



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE:POL215

COURSE CODE:HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT I

**COURSE
GUIDE**

**POL215
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT I**

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Introduction

Welcome to POL215: History of Political Thought I

This course is a three-credit unit course for undergraduate students in Political Science. The material has been developed with the Nigerian context in view. The Course Guide gives you an overview of the course. It also provides you with the information on the organisation and requirement of the course.

Course Aims

The aims include: to help you to understand the nature and changing theories of the state in historical context. This requires an examination of major orientations and contentions about the origin, nature and reason of the state in political history. This broad aims will be achieved through:

1. The examination of the ideas expressed by major political philosophers across different epochs.
2. Identifying the predominant orientation and contentions about the state in each epoch.
3. Exposing the student to critical thinking on the nature and reason of state.

Course Objectives

To achieve the broad goals outlined above, **POL215** has overall objectives in addition to the specific objectives. The unit objectives are at the beginning of each unit. I advise that you read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check your progress.

The wider objectives of the course are outlined below. It is anticipated that you should be able to meet these objectives on successful completion of the course. Consequently, the student is expected to achieve the following:

1. Understand the meaning and concerns of political thought.
2. Understand the trend in the History of Political Thought.
3. Identify the contentions and predominant ideas in each epoch.
4. Understand the major ideas of each philosopher in each epoch.
5. Reflect on the impact of the ideas on contemporary politics.
6. Think critically with regard to unfolding political realities of his time.
7. Proffer informed ideas and strategies on the political challenges.

Working through This Course

To complete the course, you are expected to read the study units and other related materials. At the end of each unit, you are required to

submit written assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of the course, you will write a final examination.

Course Material

The major materials required for this course are as follows:

1. Course Guide.
2. Study Units.
3. Assignment Files.
4. Relevant Textbooks including the ones listed under each unit.

Study Units

There are nineteen study units divided into four modules in this course. They are as follows:

Module 1 Classical Era and the Theory of the City State

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Unit 1 | Notion and Evolution of Political Thought |
| Unit 2 | Plato: His Life and Times (427-347 BC) |
| Unit 3 | Aristotle: His Life and Times (384-322 BC) |
| Unit 4 | Decline of City States |
| Unit 5 | Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) |

Module 2 Medieval Era and the Theory of Universal Community

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Seneca and the Christian Fathers |
| Unit 2 | St Aurelius Augustine (354-430) |
| Unit 3 | Feudalism (200-1400) |
| Unit 4 | St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) |
| Unit 5 | Marsilio of Padua |

Module 3 Theory of National State in Reformation and Renaissance

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Niccollo Machiavelli (1469-1527) |
| Unit 2 | Jean Bodin (1530-1596) |
| Unit 3 | Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) |

Module 4 Era of Reason and Enlightenment

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | John Locke (1632-1704) |
| Unit 2 | Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) |

Unit 3	G.W.F. Hegel (1770 – 1831)
Unit 4	Utilitarian School
Unit 5	John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)
Unit 6	Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Textbooks and References

Certain books have been recommended for the course. You may wish to purchase them for further reading.

Assessment File

An assessment file and marking scheme will be made available to you. In the assessment file you will find details of the works you must submit to your tutor for marking. There are two aspects of the assessment of this course; the Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) and written examination. The marks you obtain in these two areas will make up your final marks. The assignment must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadline stated in the presentation schedule and the Assignment File. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment represents 30% of your total score.

Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)

You will have to submit a specified number of TMAs. Every unit in this course has a Tutor Marked Assignment. You will be assessed on four of them but the best three performances from the TMAs will be used for computing the 30% score. When you have completed each assignment, send it together with a Tutor Marked Assignment form, to your tutor. Make sure each assignment reaches your tutor before the deadline for submissions. If for any reason you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor for a discussion on the possibility of an extension. Exceptions will not be granted after the due dates unless under exceptional circumstances.

Final Examination and Grading

The final examination will be a test of three hours. All areas of the course will be examined. Find time to read the unit all over before the examination. The final examination represents 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions, which reflects the kinds of self assessment exercises and tutor marked assignment you have previously encountered. It is important to note that all aspects of the course will be assessed. You should use the time between completing the last unit and taking the examination to revise the entire course.

Course Marking Scheme

The allocation of marks for the course is listed below.

Assessment	Marks
Best 3 TMAs from 4 marked	30%
Final Examination	70%
Total	100%

Presentation Schedule

The dates for the submission of all assignments will be communicated to you accordingly. Similarly, you will be notified when you are to complete the study units and sit for examinations.

Course Overview

Unit	Title of Work	Weeks	Assignment
	Course Guide		
Module 1			
1	Notion and Evolution of Political Thought	Week 1	Assignment 1
2	Plato: His Life and Times (427-347 BC)	Week 2	Assignment 2
3	Aristotle: His Life and Times (384-322 BC)	Week 3	Assignment 3
4	Decline of City States	Week 4	Assignment 4
5	Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC)	Week 5	Assignment 5
Module 2			
1	Seneca and the Christian Fathers	Week 6	Assignment 1
2	St Aurelius Augustine (354-430)	Week 7	Assignment 2
3	Feudalism (200-1400)	Week 8	Assignment 3
4	St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)	Week 9	Assignment 4
5	Marsilio of Padua	Week 10	Assignment 5
Module 3			
1	Niccollo Machiavelli (1469-1527)	Week 11	Assignment 1
2	Jean Bodin (1530-1596)	Week 12	Assignment 2
3	Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)	Week 13	Assignment 3
Module 4			
1	John Locke (1632-1704)	Week 14	Assignment 1
2	Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)	Week 15	Assignment 2
3	Utilitarian School	Week 16	Assignment 3
4	John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)	Week 17	Assignment 4

5	George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel	Week 18	Assignment 5
6	Karl Marx (1818-1883)	Week 19	Assignment 6
	Revision	1	
	Examination	1	
	Total	21	

How to Get the Most from this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. It is better to conceive it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way a lecturer might give you some reading materials, the study units tell you where to read, and which are your text materials or set books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives to let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course. This main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually either be from your set books or from a reading section. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

- Read this Course Guide thoroughly, it is your first assignment.
- Organize a Study Schedule. Design a "Course Overview" to guide you through the Course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the Assignments relate to the units. Whatever methods you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
- Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it. The major reason why students fail is that they get behind with their course work if you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late to help.

- Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and objectives for the unit.
- Assemble the study materials. You will need your set books and the unit you are studying at any point in time. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.
- Keep in touch with your study centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
- Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before due dates), keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
- Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.
- When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
- When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.
- After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials

Information relating to the tutorials will be provided at the appropriate time. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must take your Tutor Marked Assignment to the study centre well before the

due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact your tutor if you need help. Contact your tutor if:

1. You do not understand any part of the study unit or the assigned readings
2. You have difficulty with the exercises
3. You have a question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your tutor and ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussion actively.

Summary

The Course Guide gives you an overview of what to expect in the course of this study. The course exposes you to the history of political thought. It specifically acquaints you with the changing theories of the state and the works of various philosophers on the origin and nature of the state as well as issues pertaining to the reason of the state and limits of state power.

We wish you success in the course and hope that you will find it interesting and useful.

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MODULE 1 CLASSICAL ERA AND THE THEORY OF THE CITY STATE

Unit 1	Notion and Evolution of Political Thought
Unit 2	Plato: His Life and Times (427-347 BC)
Unit 3	Aristotle: His Life and Times (384-322 BC)
Unit 4	Decline of City States
Unit 5	Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC)

UNIT 1 NOTION AND EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Notion and Evolution of Political Thought
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This course begins with an examination of the meaning and concern of political thought and the trend in the evolution of the discipline. Attention will be focused on the changing notion of state power across several epochs in history. This is with a view to showing the variations in thoughts concerning the state over the centuries. The student is expected to understand these variations as they are fundamental to understanding the entire course when broken into specific eras.

It is advised that the student should be painstaking in studying this material. This is because the details though interesting, often requires patience and commitment to actually understand the unfolding fact associated with the course. It is also necessary that the student should be open-minded and free from the bondage of dogma as this will go a long way to aid the appreciation and assimilation of the logics of political thought.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able:

- to explain the meaning and concern of political thought
- to trace the origin and trend in political thought
- to identify the changing notion of the state in different eras
- to identify the philosophers in each era and the nature of their thoughts.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Notion and Evolution of Political Thought

Political thought has been described as man's attempt to consciously understand and solve the problems of his group life and organisation. Sabine and Thorson (1973: 3) described it as an intellectual tradition whose history consists of the evolution of men's thoughts about political problems over time. It is the disciplined investigation of political problems which has over the centuries attracted inquiries from political philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, Machiavelli, Karl Marx and many others.

Consequently, the focus of any study on the history of political thought is to understand and interpret the various perspectives on collection of writings on the changing theories of the state. Such an inquiry will explore the reason of the state, the nature of the state and the place of the individuals within the framework of the state. It seeks to establish yardsticks upon which the state and its machineries can be objectively assessed.

Specifically, the thrust of political thought has often raised questions on the limits of state power, the relationship between the church and the state, the so-called political obligation and polemics on the contract and relationship between the citizens and the state. In line with this, philosophers in time and space have often sought to explore not only the objective realities of a political system but also what should constitute the ideal reality. These endeavours have over the centuries revealed consensus ideals and sometimes conflicting perspectives on what is and what ought to be the nature of reality in a political society.

Significantly, there exist remarkable distinction between the prevailing orientation and thrust of political thought in the classical era as represented by the views of Plato and Aristotle when compared to the prevailing ideas in the medieval era. Similarly, the nature of political theory between the Renaissance period and the era of Reason and

Enlightenment also reveal widespread departure with what obtained in either the Classical or medieval ages.

The origin of western political thought has often been traced to the fifth century BC and is often associated with Greece. This is because the Golden Age of Athens or of Pericles is often assumed to be the beginning of western political civilization. Historically, Greece is the place where Europeans contacted the civilization of ancient Middle East and where they crossed the threshold of science, philosophy and political theory.

The history of western political philosophy begins with ancient Greece. Greek politics was characterized by the existence of city states or *polis*. Aristotle and Plato wrote of the *polis* as an ideal form of association or organized society of men dwelling in walled towns (the heart and home of political society) in which the whole community's intellectual, religious, cultural, political and economic needs could be satisfied. The *polis*, characterized primarily by its self-sufficiency, was seen by Aristotle as the means of developing morality in the human character. It is significant to observe here that the Greek *polis* corresponds appropriately to modern concept of nation, a population of a fixed area that shares a common language, history and culture.

