
UNIT 1 THE MODERN STATE AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

You must have gone through the Course introduction of this course on modern European History. We believe that you have understood the broad outline and the basic thrust of this course. After studying this Unit, you should be able to explain the:

- nature of the modern state and the role of bureaucracy,
- growth of nationalism and the development of the nation state, and
- process of democratization, the role of judiciary and the political parties in the modern state.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The exercise of power in modern European states was different from any form that preceded it. It was marked especially by a) the absolute power of the modern state, and b) the correspondingly enormous mobilization of the population over which these states exercised their powers.

Absolute power does not necessarily mean mere dictatorship or tyranny because it needs in some form the consent of the population. However it does imply that a) the modern European state developed almost unlimited powers which grew with each passing generation, and b) there is no area from which the state is debarred from entry. In other words, both the powers and the spheres of action are unlimited and expanding.

This is in sharp contrast with pre-modern states, both European and non-European. Their capacity to act was limited despite vast pretensions. When they did act, it was spectacular and designed to impress and terrify the public; but such displays and drama were substitutes for the daily process of control which was most limited compared with the modern state. Further, the spheres in which the states acted were few. These were chiefly military and fiscal, or warfare and taxation; most other matters were left relatively undisturbed, and subject only to remote regulation.

The modern European state was able to act in this manner for a variety of reasons. The most important of these were:

- direct rule through its monopoly on the exercise of legitimate coercion;
- nationalism, through its imposition of cultural uniformity on the population under its control; and
- the state's democratic legitimation through its claim to embody the will of the people.

This Unit will familiarize you with the main features of the modern state and politics.

1.2 DIRECT RULE AND BUREAUCRACY

Chronologically the first and perhaps the most important foundation of the modern European state was direct rule. From the fifteenth century onward, European monarchs increasingly imposed their direct rule on their subjects and concentrated all power in their hands. They did so by depriving their feudal lords and estates of power and appointing royal officials or lesser nobles directly responsible to or dependent only on the monarch. This was the beginning of a modern bureaucracy. The history of these three centuries, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth, is full of such bitter struggles between the state or a monarch and feudal or regional lords, all culminating in a series of royal absolutisms. The most remarkable state-builders of this type were Ivan IV (the Terrible) and Peter I (the Great) of Russia, Frederick William and Frederick II of Prussia, Cardinal Richelieu and Louis XIV of France, and Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell of England. Thus only the king could maintain armies and make war, tax the population, adjudicate in disputes, punish offenders, and in particular take the life of a subject; and he did so through his new royal bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy is an administrative hierarchy of officials with the following features as ideals: they are salaried professionals who have no personal interest in the decisions they take or enforce; they carry out the orders of their superiors and issue orders to their inferiors who implement such orders in the same fashion; they act according to rules laid down by law, not according to personal whim or preference; they are selected for their expertise in the area concerned, not for their personal, family, or class connections; they are replaceable like parts of a machine, and the newcomer or substitute will act in the same manner as the person who has been replaced, such that little depends on just the individual. This is the model of bureaucracy; and this particular manner of acting has been called rational-legal, as described authoritatively by Max Weber. However, practice departs significantly from the model, as must always happen; but it provides us with the most important insights into the functioning of modern administrative structures, whether of the state, the political party, a business corporation, a religious hierarchy like a Church, or even simple associations like clubs.

As we live with such bureaucracies in our daily lives, and since this is the ideal which we expect the government to live up to, we little realize how different it is from other form of rule. Indeed, when we encounter other forms, we tend to describe them as arbitrary and corrupt. For example, if officials were to be appointed for their family connections or money they had paid, if they were to take decisions because it suits them personally or the mood takes them, were

they to act without orders, against orders, or outside the law, were they to be appointed without the necessary expertise for the job, or were everything to depend on one individual as if he or she were irreplaceable, we generally dismiss such systems as irrational, corrupt, and archaic. Yet that was perfectly normal for all states or forms of rule before modern times, and only now do they appear undesirable. We have absorbed this textbook ideal and measure all administration by these standards, almost unaware that these began to be introduced less than two hundred years ago in Europe and have been accepted thereafter as standards the world over. Anything that is not “modern” in this sense we tend to call “traditional” or employ some pejorative expression.

