman Philosopher, Cicero common consent as the basis of state. From Cicero onwards, the idea that the people are the source of political authority constantly recurs. The Teutonic idea of government exerted some influence upon the development of this theory and noted that political authority was derived from the people. The Teutonic King, at the time of his election, made an agreement with the people promising good government.

The state is not an organ of class rule in a liberal democracy. It is organ that exists for the condition of divergent socio economic interests.

9.8 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

- I. Answer the following in about 30 lines each.
1. Write about social contract theory?
 2. Critically analyze the Marxist theory of origin of state?
- II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.
1. Explain the concept of General will, as propounded by Rousseau?
 2. Evaluate social contract theory of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau?
 3. Write about the Marxist Theory of origin of state?

9.9 GLOSSARY

1. **Civil Society:** Civil society is the 'aggregate of non-governmental organisations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens' civil society includes family and the private.
2. **Natural Rights:** The philosopher John Locke defined the natural rights every person should have as the rights to life, liberty and property.
3. **Pre-Social:** In political philosophy, the 'General will' is the will of the people as a whole.
4. **Totalitarian State:** Where entire power is vested in the hands of the single political party i.e. communist party, that state is known as Totalitarian state.
5. **Social Contract:** The voluntary agreement among individuals by which, according to any of various theories, as of Hobbes, Locke, or Rousseau, organised society is brought into being and invested with the right to secure mutual protection and welfare or to regulate the relations among its members.

9.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Amal Ray and Mohit Bhattacharya - 'Political Theory, Ideas and Institutions' world press, Calcutta.
2. Mahajan, V.D. - "Political Theory" S. Chand & Co, New Delhi.
3. O.P. Gauba - "An Introduction of Political Theory".
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5. B.K. Ghokale - "Political Science - Theory and Governmental Machinery" (Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay).
6. P.G. Das - "Modern Political Theory" (New Central Book Agency (P) Ltd., Calcutta).

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