The experience of ancient Rome was however at variance. Here, the King was called *Rex*. He was the sole ruler and his power was expressed by the word *imperium*. Bluntschli observed that the *imperium* of the *Rex* was technically unlimited both in peace and war. He was supreme judge, high priest and Commander in chief in war. He appointed all officials. However, he was expected to work on the counsel of the senate whose advice he was expected to follow. The Roman *Res Publica* or Commonwealth corresponds more accurately to modern concept of the state. The *Res Publica* was a legal system whose jurisdiction extended to all Roman citizens, securing their rights and determining their responsibilities. With the fragmentation of the Roman Empire, the question of authority and the need for order and security led to a long period of struggle between warring feudal lords of Europe.

In the classical era, man was conceived as a fraction of the polis or self governing city state that had no other existence outside the framework of the polis. The city state was on its part conceived as the only genuine platform through which political values could be realised. The polis was conceived as fundamentally self sufficient and the only ethically sound foundation for the higher forms of civilization. It was however not a perfect structure but one which needed to be either improved or superseded.

There was no premium attached to the notion of individualism. Specifically, a good life was perceived only in terms of participation in the life or activities of the polis. It is in line with this that Plato described the state as the bottom of division of labour in which men of differing capacity satisfy their needs by mutual exchange. Participation in the affairs of the polis was ethically conceived as more important than either duties or rights. As Aristotle put it, happiness is activity and he who does nothing cannot do well.

The city state or *polis*, in which political activities revolved, was of necessity small and further characterized by the love for independence and the all inclusiveness of its activities. Aristotle observed that the *polis* was self-sufficing as being not too large as to prevent unity of interests and feelings among its members. Furthermore, he maintains that the citizens of the *polis* must be capable of ruling and being ruled. Thus, the evolution of democratic thoughts was evident in the Greek city states.

Within the polis, citizenship was perceived in terms of sharing of the common life and stands at the summit of human goods. Consequently, to advocate or assert that for individual to seek for a good life outside the frontiers of the polis, or to be in it and not be of it was not only alien but also perceived as a sacrilege. This explains why Aristotle strongly asserts that the man who can live outside the polis is either a beast or a god. In these presumptions lie the genius of ethics and politics of the polis in the classical era.

It is significant to note that this concept of the nature of state is fundamentally faulty. For one, the complete acceptance of the polis as a moral institution by its advocates reveals the limits of their political horizon. Little premium is attached to the role which foreign affairs plays in the economy of the polis.

During the centuries that followed the collapse of Rome, the political organization of Western world was extremely pluralistic. Theoretically, the medieval political system was based on the idea that the Pope and Emperor, as Vicars of Christ were jointly responsible for the governance of Christendom. Under this condition, no territorial Prince had the power or authority to maintain an effective rule of law since the secular realm was broken down into a complex network of overlapping jurisdictions.

Writing in this epoch, St Aurelius Augustine (354-438 AD) the political existentialist, makes a distinction between a universal order of justice and the order of the state. For him, men as individuals, should ultimately honour the universal society than the state. In his contribution to

political ideas of this era, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) supports the church supremacy over the state. He argued that since the true end of man is to attain virtue, and through that qualify for the eternal enjoyment of God, the organization through which this is attained must be superior. Consequently, he advocated that secular government should be subordinate to the church because the latter is concerned with ultimate purpose that is the salvation of souls.

In the centuries between St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, feudalism emerged as the dominant socio-economic and political characteristic of the Middle-Ages. The feudal era, which lasted for about ten centuries, is a socio-economic system of land ownership wherein the lords, release out land (manor) to serfs who owe loyalty to the lords. They work on the land and must return a good portion of the produce to the lord. Under the feudal system, man's socio-economic and political relevance were dependent on his relationship to land. It is these features that characterised the trend in the Middle-Ages. Attempts are made below to highlight the dominant philosophies of the epoch.

Practical exigencies of the state reached a point in the emergence of Reformation and Renaissance. The arrival of Protestantism raised serious questions of political obligation in the evolution of political thought. Practicing Lutherans and The Calvinist began to rethink their continued loyalty to Catholic Princes and even Catholic subjects thought the same way about Protestant Princes. The consequence of this was the crystallization and codification of natural laws and doctrines of state sovereignty. Here, royal authority increased with a decline of papal authority even in Catholic states. The end product was the emergence of absolute monarchy which overturned feudal constitutionalism on which the medieval politics depended.

The reformation supported the absolutism of Monarchs and placed all ecclesiastical authority to civil predominance. Reformation scholars such as Hobbes supported absolutism in his *Leviathan*, which contained his social contract theory. Hobbes doctrine found complement in the divine right of kings, which gave credence to royal absolutism. Machiavelli on his part freed kings from the limitation imposed by public morality. He argues that the state is an end in itself, with its own life aimed at its own preservation and advantage and as such was not bound by obligations. For him, the prince should aim at conquering and maintaining state and the end will be judged honourably and praised by everyone.

It was from the writings of Nicollo Machiavelli and Jean Bodin that the modern concept of state as the centralizing force for stability emerged. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli gave prime import to the durability of

government, sweeping aside all moral consideration and focusing instead on the strength, the vitality, courage and independence of the ruler. For Bodin, power was not sufficient in itself to create a sovereign. Rules must comply with morality to be durable, and it must have continuity i.e. a means of establishing succession. Reflecting on the role of state sovereignty in the prevention of anarchy, Bodin cautions that for monarchical power to remain unquestioned it must be in conformity with natural laws and to reflect divine authorization.

The era of reformation and renaissance was succeeded by the era of reason and enlightenment. This era was characterized by intense skepticism of religious revelations, the increasing spread of literacy and consequential growth in the size of politically conscious, curious and ambitious communities. Specifically, intense challenge was placed on all established dogma and this ignited a changing condition of political and social speculations, proliferation of political thoughts and conflicts of rival explanation or models of social and individual life within the state. Descartes, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau who contributed to French encyclopedia believed in the power of reason and knowledge to liberate man from restrictive political and religious systems. The influence of English empiricism on the philosophical traditions stemming from Descartes led to the great intellectual development referred to as Enlightenment.

Montesquieu writing on liberty emphasized that political freedom is to be found in moderate governments where power is not abused. He argued that when the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body, there can be no liberty and if the judicial power be not separated from the legislative and executive, the life and liberty of subjects would be exposed to arbitrary control. Consequently, he proposed that the nature of governmental constitution should be such that power be a check to power.

A significant feature and prevailing belief of the Enlightenment is the Principle of liberty as contained in Code Napoleon which emphasized that the state should not encroach on individual's freedom. This code was exported from France to Europe and the rest of the world. Utopian thinkers looked forward to the emergence of politics not characterized by inequalities and injustice. Jeremy Bentham in his work, *A Fragment of Government* (1776) and *Principle* (1789) advocated for utilitarianism, which emphasized that the happiness of the majority of individuals was the greatest good. This he argues will be achieved through the calculus of pleasure and pain. Rousseau extends the dominant notion of the era by advocating that the state should owe its authority to the general will of the governed because the law is none other than the will of the people as a whole and an environment for the moral development of humanity.

This era featured two prominent revolutions one in France (1789) and the other in USA (1776).

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit explored the meaning and concern of political thought. Some of the findings are that political thought is the product of philosophical inquiries on the nature of state and the search for the form of government that will ensure ordered society and attainment of the good of life. Deliberate efforts were made to identify the prevailing notion of state in each era as well as the political thinkers in each era.

In line with this, the following epochs in the evolution of political theory were identified- the era of city states in Greeko-Roman period, the medieval political philosophies which was characterised by the controversy between the church and state, the era of national state in reformation and renaissance and the era of reason and enlightenment.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit explained political thought as man's attempt to understand and solve the problem of group life and organization. It also interpreted the perspectives of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Machiavelli, Karl Marx on the changing theories of the state.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What were the main features of political theory in the Era of Reason and Enlightenment?
2. What was the prevailing nature of political philosophy in the medieval era?
3. How did philosophers of the era rationalize the doctrines?
4. What was the dominant orientation in political theory in the Renaissance period?
5. What were the main features of political theory in the Era of Reason and Enlightenment?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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Nna-Emeka, C. Okereke. (2004). *Citizen and State: An Introduction to Political Discourses*. Lagos: Elim Publishers.

UNIT 2 PLATO: HIS LIFE AND TIMES (427-347 BC)

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Plato: His Life And Times
 - 3.2 Political Thought before Plato
 - 3.3 Plato's Ideal State and Best Form of Government
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the political thoughts of Plato. Specifically, it begins with an exploration of the life and times of Plato as a background to understanding the prevailing orientations and influence on him. It is also important to note that attempts are made to examine the nature of political thought before Plato with particular reference to Aristophanes and Socrates. The influences which Socrates had on Plato are also highlighted.

The focus on Plato examines his treatment of the forms of government, nature of education, his thesis of the philosopher king and other classes in society. It is remarkable to state that Plato falls within the scope of what is described as idealist political thinkers.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the life and times of Plato and its influence on his political thoughts
- examine the main thesis of Plato's political writings
- identify the influence of other political thinkers on Plato and his influence on other political philosophers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Plato: His Life And Times

Plato was the son of a wealthy and influential Athenian parent. He began his philosophical life as a student of Socrates. Following the death of his master, Plato traveled to Egypt and Italy where he studied with students of Pythagoras. He remained an adviser to the ruling family of Syracuse for several years before returning to Athens to establish his school of philosophy called *The Academy*, where he sought to transmit the philosophical heritage of Socrates to his students through mathematical learning, to the achievement of abstract philosophical truth. It is this platform that constitutes the written dialogues on which his enduring reputation rests.

At inception, Plato sought to convey the spirit of Socrates' teaching by presenting accurate reports of the master's conversational interaction through series of dialogue which later became the major source of information on the thoughts of Socrates. Such early dialogues were typically devoted to the investigation of single issues, about which a conclusive result is rarely achieved. For instance, the *Euthyphro* raised significant doubts about whether morally right action can be defined in terms of divine approval by pointing out a significant dilemma about any appeal to authority in defence of moral judgments. The *Apology* offers a description of the philosophical life as Socrates presented it in his own defence before the jury in Athens. The *Crito* utilized the circumstances of Socrates imprisonment to ask whether an individual citizen is ever justified for refusing to obey the state.