It is bureaucracy in such “rational-legal” form that makes the modern state so immensely powerful in the sense of being effective. Bureaucracy is an instrument that is more reliable and responsive than any other and can penetrate any field. Impersonality, expertise, action according to rules, strict hierarchy and easy replaceability makes it possible to carry out decisions with precision and predictable results. Rulers dependent on subordinates who have a personal interest, do not obey orders, do not possess expertise etc. are unable to act effectively.

That is why in pre-modern times rulers’ actions were immensely ostentatious and dramatic but far less effective than those in modern times. Displays of power in pre-modern times used to take the form of personal opulence in the costume and life-styles of rulers, elaborate court etiquette, enormous generosity by rulers on certain special occasions like coronations, arbitrary mercy to criminals, extraordinary violence to political opponents etc. But these were displays to impress the public periodically and had to be repeated regularly because of their limited effect. The modern bureaucracy has dispensed with most of such routine displays while reserving them for great national occasions with the intention of impressing the public.

However, for everyday rule and control, it does not need such ostentation because it can anticipate problems, solve so many of them before they mature, target a criminal or political opponent with remarkable accuracy, and ensure compliance. In these senses, the modern state is more absolute than any old-fashioned tyranny or autocracy although it co-exists with democracy and rests universally on democratic principles, which is a phenomenon that needs to be explained.

As a corollary to this vast expression of power, there is no sphere in which the modern state does not act. Formerly, states would act on rich and powerful persons and tax the rest of the population, and little else. Now the state seeks to anticipate problems, to hunt for sedition and to assess the mind of the people. It deploys systems of surveillance and gathering of intelligence on every aspect of the life of citizens in order to foresee a problem or to decide how best to act in any number of hypothetical situations. Similarly, these states began to mediate in all forms of conflict, whether industrial, social, or professional, of locality or of family, issuing regulations governing all these aspects of life. They assumed responsibility for education, welfare, health, the condition of the poor, the old, children, and even the yet unborn. They began to regulate life in these thousands of different ways in the minutest detail which we today accept as perfectly normal and even necessary.

In addition, the modern state’s capacity for violence and repression is infinitely greater than that of any of the most famous tyrants in history. This derives not

only from its claim to the monopoly of violence but more from the organization of military systems and the technological development of modern weaponry and weapons systems. In pre-modern times, feudal magnate could maintain an army that could challenge the royal army; but modern armies may be afforded only by the state and cannot be dreamt of by even the wealthiest plutocrat. The first difference is of sheer numbers. The French Revolution demonstrated what a modern army and total war could be by calling up all able-bodied citizens to the army. This was the first full-scale national recruitment in history and was in itself an extraordinary innovation. Feudal nobles could maintain armies of a few thousands; but the modern state now would maintain standing or permanent armies of hundreds of thousands; and in the twentieth century these would become millions. Feudal lords would recruit an army for a specific campaign or war and then disband them since the soldiers were chiefly peasants who had to return to make their living. The modern state innovated by sustaining a permanent army. These magnitudes were possible only to the state, not to any individual or independent corporation, however rich.

Weapons technology likewise tilted the balance in favour of the state. Cavalry and infantry could be outfitted by feudal lords, but the cost of artillery could be borne only by the state. This was already evident from the fifteenth century. But numerous innovations in the handheld gun, making it more and more of an instrument of precision and therewith more expensive, placed the advantage in the hand of the state. The impact of such technologies on naval warfare was seen in the almost total disappearance of piracy by the eighteenth century.

The twentieth century then saw two further terrifying innovations, the tank and mastery of the skies, which, from the outset, remained a monopoly of the state. The combined destructive power of tanks and aerial bombing overwhelmed any civilian population that dared challenge the state. Opposition therefore could not take the form of direct confrontation, as in heroic literature or in pre-modern times, but in a political and social mobilization of the populace.

Some of this could assume the form of armed conflict, but only as guerrilla warfare or insurgency because the state could not be confronted in a straight armed combat. Such revolutionary mobilizations and insurgencies have become frequent for this reason in the twentieth century. If there are direct armed conflicts within a country, it is only because the state itself has fragmented and there are two or more potential states in conflict in the same territory, e.g. during the Chinese revolutionary struggles of the forties, the Russian civil war of 1918-1921, or the American Civil War of 1861-1864. The state's monopoly on violence is therefore both real and claimed.

1.3 NATIONALISM AND NATION-STATE

With this awesome accumulation of resources, the modern European state then imposed uniformity on its citizens, thereby creating what we call the nation and nationalism. If all citizens were the product of the same culture, the capacity to act on them, to predict responses, to satisfy preferences, indeed to create a set of common choices, was greatly enhanced. On the other hand, a divided people suggested a fragmented state or a number of different centres of power. This was the case under feudalism which was overcome by royal absolutism imposing the will of a single centre. A single state therefore implied a single people; and the

modernizing state set about creating such a single people consciously. This was done by the people, now called citizens, being required to submit themselves to the same set of principles that governed their society. The most famous and typical of these doctrines is that of equality of all before the law; corresponding principles in other spheres of life were, for example, that knowledge be equally available to all, that one person's labour is equal in value to another's, that one person's vote be equal to another's, that every adult should have the vote (universal suffrage), or that everybody should have equal opportunity to education and career.

Perhaps the most powerful instrument of homogenization, or creating such uniformities, was education. The modern European state, unlike its predecessors, was singularly active in the field of education. It increasingly made primary and then secondary education universal and compulsory; through such an educational system it ensured a common set of values and single language as taught in schools which could be different from what was available at home or in the region. It thus produced a single people with a single culture and even a single language such that each citizen was a replica of any other, all common products of the same cultural factory as it were. A single culture thus spread over a territory ruled from a single centre of power; and this is what is known as the nation-state. This sense of belonging to such a common culture in a specific territory is known as nationalism. Nationalism is a creation of modern times by states which created such nations.

How recent is the creation, and how it has been, may be seen from the examples of the most famous nations-states of Europe. Thus we speak routinely of a British people and a British nation little realizing that it consists of at least the English, the Welsh and the Scots. Within these there are regions with pronounced identities, e.g. Cornwall in England and the Highlands in Scotland. Only in the eighteenth century did the English language become universal to all these countries of Great Britain. Similarly France, another distinct and successful nation-state, consists of many identifiable regions with their own languages to this day, of which Brittany in the north-west and Gascony in the south are the most well-known. In 1789 only 12-13% of the population of France spoke French; therefore the French nation was in effect created during the nineteenth century through the processes described above.

Similarly, in 1860, at the time of the unification, only about 2.5% of the population of Italy spoke Italian; the rest spoke various regional languages, some of which survive to this day. Again, the new Italian state had to impose the Italian language on the whole population and thereby help fashion the Italian nation. Similar processes went on in all the nations and states of Europe; and nationalism and nation-making became a universal phenomenon in the course of the nineteenth century.

There was no modern state which did not sponsor its own nationalism; and the fatal problem of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian states was that they ruled over multi-national empires in themselves and hence could not afford to promote any nationalism lest the empire break up. They could have hoped to survive through a Russian or German nationalism respectively and thereby destroying the other cultures within their empires as British nationalism reduced the culture of the Highland Scots, of Wales, or of Cornwall, or as the French state did with the various regional cultures by making them all French. But that process should have started much earlier, before regional nationalisms developed, like those of

the Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia or Tatarstan in the Russian Empire, or of the Czechs, Hungarians, Croats, or Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Neither empire could become single nations given the competing nationalisms developing within them; and both were doomed to collapse. To an important degree it was a question of timing. However, any state that wished to exist as a modern state, or a group that aspired to establish a modern independent state (e.g. from among the various nationalities of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires referred to above), found itself engaged in the politics of nationalism and of nation-building.

Europe thus came to be composed of a series of nation-states, sovereign within their own territories, equal in theory to every other, and related to each other in a system which became in itself an independent specialization called international relations. Modern politics in Europe therefore implied a peculiar structure of international relations which has since been accepted as a universal model. It was logically consistent with the state's claim to the monopoly of legitimate coercion; just as it did not accept any other source of power within its territory, it could not accept any external source of power within that same territory. Hence it led to a system composed of states which were sovereign and independent with respect to each other in theory and law even if unequal in material resources. In terms of real power and resources, these states formed a hierarchy; but in theory they were equal in status to each other. This led to the exchange of permanent ambassadors between states and to the elaborate edifice of what is known as diplomacy. Through such diplomacy, each state was now an actor on the stage of international relations to defend and promote what it called its "national interest," for it now spoke in the name of the nation. Hence politics came to include involvement in international relations and the defence of the "national interest." Every political party and ideology was obliged to take care of the "national interest," and those that did not seem to do so adequately were severely weakened in the struggle for power. Such a system of international relations was in formation since the sixteenth century; it was defined as a system of relations between sovereign and equal states with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648; but it became a part of modern politics only in the nineteenth century.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Explain the important features of bureaucracy in five sentences.