The middle dialogues of Plato continued to utilize Socrates as a fictional character to develop, express, and defend his own, more firmly established, conclusions about central philosophical issues. For instance, Plato utilized the *Meno*, to introduce the doctrine of recollection in an attempt to discover whether or not virtue can be taught. He also utilized it to report the logics of Socrates that no one knowingly does wrong. The *Phaedo* was useful in the development of Plato's philosophy by presenting the doctrine of the *Forms* in support of series of argument that demonstrates the immortality of the human soul. Among the other dialogues of this period are Plato's treatments of human emotion in general and of love in particular in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*.

The masterpiece in the series of Plato's middle dialogues is revealed in *The Republic*. It adopted as its point of departure, the conversations of Socrates about the nature of justice and proceeds directly to an extended discussion on the virtue (Gk: *arete*) of justice (Gk: *dikaiosune*), wisdom (Gk: *sophia*), courage (Gk: *andreia*) and moderation (Gk: *sophrosune*)

as they appear both in individual human beings and in society as a whole. This plan for the ideal society or person requires detailed accounts of human knowledge of the kind of educational programme by which it may be achieved by men and women alike, captured in a powerful image of the possibilities for human life in the allegory of the cave. The dialogue concludes with a review of various forms of government, an explicit description of the ideal state, in which only the philosopher king are fit to rule, and an attempt to show that justice is better than injustice.

Plato's later writings often modify or completely abandon the formal structure of dialogue. They include a critical examination of the theory of forms in *Parmendis*, an extended discussion of the problem of knowledge in *Theaetetus*, cosmological speculations in *Timaeus*, and an interminable treatment of government in the unfinished *Laws*.

3.2 Political Thought before Plato

Sabine and Thorson observed that while the Great Age of Athenian public life fell in the third quarter of the fifth century, the Great Age of political philosophy came only after the downfall of Athens in her struggle with Sparta. Prior to this era, the Athenians were not much engaged in either reading or writing. As such, scarcely anything was preserved on prevailing political theories. There however exist indications that during the fifth century, active political debates on issues of public concerns and the conduct of government were common place. Political questions of various dimensions were actively asked and discussed and the Greek even conceptualized what exist today as comparative government.

Herodotus treatise on *History* exposed the curiosity in Greeks of the fifth century to the laws, customs and institutions of other parts of the world. It became obvious that some behavior which were upheld and praised in one place maybe condemned and ridiculed in another. Individual sought to live within the standard of their various countries as such customs and laws formed the basis of regulation and social control. The book contained dialogues on issues relating to such forms of government as monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Such contending issues as the virtues of monarchy, or the rule of one-best man and subsequent degeneration to tyranny, the desirability of the so-called equality in democracy and nature of mob rule which is a corrupt form of democracy were widely discussed.

At a point, political debates in Athens centered on economic issues and the polemics between proponents of aristocracy of the old and well born families of land owners, and democracy dominated by new interests of

foreign trade with aim to develop Athenian power on the sea. Meanwhile, while contention and debates on the best form of government was prevalent in Athens, conservatism and political stability dominated the trends in Sparta. In view of the dynamics of Athenian politics and democracy, the political system in Athens was described in terms of progress especially with the eventual triumph of democracy during the political career of Pericles. Generally, Athenian political history and that of other Greek city states remained characterized by active party struggle and rapid constitutional change.

The relevance of economic factors in Athenian politics is revealed by the triumph of democracy over aristocracy in the city state. In the supposed Xenophon work, *Constitution of Athens*, the author conceives the constitution as a perfect instrument of government and a perverted form of government. The author conceives democracy as a device for exploiting the rich and putting wealth in the hands of the poor. He observed that with democracy, one cannot even identify a slave out there on the street. For him, the popular court was simply a clever way of distributing pay to six thousand jury men and compelling Athens allies to spend money in Athens while waiting to transact their judicial business. (Sabine and Thorson 1973: 38).

The principal ideas presented by the **Sophist** are that nature should not be conceived as setting a rule of ideal justice and right. They repudiated the impression that slavery or nobility of birth are both natural phenomena. Specifically, Sophist Antiphon argued that there was no difference between a Greek and a Barbarian. In his book, *On Truth*, he equivocally affirmed that all laws are merely conventional and therefore contrary to nature. Justice may be thought of as a convention having no other basis but the law of the state itself while nature is considered non-moral.

Consequently, most of what is just according to the law is against nature and men who are not self assertive usually loose more than they gain. Nature assumed the image as simply egoism or self-interest and a rule of strength. This stimulated contention and attempts to establish the true nature of nature. One dominant perspective conceived nature as a law of justice and rights inherent in human being and the world. The other conceived nature non-morally as self assertion and egoism manifesting in the desire for pleasure and power.

Socrates exhibited the rational tradition of raw philosophy based on the belief that virtue is knowledge which can be learned and taught. He was engaged in the quest for a valid general rule of action and imparting through education. Furthermore, he was concerned with generating precise definition of issues with the belief that if ethical concepts can be

defined, a scientific application of them in specific cases can be attained. The ensuing science in his view can be used to sustain a society of demonstrable excellence. This was indeed the vision philosophers like Plato were concerned with in their search for the best state.

Socrates remained an outspoken critic of the Athenian democracy based on the assumption that any man can assume an office. He was accused of corrupting innocent mind and later executed. The work of Socrates greatly influenced Plato.

Aristophanes (445-380 BC) was a Greek philosopher who defended the aristocratic order of Greek politics. For him, democracy was not a good form of government because it created avenue for unqualified people to occupy political positions. In his dialogue in *The Knight*, he observed that although the sausage seller lacked the competence to conduct public affairs, that such lack of competence was in essence, an advantage. Similarly, he denounced early reforms in Athens where poor citizens paid as jurors, ridiculed the practice of justice. Like Xenophon, he maintained that many unqualified people joined the juror for the sake of money.

In his work, *Ecclesiazusae*, he outlined the new order of the state. Here, he advocated that women are to oust men from politics and that marriage should be discarded and all women and men will be common and free. Consequently, he proposed that children should be kept in ignorance of their true parents and are to be equally the sons of their elders. This he demonstrated in the dialogue between Praxagoras and Blepyrus. He further advocated that labour is to be performed only by slaves while gambling, theft and lawsuits should be abolished.

The ideas of Aristophanes are very representative of his time. This coincided with the same time when Plato wrote his manuscript on *Republic*. As such, it is not very clear who actually preceded the other. However, one basic fact is that Aristophanes favoured communism or a system of communal ownership of property as a substitute for democracy which he condemned.

3.3 Plato's Ideal State and Best Form of Government

Writing on the ideal state or *polis*, Plato describes it as a just state based on justice which is the earthly manifestation of the human soul. He identified two basic principles that underlie the polis as the mutual needs of the individuals that make up the polis and secondly, the various aptitudes to be realized. From this, he describes the polis as a natural growth with its modes and mores and based on the needs and aptitudes of its members. Plato shares the view that to establish or govern a state

is a labour to which the human hero shows himself most godlike while the life of political service is the crown of human blessedness.

Plato further identified three major social classes in the ideal state as the rulers, the soldiers and the producer or workers which corresponds to the soul's three operative elements and corresponds respectively to the *Nous*, *Thumos* and *Soma*. The *Nous* or Reason refers to the Philosopher Kings or rulers who with the aptitude of wisdom govern and legislate for the polis. They are the lovers of wisdom, truth and knowledge. This category of officials should neither marry nor own property.

The *Thumos* or Spirit refers to the soldiers or auxiliaries and guardians of the rulers. They are primarily concerned with the defence of the polis. This class must be sustained by courage and fortitude to keep order and control of workers. They must be subject to the Philosopher Kings and must possess neither property nor wealth.

The *Soma* or body refers to the producers, that is, the workers in the society. Members of this class are guided by desire for satisfaction of senses and with their desire and temperance provide the polis with material subsistence. They are subject to the *Nous* and *Thumos* and have no significant political responsibility. Members of this class can get married and own property. Plato contends that in an ideal state the harmony of these classes are safeguarded by justice especially as it concerns their duties and rights.

Plato extols "Aristocracy" as the best form of government where only the best rule for general interests. To this form of government, he describes others as inferior. He subsequently identified and describes other forms of government as degeneration from the ideal state. Specifically, he described *Timocracy* as a government of honour and ambition; degeneration from the ideal state where dissension exists between two elements of the governing class; the ruler and the guardian no longer experience cordial relations with their subjects. The violence of their opposition is resolved in compromise under which they distribute land and houses to private ownership, while the subjects (producers) whom they once guarded as freemen are reduced to menials and constantly held in subjection.

Another deviation from the ideal state is Oligarchy. Here, the few rule in their narrow and selfish interests. Under oligarchy, it is wealth or property qualification that counts and political power is in the hands of the rich and the poor have no share of it. In oligarchy, the process of accumulation is in private hands and this heightens the possibility of perversion of the law. Here, the state suffers as majority of its citizens are poor and beggarly and often lack proper education.

Plato further classified democracy as another deviation from the ideal state. He conceived democracy as originating from the conflict of the minority rich and majority poor wherein the poor emerged victorious. He described it as a society where there is equality of political opportunity and freedom for every individual member to do as he likes. Such a society for Plato lacks high principles and ideals and has little restriction in desires as the law is underrated.

The last degeneration from the ideal state in the views of Plato is Tyranny. This society is characterised by oppressive government either by an absolute ruler or group of rulers which administer with cruelty and without due regards for the rule of law. Plato attributes it to the excessive emphasis of liberty under democracy. In his view, tyranny is the worst form of government.

In a nutshell, Plato's ideal state is based on reason and controlled by the Philosopher King. It pursues the attainment of the best objective of the state which he classified as happiness. He proposed that the Philosopher King must emerge through a rigorous process of education which involves both theoretical and practical orientations and that this education will continue until they are at least fifty years. It is expected that the curriculum must cut across discipline such as mathematics, physical education, politics, psychology and philosophy. Only persons who have successfully completed this curriculum and emerged outstanding will take their turn to steer the turbulent ship of statecraft. It is on this background that Plato is classified as an idealist or utopian political philosopher.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Plato remains till date one of the prominent philosophers in political history. His ideas grew to stimulate several other inquiries on the nature and processes of the ideal state. Specifically, Plato advocated that the ideal state should be governed by the philosopher king. Such a state must have the classes of the soldiers and producers. Each of the three classes corresponds to the three components of the human life- nous, thumos and soma. Plato further advocated that the position of the philosopher king must be reached through a rigorous process of education which runs up to the age of 50.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit explored the political thought of Plato as well as the orientations and influences that shaped his views as it relates to forms of government, nature of education and thesis on philosopher kings.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the fundamental aspects of Plato's ideal state?
2. Briefly describe the life and times of Plato.
3. What is the dominant trend in the philosophies of the Classical era?
4. Identify the central idea advocated by the Sophists.
5. What are the major ideas of Aristophanes and Socrates?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 ARISTOTLE: HIS LIFE AND TIMES (384-322 BC)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and Times of Aristotle
 - 3.2 Basic Works of Aristotle
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the political ideas of Aristotle often described as the father of comparative politics. Specifically, attempt is made to highlight the nature of ideas espoused by Aristotle and the various factors and experiences that helped shape his thoughts. Like Plato, the thrust in the philosophy of Aristotle was motivated by the need to evolve a pattern of governance that will enhance the attainment of the good life. He compared various constitutions and identified three forms of government and their perversions.

It is Aristotle's position that the state has an organic origin which emanates from the family and expands till it transforms into the state which is highest of all human associations. Aristotle's ideas are espoused in his work *Politics*.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to expose the students to the basic works of Aristotle
- to identify the events in Aristotle's life that influenced his political ideas
- to stimulate further discussion on nature of political thoughts of Aristotle.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of Aristotle

Aristotle was born in 384 BCE at Stagirus, a Greek colony and seaport on the coast of Thrace. His father Nichomachus was court physician to King Amyntas of Macedonia, and from this began Aristotle's long association with the Macedonian Court, which considerably influenced his life. While he was still a boy his father died. At age 17 his guardian, Proxenus, sent him to Athens, the intellectual center of the world, to complete his education. He joined the Academy and studied under Plato, attending his lectures for a period of twenty years.

As Aristotle matured, he began to lecture on rhetoric. At the death of Plato in 347, Aristotle was invited by his friend Hermeas, ruler of Atarneus and Assos in Mysia, to his court where he spent three years and got married to Pythias, (the King's niece). He later married a second time to another woman named Herpyllis, who bore him a son, Nichomachus. He left Hermeas for Mytilene at the invitation of Philip of Macedonia following the conquest of Hermeas by the Persians. While he was in Mytilene, he became the tutor of Philip's 13 year old son, Alexander (later world conqueror) for five years.

Aristotle returned to Athens after the death of Philip and left Alexander to continue with the challenge of leadership. Upon his return, he discovered that the Platonic school was flourishing under Xenocrates and that Plato's doctrine has become the dominant philosophy in Athens. He subsequently established his school which became known as the *Lyceum*. Aristotle subsequently devoted time and energies to his teaching and philosophical inquiries. Two types of teaching dominated Aristotle's lectures. The first was the more detailed discussions to a select caucus of advanced students which he usually administers in the morn while the second was the popular discourses in the evening for the general body of lovers of knowledge.

Following the sudden death of Alexander in 323 BC, the pro-Macedonian government in Athens was overthrown, and a general reaction occurred against anything Macedonian. Aristotle was accused of impiety and he fled to Chalcis in Euboea. His reason was that "The Athenians might not have another opportunity of sinning against philosophy as they had already done in the person of Socrates." In the first year of his residence at Chalcis he complained of a stomach illness and died in 322 BCE.

After his death, Aristotle's writings were held by his student Theophrastus, who had succeeded Aristotle in leadership of the

Peripatetic School. The name Peripatetic school was used to describe Aristotle and his followers because they had the habit of walking about while in a discourse. Theophrastus library were kept later by one of his students called Neleus who concealed the works inherited from Aristotle and Theophrastus in a vault in order to protect them from theft and destruction. Some of the works were damaged by moth, dampness and worms. These works were later held by Apellicon, a wealthy book lover who brought them to Athens in 100 BC. They were later taken to Rome after the capture of Athens by Sulla in 86 BCE. In Rome they soon attracted the attention of scholars, and their new edition gave fresh impetus to the study of Aristotle and of philosophy in general. This collection is the basis of the works of Aristotle that we have today. Strangely, the list of Aristotle's works given by Diogenes Laertius does not contain any of these treatises. It is possible that Diogenes' list is that of forgeries compiled at a time when the real works were lost to sight.

In his work, *Politics*, Aristotle defined politics as merely an extension of ethics. He studied the constitutions of over 150 polities and it is on this basis that he is often ascribed as the “Father of Comparative Politics.” Among his writings is the interesting tract *On the Polity of the Athenians*. A breakdown of the works indicates that the early period follows Plato's theory of forms and soul, the middle rejects Plato, and the later period (which includes most of his treatises) is more empirically oriented.

3.2 Basic Works of Aristotle

Aristotle conceives politics as an integral aspect of ethics which is a completion and verification of it. He maintains that the moral ideal in political administration is only a different aspect of that which also applies to individual happiness. Man, for him is a political animal and a fraction of the city state and that the city state is the necessary condition for civilized life and the only means for bringing human faculties to their highest form of development.

He further contends that humans are by nature social beings, and the possession of rational speech (logos) in itself leads us to social union. He conceived the ideal state (*koinonia politike* - political community) to be an offshoot from the family which evolved through the village community, to town, nation and subsequently the state. It is usually based on sharing as it was originally formed for the satisfaction of natural wants. The ideal state exists afterwards for moral ends and for the promotion of the higher life. The state as such is no mere local union for the prevention of wrong doing, and the convenience of exchange. It is an institution for the protection of goods and property and also a genuine moral organization for advancing the development of humans.

The family, which chronologically exists prior to the state, involves a series of relations between husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave. Aristotle describes slavery as a natural institution and the slave as a piece of live property which has no existence except in relation to his master. He likened the relationship between a slave and his master to that between the body and soul; however, he maintained that we must distinguish between those who are slaves by nature, and those who have become slaves merely by war and conquest. He described the communal ownership of wives and property as sketched by Plato in the *Republic* as based on a false conception of political society. In his view, the state is not a homogeneous unity, as Plato believed; rather it is made up of dissimilar elements.

The *classification of constitutions* is based on the fact that government may be exercised either for the good of the governed or of the governing, and may be either concentrated in one person or shared by a few or by the many. There are thus three true forms of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and constitutional republic. The perverted forms of these forms of government are tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. The difference between the last two is not that democracy is a government of the many, and oligarchy of the few; instead, democracy is the state of the poor, and oligarchy of the rich. Considered in the abstract, these six states stand in the following order of preference: monarchy, aristocracy, constitutional republic, democracy, oligarchy, tyranny. He notes that with a perfect person, monarchy would be the highest form of government, but that the absence of such people puts it practically out of consideration. Similarly, true aristocracy is hardly ever found in its uncorrupted form. It is in the constitution that the good person and the good citizen coincide. Ideal preferences aside, then, the constitutional republic is regarded as the best *attainable* form of government, especially as it secures that predominance of a large middle class, which is the chief basis of permanence in any state. With the spread of population, democracy is likely to become the general form of government.

Which is the *best state* is a question that cannot be directly answered. Different races are suited for different forms of government, and the question which meets the politician is not so much what is abstractly the best state, but what is the best state under existing circumstances. Generally, however, the best state will enable anyone to act in the best and live in the happiest manner. To serve this end the ideal state should be neither too great nor too small, but simply self-sufficient. It should occupy a favorable position towards land and sea and consist of citizens gifted with the spirit of the northern nations, and the intelligence of the Asiatic nations. It should further take particular care to exclude from

government all those engaged in trade and commerce; “the best state will not make the “working man” a citizen. Such a state should provide support for religious worship and secure morality for itself through the educational influences of law and early training. In Aristotle’s ideal state, the essential features of citizenship is that it should be a relation between two equals, rendering a voluntary loyalty to a government having lawful rather than despotic authority.

Aristotle affirms that **education** is of primary importance in a polity because it promotes the progress of the constitution by positively moulding the character and perception of the citizens. As such, he insists that education should be guided by legislation to make it correspond with the results of psychological analysis, and follow the gradual development of the bodily and mental faculties. Children should during their earliest years be carefully protected from all injurious associations, and be introduced to such amusements as will prepare them for the serious duties of life. Their literary education should begin in their seventh year, and continue to their twenty-first year. This period is divided into two courses of training, one from age seven to puberty, and the other from puberty to age twenty-one. Such education should not be left to private enterprise, but should be undertaken by the state.

There are four main branches of education: reading and writing, Gymnastics, music, and painting. They should not be studied to achieve a specific aim, but in the liberal spirit which creates true freemen. Thus, for example, gymnastics should not be pursued by itself exclusively, or it will result in a harsh savage type of character. Painting must not be studied merely to prevent people from being cheated in pictures, but to make them attend to physical beauty. Music must not be studied merely for amusement, but for the moral influence which it exerts on the feelings. Indeed all true education is, as Plato saw, a training of our sympathies so that we may love and hate in a right manner.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Aristotle remains one of the leading figures in political philosophy. His ideas were carried forward by later scholars like Cicero and Marsilio of Padua. Aristotle is regarded as the father of comparative politics and his works are held in high esteem among scholars among political scientists. Like Plato, he is also an idealist political scholar whose inquiry was propelled by the quest for a suitable form of government.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit highlighted the nature of Aristotle's ideas on how to evolve a pattern of governance that will enhance good life, and the myriad of factors and experiences that helped shape his thoughts.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a clear and concise account of the life and times of Aristotle.
2. Examine Aristotle's views on education and its role in the polity.
3. What is the origin and nature of Aristotle's best state?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 DECLINE OF CITY STATES

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Epicurean Philosophy
3.2	The Cynics
3.3	The Stoic
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This section of the study examines the ideas that emerged towards the end of the era of polis which posed philosophical questions on some critical aspects upon which the city state were based. These new ideas in no small way contributed to stimulate curiosity that facilitated the decline of the city states. Specifically, the ideas expressed by the epicureans, stoics and cynics will be discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- be exposed to the prevailing ideas towards the end of the city states
- understand the essential kernels embedded in the teachings of the epicureans, stoics and cynics
- grasp how these teaching contributed to facilitate the decline of the city states.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Epicurean Philosophy

Epicurean philosophy sought to inculcate in its students, a state of individual self-sufficiency. Its primary teaching is that a good life consists of the enjoyment of pleasure. To the Epicureans, happiness implies the avoidance of pain, worry and anxiety. It involves a withdrawal from the useless cares of public life. It constitutes the realm of intrinsic virtue and value. The wise man in their view will have nothing to do with politics unless circumstances compel him to do so. The Epicurean philosophy identified the anxiety of religion, of divine retribution and the incomprehensible whims of god and spirits as among the most serious consolations to which men are heir. It further advanced the belief that the gods care not about men and do not interfere either for

good or evil in the course of their lives. As such, it remained a caustic critic of all sorts of superstitious practice and beliefs, such as divination and astrology.