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- 2) Do you think that education was used by the modern state to promote nationalism? Answers in 50 words.

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3) Define international relations? Answer in five sentences.

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1.4 DEMOCRATIC POLITY

Paradoxically, while the modern state concentrated such enormous powers in its hands, the politics of the nation became “democratic.” In one sense there should be no paradox since the state claimed to represent the “popular will” and to rest on the “sovereignty of the people.” Theoretically, the people were now sovereign, as reflected in the electoral system. Hence it was a democratic or people’s state that exercised such vast powers.

From the revolutionary developments in America, Britain and France in the late eighteenth century there emerged the modern state which rested on the claim of representing the people.

The question is not whether it did in fact represent the popular will and how genuinely it did so. The point is that it had to claim to do so and appear to be doing so. All the European states have done so in increasing measure, however opposed their ideologies. This applies as much to the liberal democratic states of north-western Europe, the fascist-type states that covered so much of Europe, especially central Europe, in the twentieth century; and the socialist states of the Soviet Union and East Europe.

Democratic politics meant something other than the people being the rulers. The people could never be the real rulers. They could have ruled directly only if numbers were so small, a few hundred at best, so that the people could meet regularly, take decisions, and occupy public office. But modern nations consist of many millions at the least; hence such notions of democracy are fanciful. The solution has been found, since the eighteenth century in Europe and America, of the people electing their representatives who then choose their rulers. This is the standard form of the modern democratic constitution. As such, the people surrendered their powers to representatives who acted on their own judgement; and the representatives surrendered their powers to a government which also acted at its discretion. The only effective control in the hands of the people was that both the government and the representatives had to submit themselves periodically to elections when they could be replaced by others. These others would belong to other parties and ideologies. Hence, multiple ideologies and parties were an essential part of the democratic politics of changing rulers periodically. This multiplicity is known as pluralism. However, between elections, both the act of representation and that of governing were independent of the people. But, because all were well aware that an election was due, such democratic rulers and representatives routinely sought to gauge the mood of the people, ensure their actions were popular, and justify their conduct as reflecting the will of the people. Hence the extraordinary importance of elections and all the rights

and procedures associated with elections, e.g. universal suffrage, the secret ballot, fair procedures and with them the assumption that the holding of regular elections by itself ensures democratic politics. The pattern described above is the model of liberal democratic politics to which socialists on the left and conservatives on the right subscribed but which was repudiated by revolutionaries on the left (e.g. communists, anarchists) and counter-revolutionaries on the right (e.g. fascists, national-socialists).

Revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries pursued another logic of democratic politics. As in liberal democratic politics, they derived their power and legitimacy from popular support and choice; hence these were demonstrated, as usual, through elections and votes. Elections could be organized in many different ways; coercion could be used; voters could be excluded or their ballot papers marked by others, and most of all, multiple candidates could be prohibited such that voters could vote for only one candidate. The exact degree of popular support for such regimes is a subject of independent investigation; and it should not be assumed that they did not enjoy considerable popular support at certain moments, whether it be Stalin or Hitler. But the important point remains that they sought to demonstrate such popularity through all the procedures of election.

Thus dictatorships could be imposed through perfectly democratic means. The first practitioner of this art of politics was Louis Napoleon in France in 1851 when he was elected through a plebiscite; he later proclaimed himself emperor and ruled essentially by decree on this democratic foundation. Many dictators have used the plebiscite and the referendum, which are after all another form of the popular vote, to prove their democratic credentials. The most notorious case is that of Hitler who won the general elections of 1932 to become the chancellor of Germany, and even secured dictatorial powers from the Reichstag (the German parliament) through the Enabling Act of 1933. The Bolshevik regime in the Soviet Union also depended on a hierarchy of democratic institutions called soviets or councils elected by the people. Even if only one candidate was permitted to stand for election, the regime organized such elections regularly without which it did not feel legitimate. Indeed, the worst phase of the Stalinist purges of 1936-1938 witnessed a furious round of elections through which "enemies of the people" were identified and denounced.

This procedure in its totality, of proving popularity, is known as democratic legitimation; and the most effective instrument for achieving it was found to be some form of election. Hereditary monarchs were increasingly replaced by elected rulers (sometimes as elected monarchs like Napoleon III of France) as the real centres of power; but the state continued to concentrate power as discussed above, that is, to rule directly and to claim a monopoly on the legitimate exercise of force. Thus, even while the foundations of the state became more democratic, its absolute power grew through the process of bureaucratization. The support of the people always provided more power to a ruler than any other source like tradition (for a hereditary monarch), force of personality (for a charismatic leader), or physical force (for a military dictator). As the state claimed to exercise power by promoting the interests of the people, it could call upon the people that are it could mobilize them, to render such support. Politicians discovered soon enough after the French Revolution that they could acquire and exercise more power by mobilizing the people than by mobilizing God, custom, an individual, or even an army.

However, not all the instruments of rule even went through the ritual of democracy like elections. The bureaucracy most obviously did not pretend to be democratic any more than did the armed forces, paramilitary forces, and the police; yet they were jointly the omnipotent instruments of the modern democratic state. In equal measure, the judiciary and the entire legal profession was another such major instrument. Ironically, it was and still is generally considered essential to democracy although it is entirely appointed and is in so sense answerable to the people. The judiciary performed two important functions: it adjudicated in disputes by applying the law, and it interpreted the law in the course of applying it, that is, it declared what the real law was. Therefore, it not only settled disputes, but in effect it also made law by interpreting it, or declaring what the real meaning of a law was. In settling disputes, it dealt with not only cases between individuals, but also between individuals and the state. Even if the state claimed to represent the people, judges could decide in favour of individuals against the state. This is one reason why elected leaders have sometimes denounced the judiciary as reactionary because it opposed the will of democratically elected leaders. But in doing so, it could also be defending individuals against oppression by the bureaucracy. This is the first reason why an independent judiciary is considered necessary to democracy although it is neither elected nor responsible to anybody.

The next reason why such a judiciary is deemed essential to democracy is the power of judicial review. This means that the highest court of the land, usually called the Supreme Court, could examine legislation to decide whether it violated the constitution or not. Thus, if the people's representatives enact a law, judges of such supreme courts may reject the law.

The powers of such an independent judiciary are enormous; some of the powers are almost equal to those of the legislature; and certain of their powers are superior to those of the legislature. Such extraordinary powers are accepted on the assumption that the democratic essence of the political system is contained in the written constitution and that only legal experts are capable of deciding whether new laws are compatible with that constitution. The most famous and extensive power of judicial review has been established in the USA. Different European countries have different practices; but equally famously, the British system does not provide for judicial review, although judge-made law through interpretation of previous laws is normal. Nonetheless, independent judiciaries limiting the power of democracy remains true about all pluralist liberal democracies; and these limits have been made a part of democratic theory through what is known as the doctrine of the separation of powers, or the separation of the legislature, executive, and judiciary. Ultimately then, the judgements of the people's representatives are considered unreliable; democratic procedure is inadequate to the protection of democracy; and a small body of virtually self-appointing persons are seen to be one of the best means of protecting democracy.

Thus modern democratic politics is not democratic in many essential respects even in the countries always proclaimed as model democracies. The people do not rule; the administration of justice and judicial review is in the hands of a group of persons responsible to nobody but themselves; and the state exercises almost unlimited and continually expanding powers through its vast bureaucracy and military establishment. It is difficult to see a trace of democracy in it all; yet it is this very combination of electoral politics and bureaucratic absolutism that has been described a democracy in modern politics. One reason has already been

noted, that is, these powers are exercised in the name of the people even in dictatorial regimes, and the people make a periodic choice of their rulers in electoral regimes. But there is another reason, perhaps more significant; and that is the people's involvement or participation in politics at higher levels than ever before in history. The people do not rule, but they participate through numerous processes, of which elections are merely the most obvious.