For the Epicurean philosophers, nature means physics and constitutes the atom from which all things are made. However, they observed that so far as the individuals are concerned, nature means self interest, the desire of every man for his own individual happiness. Consequently, all other regulations of human action belongs to the class of conventions and is therefore meaningless for the wise man, except in so far as a conventional rule may be serviceable in producing more happiness than men would get without it.

They however contend that all men are essentially selfish and seek only their own good. The pursuit of selfish good tends to endanger the good of everyone. To avert this, men enter into tacit agreement with each not to inflict or suffer one another. They further assert that the doing of injustice is not bad in itself, rather, that suffering injustice without protection is worst than any advantage arising from it. Consequently, men adopt as a working compromise the plan of respecting the rights of others for the sake of obtaining equal forbearance from them. It flows from this that states and law therefore emerged as a contract to facilitate intercourse between men and for the sake of obtaining mutual security especially against the depredations of other men. From this, they contend that justice is nothing without such a contract.

The Epicurean thesis reveals an attack on religion and superstition in an era when the significance of religion was steadily on the increase. It has been described as a philosophy of escape as it provided for men a source of peace and consolation. The full weight of Epicureanism as a political philosophy based on pure egoism and contract was re-enacted in the doctrine of Thomas Hobbes. The emphasis of Hobbes remained the same underlying materialism of the Epicurean thesis, its reduction of all human motives to self interest, and in its construction of the state upon the need for security.

3.2 The Cynics

The Cynics propagated a protest against the City States and the social classifications upon which it rested. They argued that the one escape for man lay in the renunciation of everything that man classified as the good of life, the elimination of all social distinctions and in abandoning the amenities and sometimes even the deficiencies of social conventions. They often exhibited what was described as a shocking rudeness and disregard for decorum in their behavior. Their teachings were in most

part, targeted at the poor and emphasized contempt for all conventionalities. (Sabine and Thorson, 1973: 136)

It is significant to note that the Cynics consist of individuals who were recruited from the ranks of foreigners and exiles and as philosophers they adopted a life of poverty on principle. For instance, the founder, Antisthenes had a Thracian mother; its most notorious member, Diogenes of Sinope, was an exile; and its most able representative, Crates, renounced his fortune to assume a life of philosophic poverty as a wandering beggar and teacher. His wife, Hipparchia was a woman of good family who later became his pupil and partner in wandering.

The essential doctrinal kernel as espoused by the Cynics is that the wise man ought to be completely self-sufficing. By implication, it means that only things within his power, his thought and character is sufficient to lead the good of life. The Cynics abhor social discrimination that characterized the Greeco-Roman polities, repudiated social inequalities in the society and consequently sought in philosophy, the entrance into a spiritual realm where such abomination would not exist.

This laid the framework upon which they extolled moral character above all other concerns. For them, every other thing with specific focus on marriage, family, property, citizenship, learning good repute as well as all the piety and conventions of a civilized life fall within the realm of indifference. For them, the rich and poor, Greek and barbarian, citizen and foreigner, freeman and slave, well-born and base-born are considered equal and reduced to the same level of indifference. This world view was a direct attack on all the essential customs that characterized traditional Greek life.

3.3 The Stoic

The Stoic movement emerged as the fourth major Athenian school of philosophy around 300 BC, and became more pronounced during the second century after Christ. Its founder was Zeno of Citium. Other leaders of the Stoic movement after Zeno came from elsewhere particularly Asia Minor where there was a remarkable mixture of Greeks and the Orientals. At inception, Stoicism was a branch of Cynicism but Zeno broke ranks because of the crudeness and lack of decorum to which their naturalism led. For instance, to give up the distinction between the Greek and Barbarian was admissible but to substitute it with the sharp distinction between wise men and fools did not help matters.

One platform explored by the Stoics was the focus on monarchy which political philosopher of the past like Aristotle gave only an academic

focus. This became necessary as monarchy began assuming great relevance in Egypt, Persia and even Macedonia and the emerging monarchies tended towards absolutism. A situation emerged in which the King was not just the Head of State but was practically identified with the state especially as the monarch proved the only cohesive force that could hold it together. Monarchy at this stage appeared to be the only form of government that could bind both the Greek and Oriental together especially as the Kings were perceived to be the symbol of unity and good government.

Stoicism which is considered a Hellenistic school propagated the theory of deification of Kings. A true king was considered divine because he brought harmony to his Kingdom as God brings harmony into the world. He was an animate law, that is, a personalized form of the principles of law and right that govern the whole universe. It was for this reason that the Stoics maintained that the King possessed a divinity which the common man did not share and which brought any unworthy usurper of a throne to disaster. The authority of the King was therefore assumed to have moral and religious sanctions which his subjects could recognize without lose of their own moral freedom and dignity.

The ethical purpose of Stoicism like other philosophies before it, was designed to produce self-sufficiency and individual well being. Their doctrine proffered a positive moral meaning for the idea of a world wide state and universal law and eventually became the intellectual backbone for men of political, moral and religious convictions. The Stoics taught self sufficiency through rigorous training of the will; its virtues were resolution, fortitude and devotion to duty and indifference to the solicitations of pleasure. This sense of duty was however reinforced by religious teaching similar to orthodox Calvinism.

An essential kernel of the Stoic philosophy emanates from the religious conviction of oneness and perfection of nature or a true moral order. They espoused a strong belief in the overruling power of Divine Providence and that life was a duty upon which each man is to play his part well. Natural life for man they contend implies resignation to the will of God, cooperation with all the forces of good and composure of mind that comes from faith in the goodness and reasonableness of the world. (Sabine; 1973: 148).

From this they posit that there is in existence, a world state, which both men and God are all citizens. This world state has a constitution which is right reason, teaching men what must be done and what must be avoided. Right reason for them, is the law of nature, the standard everywhere of what is right and just. It is unchangeable in its principles and binding on all men whether ruler or subject. It is the law of God.

The Stoics posit that there are two laws for every man, the law of his city and the law of the world city. Put differently, the law of his custom and the law of reason. The second for them is superior and should have greater authority and consequently must provide a norm to which the statutes of customs and cities should conform. They further argue that customs are varied while that reason is one and that behind every variety of customs there ought to be some unity of purpose. This gave rise to the belief in a world wide system of law that has many branches. Evidently, while Stoicism tended to diminish the importance of social distinction between individuals, it tended to promote harmony between states.

The ideas propagated by the Stoic movement made a strong appeal on the educated Romans of the era and proved a medium through which Greek philosophy exerted significant influence in the formative stage of the Roman empire. For instance, the notion of divinity and deification of Kings which was integrated into Greek customs was adopted by the Roman emperors.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit identified the major movements whose ideas gained increasing currency towards the end of the Greeko-Roman era. Prominent among them include the epicurean philosophy, the stoic movement and the cynics. The epicureans sought to inculcate in their students a sense of individual self sufficiency. They extolled the pursuit of the good of life characterized by the enjoyment of pleasure and avoidance of pain.

The Cynics on their part propagated a protest against the city state and the social formation upon which it was based. Consequently, they expressed contempt for all conventionalities. In addition, the Cynics shared the passion of the epicureans on self sufficiency. The stoics on their part focused on the monarchy and subsequently propagated a deification of the kings because they were assumed to bring harmony to their kingdoms.

5.0 SUMMARY

It highlighted the essential Kernels embedded in the teachings of epicureans, stoics and cynics towards the end of the city states.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify and discuss the main thesis of the Epicurean philosophers
2. What constitute the main philosophy of the Cynics?
3. How valid is the assertion that the Cynics were opposed to the logics of the polis?
4. Critically assess the main thesis of Stoic political philosophy.
5. What are the main differences between the doctrine of the Cynics and the Stoics?

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UNIT 5 MARCUS TULIUS CICERO (106-43 BC)

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Life of Cicero
3.2	Cicero's View of Law
3.3	Cicero's View of State
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this unit is on the political thoughts of Marcus Cicero. It is remarkable to note that the writings of this philosopher had remarkable impact on the political ideals of his era. While it is accepted that Cicero apparently lacked originality in much of his work, it is noteworthy to credit him with the fact that his ideas were open to public consumption.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the main highlights of Cicero's political theory
- get exposed to the contributions of Marcus Cicero to political theory.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life of Cicero

Marcus Cicero is one of the outstanding statesmen and orators of the Roman empire. He was born in Arpinum under Rome and got influenced by the works of Plato and Aristotle. He defended the Roman constitution against the autocracy of his time. Consequently, his works, which represented a form of Stoicism, were preserved for the reading public at all future times. One remarkable fact about the work of Cicero is that they were merely compilations of previous works and as such had little originality. However, the merit of his writings is based on the fact that they were widely read.

It is also significant to note that the wide acceptability of Cicero's works to the political authority in his time made it possible for accessibility to even future generations. Essentially, his political writings formed the main source of information on the form of Stoicism which Panaetius introduced to the Roman public. His outstanding political works include

such political treatises like *De Re Publica- The Republic* 51 BC and *De Legibus- The Law* represents credible indexes of the political thoughts of Rome especially in conservative and aristocratic circles during the last days of the Republic.

Sabine and Thorson posit the ideas and significance of Cicero's works are better appreciated through an understanding of the immediate purpose and the long time influence that he exerted. They described the moral purpose for which Cicero wrote his treatises was to commend the traditional Roman virtue of public service and the preeminence of the statesman's career, enlightening and harmonizing these with a tincture of Greek philosophy. Politically, his works were designed to restore the Republican constitution in the form it was before the revolutionary tribunate of Tiberus Gracchus.

3.2 Cicero's View of Law

Cicero contends that the natural law of reason is the basis of all other laws and that its source is divine wisdom and reason that directs the entire universe. The state and its laws are always subject to the law of God, or the moral and natural law, that is, the higher rule of right which transcends human choice and human institutions. It is from this source that even the rules of nations which demands righteousness and deter from doing evil, and also other particular laws written and unwritten draw their power. The primal law for Cicero is the divine right reason of Supreme Jupiter (Roman god), powerful to establish right and wrong. Consequently, he argued that good and truth must be eternal since they originate from divine source.