Such participation occurs through mobilization. In modern politics, a new institution called the political party emerged in the course of the revolutionary developments at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. They were no longer merely factions or groups at Court or within the bureaucracy. They were now organizations defined by ideology. The ideology could embody the interest of a class, a group, a region, a religion, a nation etc.; but it was a view of the world of the future. Such parties now sought to mobilize support among the people for their particular ideological position and therewith for the parties themselves. With a number of political parties actively seeking support among the people, the mass of the population increasingly came to be involved in politics. The public was asked to express an opinion and exercise a choice on political options, and in various different ways to indicate their position on any subject. It could take the form of asking citizens to vote, to join a union, to sign a petition, to march in a demonstration, to subscribe to a newspaper, to attend a meeting, and numerous other such activities. Today we treat as utterly normal that so many different types of persons should trouble us every day in so many ways, that they should demand that we act the way they want; but all these are innovations of the nineteenth century. Before then, people were left to themselves with only an occasional demand for extra taxes or participation in war.

In these new ways, each interest group drummed up support and formed political parties which represented a major ideological position. It was such ceaseless activity of demanding from the population that they participate in politics and take position, that is, the process of mobilizing the people that made politics democratic. Now, the claim that rulers were acting in the name of the people could have a foundation in fact, that is, the people would be demonstrating whether they supported such rulers or not. These political parties became the instruments through which such rulers were chosen and through which rulers legitimized themselves. The politics of first Britain, France, and America, and then of the rest of Europe in gradual degrees in the course of the nineteenth century, followed by the rest of the world, reveals this logic. This, more than anything else, is the core of modern politics, namely, a mobilized population with a civilian party as the instrument of mobilization. The people don't rule but they are involved; and whether they like it or not, they are required to be involved.

From the above account it would appear that modern populations are overwhelmed by bureaucratic absolutism and party mobilization leaving little sense or reality of individual or group freedom and choice which should after all be central to democracy. Is democratic politics then an elaborate form of oppression? Indeed not, even if it is not what it claims to be.

Both the state's claim to the legitimacy of its rule and the political parties' mobilization of popular support are founded on the rights of citizens, as they were called during the French Revolution, or human rights, as they were restated by the United Nations. Rights as understood in modern political discourse are

what a person is born with and cannot be taken away; they are not privileges granted by rulers as was understood in pre-modern times. Therefore political action by citizens takes the form of the exercise of rights which are equally available to all at all times. The assertion of rights may and do take any form; and where states and parties have been found inadequate, citizens have mobilized themselves in newer forms of action and through new organizations. Therefore mobilizations are not exclusively by political parties aspiring to the power of the state, as in the liberal or pluralist electoral systems of Western Europe, or by the state acting through a party, as in the fascist and communist states.

Innumerable citizens' action groups form themselves and act for purposes other than coming to power; they act in causes that could be more limited, like defending a victim of injustice, protecting the environment, upholding consumers' rights, etc., or just as pressure groups in the defence of some interest, be it business or professional, of which trade unionism is the most obvious. Action could just as well be undertaken by individuals commenting on matters of public interest; and all such individuals put together constitute what is known as public opinion. Therefore the public is active in the exercise of its rights; it is not merely driven by the political establishment to demonstrate support in stage-managed performances, although that happens just as often. Without the active citizen, there is no modern politics. Further, it is the continuous tension between bureaucracy and mobilization from above and the active citizen below which defines modern politics, whether called democratic or authoritarian, but always with claims to democratic legitimation and procedure.

Modern politics exhibits one further important feature originating in this half century of the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries. This is a peculiar format which we have come to take for granted but which was again most novel at that time. It consists of political ideologies ranged as left, centre, and right, and political parties taking positions recognizably somewhere along this line from left to right. The left included all those ideologies which demanded change, continuous innovation, and moving from the past and tradition into the future. For the left, the process of change had to be innovation or total transformation of the past and tradition. Revolution therefore belongs to ideologies of the left; of these, socialism and communism are the most famous. The centre on the other hand seeks to moderate the rate of innovation even while accepting the process of change. It is fearful of excess and refuses to be revolutionary. During the nineteenth century, liberal movements and ideologies, broadly speaking, belonged to the centre of the political spectrum because the socialists were on the left. But, in the days before socialism, or before the 1830s, liberals could also be revolutionary or of the left by the same logic as the socialists were. The French revolutionary movements were liberal, ideologically speaking, not socialist; but they were revolutionary nonetheless because they wished to overthrow tradition itself. The right represented the ideologies of calling a halt to revolution and of consolidating what had already come into existence. They sought to use tradition, improve it, change it piecemeal, but not to overthrow it as the left wanted to do and even much of the centre was ready to do. The right consisted of conservatives, best represented by Christian Democracy in Europe and the Tories or Conservatism in Britain. But conservatism was not a fixed position since it defined itself in relation to the centre and the left; it accepted the changes brought by the French Revolution until 1815 but did not want any more; after the revolutions of 1848, it accepted those changes but hoped to contain any further revolution. Thus it