Cicero emphasized the existence of a universal law of nature which has its origin in God's providential government of the world as well as the rational and social nature of man which make them akin to God. In this law lies the constitution of the universal-state. The universal law in the views of Cicero is the same everywhere and is unchangeably binding on all men irrespective of nationality. He insists that any legislation that contravenes the universal law is not entitled to be described as law because no ruler or people can invalidate it. This is the true law which in his view is *right reason*. In his words:

- There is in fact a true law- namely, right reason, which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions it restrains them from doing wrong. Its commands and prohibitions always influence good men, but are without effect upon the bad. To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict

its operation, and to annul it wholly is impossible. Neither the senate nor the people can absolve us from our obligation to obey this law, and it requires no Sextus Aelius to expound and interpret it. It will not lay down one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all peoples; and there will be as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and its sponsor. The man who will not obey it will abandon his better self, and in denying the true nature of man, will thereby suffer the severest of penalties though he has escaped all the other consequences which men call punishment. (Republic III, 22 translated by Sabine and Smith)

Cicero further contends that by definition, laws have the inherent quality of truth and justice. As such the laws of the state must also be just and true to deserve being termed as law and that such law must protect the citizens and the state as well as safeguard the tranquility of human life. He further described true law as right reason in agreement with nature. This law is of unchanging, everlasting and of universal application. The true law applies command to summon duty and often averts wrong doing by its prohibitions. Cicero further contends that it will be sin to seek to alter this law or even to repeal any part of it and is impossible to attempt to abolish it entirely. There exist no interpreter of this law but we and there is no way we can even be freed from it by the legislature.

The universality of this law implies that there will be no different law in Rome and Athens now and in the future. Rather what is in existence is one eternal and unchangeable law that will be valid for all nations, and at all times and one God for us all who is the originator, promulgator and enforcing judge of this law. He further maintained that we cannot consider the oppressive rules of some nations as true laws since they are based on the selfish principles of human nature and lack the basic qualities of divine wisdom. This is because all particular laws and rules draw their qualities from the primal law of nature else they do not oblige.

Cicero further maintained that a state without laws cannot be considered a true state because law is the greatest good of the state. He further contends in the most unequivocal terms, that in the light of the eternal law, that all men are equal. This for him do not imply that they are equal in learning and does not suggest that the state should seek to equalize their property, rather it implies that they are equal in the possession of reason, their underlying psychological make-up and in general attitude towards what they believe to be honourable or base. It is his position that inequality in the society is nothing but error and the product of bad habit and false opinion. Consequently, he argued that all men and all

racess of men possess the same capacity for experience and for the same kind of experience, and are equally capable of discriminating between right and wrong.

Furthermore, he insists that since all men are subject to one law, they are equal. This in his view is because equality is a moral requirement which suggests that some measure of human dignity and respect be accorded to every individual since we all are members of the great human brotherhood. This logic suggest that even the slave shares in this doctrine of equality since he is not just a living tool of the master rather a wage earner hired for life. Kant clarified this when he asserted that the individual should be treated as an end not just as a means.

Law for Cicero is therefore, the natural force, that is, the mind and reason with which the intelligent man measures justice and injustice. This presupposes that justice has its roots in nature which is governed by reason of the immortal gods. Cicero also contends that man share of right reason, which is law, is common with the divine. It is his opinion that sharing law also implies sharing justice in common. Force to him, is therefore merely an accident in the nature of the state and it is justified only because it is required to give effect to the principles of justice and right. From this, he posits that all possessing these three qualities and obeying the same system of law, in common, gods and men, belong to a single *Commonwealth*.

3.3 Cicero's View of State

Cicero associated the origin of the state with man's natural gift of social spirit which draws him always to partnership. A state in his view cannot exist permanently or in any form except a crippled condition, unless it depends upon or acknowledges the consciousness of mutual obligation and the mutual recognition of rights that bind its citizens together. It is therefore seen as a moral community, a group of persons who in common possess the state and its laws. Such a community represents an association of a good number of people based on justice and partnership to secure common good. It is based on this that he described political governance as *res populi* or the *res publica*, meaning "the affairs of the state" or "Commonwealth." He extended this logic further by insisting that unless a state retains it nature as a community for ethical purposes held together by common ties, it is nothing but what was later described by St. Augustine as "highway robbery on a large scale." It is on this basis that he observed that the Commonwealth is the people's affair; and the people is not every group of men, associated in any manner, but is the coming together of a considerable number of men who are united by a common agreement about law and rights and by the desire to participate in mutual advantages.

The state he therefore argued is a corporate body whose membership is in the possession of all citizens and supplies its members with the advantages of mutual aid and just government. As such, its authority arises from the collective power of the people and political power when rightly exercised, is nothing but the corporate power of the people. From this, he argued that the state cannot exist permanently except it depends upon, acknowledges or gives effects to the consciousness of mutual obligations and recognition of rights that bind its citizens together. It flows from the above that the state and its law in the purest sense is always subject to the moral and natural law which flows from God. This law transcends human choice and institutions. (Sabine and Thorson 1973)

Writing on the best form of government, Cicero exhibited faith in the Polybian Cycle that is a belief in the excellence of a mixed constitution evolved from the historical cycle of constitutions as expressed by Polybius. The Polybian cycle was a representation of the orderly alternation of good and bad constitutions, from monarchy to tyranny, from tyranny to aristocracy, from aristocracy to oligarchy, from oligarchy to moderate democracy and from democracy to mob rule. Cicero's thesis revolved on the emergence of a perfect state based on mixed constitutions whose principle will evolve from the historical development of Roman constitutions. His logic is drawn from the fact that this constitution was contributed by many minds working under diverse circumstances and embodying piecemeal solutions of various political problems as they emerged. From this, he maintained that the Roman constitution was the stable and perfect form of government that has ever evolved.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Marcus Cicero had remarkable influence on the nature of law in Romans society. His ideas on the Polybian Cycle explained the various forms of governments and how they alternate to evolve a desirable pattern for political governance in the society.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has examined Cicero's political theory especially the views on law and forms of government.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What in the views of Cicero constitute the nature and meaning of law?
2. How relevant is the Polybian cycle to the running of the state?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 2 MEDIEVAL ERA AND THE THEORY OF UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY

Unit 1	Seneca and the Christian Fathers
Unit 2	St Aurelius Augustine (354-430)
Unit 3	Feudalism (200-1400)

Unit 4	St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
Unit 5	Marsilio of Padua

UNIT 1 SENECA AND THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
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3.1	Basic Teachings of Seneca
3.2	Christian Obedience
3.3	St. Ambrose
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

A major feature of the trend in political theory during the medieval era was the contestations between the church and the state. Consequently, the underlying theme in the nature of political theories in this era was aimed at addressing this controversy. Seneca is one of the philosophers who made significant impact to influence the nature of political thought in this era. This unit therefore explores the ideas of Seneca and how his doctrine was perceived in political history.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the nature and contents of Seneca's ideas
- to highlight Seneca's contributions to political theory.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Basic Teachings of Seneca

The well centralized system of authority presented in the Roman law reflects not only administrative unity of the empire but also the ancient

conviction that the state is supreme among human institutions. In this tradition, there was no thought of a divided allegiance in which another loyalty will compete with the claim of civic duty and not evident gulf between the City of God and the earthly city.

There exist some similarities and distinction between the ideas of Cicero and Seneca especially as it concerns the ability of statesmen to deal with social problems. First, both men shared an eclectic stoicism which nature represented and a standard of goodness and reasonableness. They also described the great age of the Republic as a time when Rome achieved her political maturity and afterwards decline into senility, corruption and despotism. Their point of departure however rest on the fact that whereas Cicero held the illusion that this era may be recaptured, Seneca expressed pessimism and despondency insisting that the era of illusion was over. Furthermore Seneca like Cicero, rejected the Epicurean pursuit of private satisfaction sought by the neglect of public interests.

In the view of Seneca, dependency on a despot was preferable to dependency on the people because the mass of men is so vicious and corrupt that it is more merciless than a tyrant. He argued that a political career has little to offer the good man except the annihilation of his goodness. As such, he contended that a good man has little to do for his fellows by holding political office. He however envisaged a social service which involved no function of a political sort and maintained that it was the moral duty of the good man to offer his service in this capacity. This is another turn to the Stoic doctrine that every man is a member of two commonwealths- the civil state of which he is subject and the greater state composed of all rational beings to which he belongs by virtue of his humanity.

Seneca further noted that the greater commonwealth is a society rather than a state. This commonwealth is bound more by morals and religion than by legal or political ties. As such, the wise and good man renders service to the society even though he has no political power. This service is rendered by virtue of his moral relations to his fellow men as well as through philosophical contemplation. In his view, the man who by virtue of his thought, become a teacher of mankind, fills a place at once nobler and more influential than the political ruler. Likewise, Seneca considers the worship of God as another truly human service. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973: 172)

It is significant to note that Seneca expressed his ideas in an age when the growing need of spiritual consolation extolled religion above secular interests and as the only means of contact with a higher range of realities. Furthermore, the essentially secular unity of life was breaking

down and religion was achieving its independence beside and even above the life of the state. The growing influence and interest of religion became embodied in the institution of the Church which now began to lay claim to the loyalty of the individual.

Seneca was conscious of the inherent sin and misery in human nature. He posited that human wickedness is ineradicable and continually haunts the individual as no one escapes it. From this he added that virtue consist of the struggle for salvation. As such, his ethics placed high premium on human sympathy and gentleness and reveals a tendency towards humanitarianism. These virtues are consistent with the Stoic tradition.

Seneca rejected the ancient belief that the state is the highest agency of moral perfection. He had a glowing account of the Golden Age which in his view preceded the Age of Civilization. He argued that in the Golden Age, men were still happy and innocent; they loved a simple life without the superfluities and luxuries of civilization. They were not indeed either wise or morally perfect for their goodness resulted rather from the innocence of ignorance than from practiced virtue. In Seneca's state of nature, men have not yet acquired that great agency of greed, the institution of private property. For him, it was the growth of avarice that destroyed the condition of primitive purity.

He further contended that so long as men remained pure, they had no need for government or law; they obeyed voluntarily the wisest and best men, who sought no advantage of their own in ruling over their fellows. Unfortunately, the advancement in art brought with it luxury and corruption and men and rulers became self seeking and tyrants respectively. Consequently, law and coercion became inevitable and government became the necessary remedy for wickedness. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973)

Seneca's doctrine of Golden Age was derived from the haunting sense of decay in the Roman society of Nero's reign. His conception of law as a mere cure for sin is at variance with the Utopian notion of law as true philosophy while his belief in a primitive condition of purity is implied in the Christian notion of the fall of man. Furthermore, his insistence that private property did not exist in the state of nature tallies more appropriately with the condition of communism but is disputed by lawyers who insist that ownership of property is in accord with natural law. Such a view became pronounced following the doctrine that poverty was morally superior to riches and monasticism to a secular life.

It need be highlighted here that Seneca's doctrine in no sense suggests a subversive attack on the private property, law or the existence of

government. Rather, it implies that these institutions represent at best, an ethical second-best which will not be required in a perfect society characterized by purified human nature in place. The logic which Seneca seems to advance is that law and government backed by coercion are the divinely appointed means for ruling mankind in its fallen nature. Based on this, he posits that the government has an indivisible claim to obedience and loyalty.

Seneca's emphasis on the existence of government as a remedy for human evil reflects an enormous shift in moral opinion from the orthodoxy set by Greek political philosophers on political institutions. For instance, Aristotle expressed the opinion that the city state is the necessary condition for civilized life and the only means for bringing human faculties to their highest form of development. On the contrary, Seneca extolled the existence of a coercive power that struggle ineffectually to make earthly life tolerable as a substitute for the state as a positive agency of human perfection. It is this trend in Seneca's writing that influenced the political philosophy of the Christian fathers.

3.2 Christian Obedience

It has sometimes been argued that the rise of the Christian church as a distinct institution entitled to govern the spiritual concerns of mankind and independent of the state is the most revolutionary incident in the history of Western Europe, as it concerns politics and political philosophy. This is because, while it is accepted that Christianity is a doctrine of salvation which emphasized the providential government of the world, the obligation of law and government to do substantial justice and the equality of all men in the sight of God, certain ideas exposed by the Christian father had bearing on the functioning and processes of the society. For instance, in St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, he denounced difference of race and social position when he observed that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ." Similarly, in a letter to the Romans asserting the universal law inherent in all human beings in relation to the Jewish law, Paul observed that "For when the Gentiles, which have not law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."

The obligation of the Christian to respect secular authorities was recognized by Christ when he unequivocally told the Pharisee to "render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." St. Paul extended this further in another letter to the Romans where he cautioned against the anarchical tendencies that existed in the early Christian communities. Specifically, St. Paul made the following pronouncements:

- Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power resists the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not terrors to good works, but to the evil.

The above clearly demonstrates that St. Paul and Seneca share the view that the main power of the magistrate is the necessary consequence of human sin; the rulers work is to repress evil and encourage good. However, in the event where there exist conflict between the temporal authority and the authority of God, the individual should obey the authority of God instead.

3.3 St. Ambrose

Christian Fathers like St. Ambrose were especially uncompromising in issues relating to the autonomy of the church in spiritual matters. This uncompromising posture made him a source of reference for other Christians in later controversies on the issue. Specifically, he declared unequivocally that in spiritual matters, the church had jurisdiction over all Christians, the emperor included, for the emperor like every other Christian is a son of the church; he is within the church, not above it. (Carlyle cited in Sabine and Thorson 1973) In a letter to Emperor Valentinian, St. Ambrose clearly stated that it was the bishops that will judge the Christian emperors, not the emperors to judge the Bishops.

It is significant to note that St. Ambrose did not in any way question the duty of obedience to civil authority but he affirmed that it was not only the right but the duty of a priest to reprove secular rulers in matters of morals, a precept which he not only taught but also practiced. He once refused to celebrate the Eucharist in the presence of Emperor Theodosius because of his guilt in causing a massacre in Thessalonica. In another case, he withheld the celebration of the Eucharist until the emperor withdrew an order which St. Ambrose considered injurious to the privileges of a Bishop. Similarly, he at another incident refused to surrender a church for the use of Arians upon the order of the Emperor Valentinian. St. Ambrose specifically argued that the palaces belong to the Emperor while the churches belonged to the Bishop. He however admitted the authority of the Emperor over secular property including the lands of the church but maintained that the church building which has been dedicated to spiritual use is beyond the authority of the Emperor.

It is significant to observe that St. Ambrose unequivocally repudiated any right to rebel or resist with force the execution of the emperor's

orders. He will rather argue and implore but will not incite the people to rebellion. His position remained that whereas the secular ruler is subject to the church's instruction in spiritual matters and his authority over ecclesiastical property is limited, the rights of the church is to be maintained by spiritual means rather than by resistance.

3.4 St. Gregory

Another Christian Father that made remarkable contribution to the doctrine of the state and church is St. Gregory. In his views, a wicked King is also entitled to obedience. Writing in his *Pastoral Rule*, he maintained that the subjects must obey the rulers and in addition, they must not judge or criticize the lives of their rulers. Specifically, he unequivocally declared that:

- For indeed the acts of rulers are not to be smitten with the sword of the mouth, even though they are rightly judged to be blameworthy. But if ever, even in the least, the tongue slips into censure of them, the heart must needs be bowed down by the affliction of penitence, to the end that it may return to itself, and, when it has offended against the power set over it, may dread the judgment of him by whom the power was set over it. (See Carlyle cited in Sabine and Thorson)

One remarkable difference between St. Gregory and St. Ambrose is that whereas Ambrose protested and refused to obey some orders of the emperor he considered inconsistent with the Church, St. Gregory may protest against acts that he considered inconsistent with the canon law, but he will not refuse to obey. His position was that the Emperor had power to also do what that was considered unlawful so long as he accepts to risk the damnation.

One underlying fact about the position of the Christian thinkers of the era is their belief in the dual organisation and control of human society in the interest of the church and the state. Consequently, they stressed the preservation of eternal salvation and spiritual interests in the domain of the church while temporal and secular interests including the maintenance of peace and order remains the preserve of the state. It is their belief that a spirit of mutuality ought to prevail between both orders with each respecting the right which God had ordained for the other.

The ensuing debate between the contending authorities of the church and the state is described as the *Doctrine of the Two Swords*. Its essential doctrinal kernel is the accommodation of a society under dual control, presided over by the twin hierarchies of the church and the state,

each with distinguishable jurisdictions. This doctrine received its authoritative expression from Pope Gelasius I when the rivalry between the Pope and the Emperor made the relation between the spiritual and the temporal a matter of controversy. In his letter to the emperor in Constantinople, Pope Gelasius I advocated that in doctrinal matters, the emperor must subordinate his will to the clergy and must learn rather than presume to teach. This implied that the church and its officials must exercise jurisdiction over all ecclesiastical matters as this is the only way through which it can exert its independence as a self governing institution.

The doctrine rejected and described the combination of spiritual and secular authority in the same individual or institution as pagan tradition. This is because under the Christian dispensation, it is unlawful for the same man to be both king and priest. Emphasis was rather placed on the fact that Christian emperors need the clergy for the sake of eternal life while the clergy require imperial regulations to order the course of temporal affairs.

It is also remarkable to note that the Christian Fathers conceived the church as a universal empire in which mankind formed a single society under two governments characterised by separate laws, systems of administration and spheres of rights. Consequently, the Christian was placed between two separate laws and separate administration.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit explored Seneca's views and how this was perceived and later extended by some Christian fathers in the era. Specifically, the contributions of St. Ambrose and St. Gregory on the controversy between papal and secular authorities were highlighted. It is noteworthy to emphasize that this unit gives a good beginning to the unfolding debate over the question of supremacy between the church and the state.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the key contents of Seneca's ideas to political theory as well as the relationship of his views and that of St Ambrose.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Highlight the main contributions of Seneca to political philosophy.
2. Identify the relationship between the views of Seneca and that of St. Ambrose.
3. To what extent do St Ambrose ideas differ or coincide with those of St. Gregory.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 ST AURELIUS AUGUSTINE (354-430)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and Times of St. Augustine

3.2	St. Augustine's Doctrine of Two Cities
3.3	On the Relationship between the Church and the State
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the life and political ideas of St. Aurelius Augustine. Specifically, attempt is made here to identify the main contents of his teaching as expressed in the doctrine of two cities. Other issues which are treated in this unit focus on the so-called limits of political obligation and the contention on the spheres of supremacy between the church and the state.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to be exposed to the ideas of St Aurelius Augustine
- to be able to explore the major highpoints in the teachings of St. Augustine
- to establish its relationship with the notion of state in medieval era.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of St. Augustine

St Aurelius Augustine was a great convert and pupil of St. Ambrose. Often described as the Bishop of Hippo, St Augustine's philosophy was only in a slight degree systematic while his mind encompassed most of the learning of ancient times which was transmitted through him, to the Middle-Ages. He wrote *City of God* to defend Christianity against the pagan charge that it was responsible for the decline of Roman greatness and power and specifically for causing the sack of the city of Alaric in 410. In the book, St. Augustine restated the notion that man is a citizen of two cities- the earthly city and the city of God. This flows from the belief that man's nature is two-fold; he is body and spirit and therefore a citizen of this world and the heavenly city at the same time. It is his view that a fundamental fact of human life is the division of human interest, the worldly interests that centre on the body and the other interest that centre on the soul which belongs to the City of God. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973).

St. Augustine (also referred as Blessed Augustine) was born in Tagaste in Algeria, North Africa to a Christian mother, St. Monica and a father who remained steadfast to his traditional religion till later years in life. He resented his mother's plea to convert to Christianity and rather preferred to romanticize with the many seductions of his era, particularly the Great Philosophies of men, the licentiousness of other students, the theatres, the intoxication of his literary success, and a proud desire to be always first, even in evil. He however converted to Christianity in 387 AD. By 391 AD, he was ordained a Priest and later Bishop of Hippo in 396 AD, a position he occupied until his death.

Aurelius Augustine studied Rhetoric at Carthage and eventually worked as a teacher with it while in Carthage, Milan and Rome. He also read the works of Cicero, the Manichaeans, Skeptics and later the neo-Platonists. These experiences exposed him to questions of philosophy and trained his mind in curiosity. He was a very prolific writer and some of his works include *Confessions* and *De Civitas Dei* (*On the City of God*), *On the Trinity*; *On Faith, and Love* and *On Christian Doctrine*. His other writings include his polemic attacks on various heresies such as *Against Faustus, the Manichean*; *On Baptism*; *Against the Donatists*.

The *City of God* which was inspired by the fall of Rome to the Visigoths in 410, focused on a study of the relationship between Christianity and secular religion. This is because the collapse of Rome shook the faith of many Christians. This explains his logic that The Church was the spiritual domain of the City of God (Civitas Dei) distinct from the City of Man (Civitas Terrena). This logic significantly influenced the prevailing world view of the Middle-Ages.