related to the latest series of innovations and revolutions and sought to preserve the status quo thereafter. It was an attitude of mind whose precise political position would shift from decade to decade because it was oriented to preserving the best of the past when the past was continually vanishing. As one famous philosopher puts it, conservatism seeks to develop the past that remains in the present, socialism seeks to develop the future that is implicit in the present, and the centre seeks to celebrate the present centre itself.

However, the right has often moved to an extreme position called the counter-revolution. In its hatred of the idea of the revolution, or of the idea of recasting everything anew, one part of the right wished to undo the original idea of revolution itself. It did so, not by going back to the past, but by attacking everything that the revolutions of modern times created. This was counter-revolution, which was so violently hostile to the dream of modern revolutions, including conservatism that it tended to destroy itself in its negativity. In the twentieth century it was best represented by fascism and national socialism although both had important antecedents. This triple ideological division has been described as the ideological civil war of Europe by a famous philosopher of our times; that European civil war of the nineteenth century became a full-scale war in the twentieth between communism on the left led by the Soviet Union, liberalism in the centre led by the Allies, and the counter-revolution of the right led by the Axis powers; after 1945, it was transformed into a Cold War between that same left and centre; and with the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the communist utopian dream in 1991, the centre remains in command of what is to be the post-modern world.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What do you understand by democratic polity? Answer is 50 words.

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- 2) Discuss the importance of judiciary. Answer in ten sentences.

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- 3) Explain the role of political parties in democracy. Answer in ten sentences.

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we have studied how the modern state differs from the pre-modern state, how it exercises vast, centralized and bureaucratic power, and also how it legitimizes its rule through the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. It thus mobilizes support for the state, especially through nationalism, which is a form of imposing a uniform culture over a political territory. It mobilizes support through the modern political party, which is an invention of the nineteenth century; and modern politics could be conducted through both the multi-party system called pluralist and the single-party system, often called totalitarian or dictatorial. But citizens' function in modern politics by the exercise of rights which they possess at birth and which cannot be denied them subsequently; they thus organize themselves into all types of groups independent of the state. This is often called democratic; but it is more important to realize that modern citizens are capable of being more active politically than ever before, whether the state be democratic or not; and that complements the state's capacity to mobilize them to action on a scale unknown in history. These two tendencies combine to produce modern politics, the active citizen and the mobilizing bureaucratic state.

1.6 KEY WORDS

Absolutism	: Principle of unlimited authority to rule the state.
Conservatism	: Attitude to oppose any change.
Counter Revolution	: Revolution that changes the political regime founded by a previous revolution.
Fascism	: Ideology of right-wing dictatorial regime. Fascist ideas originated from Italy in the first half of the 20th century.
Feudalism	: Ideas developed in medieval Europe, according to which people were tied with the landlord who had the overall control over people working under him.
Homogenization	: Making uniform ideas and identity.
Liberalism	: Believing in moderate political and social reform without any prejudice.
Pluralism	: Existence of different groups with different political and religious beliefs in one society.
Socialism	: Abolition of private ownership and principle of state ownership, equality for all.
Sovereign	: Nation, state or ruler having power without any outside controls.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sec. 1.2.
- 2) Education, controlled by the state, is an important means to promote the desired objectives of the state. Read Sec. 1.3, you will find your answer and write in your own words.
- 3) Diplomatic relations developed among various states. Read Sec. 1.3.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Government run by the elected representative of the people. See Sec. 1.4
- 2) See Sec. 1.4.
- 3) Political party with distinct ideology is an important feature of modern politics. Read Sec. 1.4.



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