St. Augustine taught grace and salvation but opposed such heresies as propagated under Pelagianism that individuals have the ability to choose to be good to such a degree as to merit salvation without divine aid. He also framed such concepts like *original sin* and *just war*. He remains a Saint, a Doctor of the Church and the Patron of the Augustinian religious order in the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communion. He is ascribed a significant place in the doctrine of orthodox Calvinism as one of the theological fathers of Reformation while the Eastern Orthodox Church celebrate his feast on 15 June. He remains till date one of the most influential figures in the development of the Western Church.

3.2 St. Augustine's Doctrine of Two Cities

In his work, *Civitas Dei*, St Augustine identified two Kingdoms which correspond to heavenly Kingdom or Civitas Dei, represented on earth by the Church and the Civitas Terrena or earthly city represented by the Holy Roman Empire. This doctrine became relevant to allay the fears of

many Christian whose faith were severely shaken by the defeat and overthrow of the Roman Empire. His principal logic was that the entire humanity is one but divided into these two cities as identified by those who abide by the earthly principles and others living in accordance with the principles of the divine.

St. Augustine distinguished between the two cities. He described the earthly city as founded on the earthly, appetitive and possessive impulses of the lower human nature. This refers to the kingdom of Satan and has its history in the disobedience of the Angels and embodying itself in the pagan empires of Assyria and Rome. The other is the City of God, the society founded in the hope of heavenly peace and spiritual salvation. It is the kingdom of Christ which embodies itself first in the Hebrew nation and later the Church and the Christianized Empire. He contends that history is replete with the struggle between these two cities and of ultimate mastery which must fall to the City of God. He insists that eternity or permanence and peace is possible only in the City of God. This is because all earthly or temporal powers must pass away because such powers are naturally mutable and unstable and are often built on aspects of human nature which necessarily issue in war and the greed of domination. He used this logic to explain the fall of Rome. It must however be noted that St. Augustine did not equate the Church as the City of God. Rather, the Church remains an institution that propels and prepares men for the reward of that glorious city.

St. Augustine ascribed divinity to the heavenly city which he described as the true society, a universal commonwealth ordained by God from creation. It is a city reserved for those that love and worship God and to whom God's grace is bestowed. The membership of *Civitas Dei* is unlimited by race, class, territory or any other form of boundaries. They enjoy community with God and with one another. It has a broader membership which includes the angels and dead elect and the living who through sacrament of the Church have won the grace of god. The City of God based on justice is the true Commonwealth.

In his interpretation of man's quest for happiness, Aurelius Augustine maintained that the two great ends that determine man's action in life are the Supreme Good for which other things are desired and Supreme Evil which is the final end to which harmful effects of evil lead. He insists that it is the desire to locate these great ends that propel all quests for wisdom and attempts have been made to locate these ends in the soul, body and the soul and body together. St. Augustine associated the foundation of Supreme Good in the City of God. He argued that men desire joy and peace and that even in war, the ultimate desire is to attain peace.

Perfect peace for him is only attainable in the City of God where Supreme Good is everlasting. He distinguished it from the peace which men pass through in their mortal state as the perfect peace of the City of God experience no adversity and remains unto immortality. He argued that in the earthly city, *Civitas Terrena*, peace involves a concord between men in ordered relation with one another. However, in the City of God, the eternal peace prevails and it manifest as harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God.

Writing on slavery, Augustine identified two levels of slavery which are *slavery to sin* and *slavery of one man to another*. He argued that all men including slave owners are in the bondage of slavery. His logic is that beside physical slavery, the slave owners are in themselves slaves to lust, pride and greed. It is his opinion that it is much more beneficial to be slaves to human beings than to lust which is the more pitiless domination.

3.3 On the Relationship between the Church and the State

Man, he maintains is called to the universal and eternal society guided by the universal state's relative law. He is called to a higher order, the Celestial Society, that is neither limited by time nor national or political boundaries. From this, he maintained that the Christian has to respect and obey the secular powers of course with a spirit of one destined to a higher city. This obedience to the earthly powers must be limited to the secular affairs since the heavenly city the celestial society, cuts across languages and nation and never respecting the temporal laws that are against true religion.

St. Augustine stands as a powerful advocate for orthodoxy and of the episcopacy as the sole means for the dispensing of saving grace. It is his position that unless the state is a community for ethical purposes and unless it is held together by moral ties, it is nothing except highway robbery on a large scale. In the light of later scholarship, Augustine can be seen to serve as a bridge between the ancient and medieval worlds. A review of his life and work, however, shows him as an active mind engaging the practical concerns of the churches he served.

It is significant to understand that the political ideas of St. Augustine like that of some other Christian Fathers emphasis the autonomy of the Church in spiritual matters and the belief that government is shared between the royalty and the clerics. The apparent interpretation is that both the church and the secular order are independent as long as each act within the sphere of its jurisdiction. This ensures that no party encroaches on the sphere of the other's jurisdiction.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit explored the teachings of St Augustine. One central fact is his insistence that the individual should obey the state with the mind of one destined to a higher life. By implication, he shares the view that political obedience is to be sustained so long as it does not breach the values of that higher order which is found in the Civitas Dei. This has been sometimes interpreted to imply that the state supremacy should be restricted to secular matters.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit addresses the ideas and the teachings of St Aurelius Augustine.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

8. How did St. Augustine's early life influence his political ideas?
9. What are the main logics espoused in the Doctrine of Two Cities?
10. What is St. Augustine's view on the relationship between the Church and the State?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

St. Augustine, (1972). *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, Translated by Henry Bettenson and edited by D. Knowles. Middlesex: Penguin Book.

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, (2004). *Citizen and State: An Introduction to Political Discourse*. Lagos: Elim.

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UNIT 3 FEUDALISM (200-1400)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Feudalism (200-1400)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary

- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this unit is on the functioning of a feudal society. Attempt is made in this section to identify which feudalism emerged and existed for over a millennium over and above the empire structure of political system. Attempts are also made here to identify the significant features of feudalism and how it operated during the medieval age.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to understand the nature and features of feudalism in the medieval era
- to be able to identify why the feudal era lasted for a long time.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Feudalism (200-1400)

Feudalism dominated the political structure of the medieval era just as city states were prevalent in the Greeco-Roman era. However, the structure and processes of feudalism was unequally developed in different times and places. For instance, the notion of serfdoms existed as early as the 5th century. However, the developed structures of feudalism emerged in the 11th and 12th centuries following the collapse of the Frankish empire. It is sometime estimated that the feudal era lasted for as long as twelve centuries in history.

The feudal epoch was characterized chiefly by land ownership held in fief by serfs. Under the feudal era, public officers carry out their functions not only for national interest but also for the gains they anticipate in return usually in the form of land over which they exercise full jurisdiction. In a number of cases, a substantial part of the land went to the military leaders, the strongest of whom later became kings. The military leader handed over the seized land to their combatants for life long use, and later as inheritable property together with the peasants living on it.

One underlying feature of the feudal era is the fact that in a period of order and threats of anarchy in medieval European societies, large political and economic units were usually impossible. As such, government tended to be restricted to a small size by modern or Roman

standards. Consequently, there was a focus on the system of agriculture which made the village community and its dependent farmlands almost self-sufficing. In this situation, land emerged as a very crucial factor and important source of wealth in the feudal era. The effect of this was that every individual, including the King and his fighting forces derived their social, economic and political status and right from their relationship to land.

Interestingly, the control of land became the preserve of a small community in the form of villages which also exercised customary regulations and minor police functions. The control of government and organisation of society became fundamentally local. This is because the existing state of disorder and primitive means of communication created difficulties for the emergence and functioning of a large central government in even elementary duties as the protection of life and properties.

The plots of land handed out on these terms were called fief, and the people who received them-feudal lords. Those who received land sometimes had to do military service. The land continued to be worked by small serf or peasants but they were now personally dependent on their new masters. The peasants have no right to move outside the jurisdiction of the land lords. They work constantly on the land for the lord who had the seal of ownership and to whom they must give part of their surplus value. This explains why the feudal era is described as an era which its legal principle was a system of land-tenure in which ownership was displaced by something like leasehold.

In the feudal era, the man of small power became the dependent of someone strong enough to protect him. He was one and the same time engaged in a personal relation and property relation. The personal relations emphasized loyalty and reverence of the vassal to his superior. It however operated to withdraw the loyalty of the lesser ranks from the king to their more immediate overlords. On the other hand, the property relation was more of a contract in which the two parties retained each of his private interests and cooperated because it was mutually advantageous to do so. In each of these relations, the small man obligates himself to render services to the great man in return for protection. He becomes a tenant on his land which he in most instances offers for his protection. The property and power of the strong man becomes enhanced and he offers his protection to the serf. Similarly, the conditions of service and protection could also be reversed as a king could grant his land to a tenant who would make a return in service or rent. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973).

Another remarkable feature of a feudal era is the pattern of structured vested interest which runs through the community. Structurally, the king is the sole land owner and his barons are tenants of the king and land owners by virtue of land which the king extends to them for special services rendered. The barons will in turn have tenants on the land granted to them by the king while the serfs are at the bottom of the ladder. It is also expected that the baron will raise some number of men for the feudal army to the service of the king and each baron was to command his own men.

Under feudalism, an individual became servants first to the lord before the state and the relationship between the individual and state were at best secondary. This is because the individual's civic duties were first subsumed in his relationship with the feudal lords whose duty it was to protect his serfs. Those who have no fief have no lords and therefore have no rights as they have no lord to protect them. Quite often, these individuals were not considered as citizens. The consequence is that every individual seek allegiance to landlords.

It is important to note that the grant of tenant sometimes carried with it the right to administer justice in his barony with immunity from interference from the king's officers. Consequently, the lords have governmental powers to operate individual manorial courts that decide among others issues relating to land titles, taxation and sometimes monetary issues. However, the kings were slow to grant such powers and often hesitated where they could avoid it. The court of a lord and his vassals was the typical feudal institution. It was essentially a council of the lord and his men for the settlement of disputes arising among them in the course of implementing their contract. This implies that it was an alien notion to assume that the king or lord could decide out of his own plenary powers. Beside issues of command of the army and administration of justice, the revenue of the kingdom would arise less from taxation than from the dues and relief which the king's tenants were obligated to pay upon fixed occasions.

The feudal lord's private ownership of the land and his partial ownership of the serf provided the basis for the relations of production in feudal society. The serf was not a slave for he had his own household. Alongside the property of the feudal lords, there existed the property of the peasants serfs and craftsmen-tools and their private holdings. Generally, the working time of the peasant serf was divided into the *necessary time* and the *surplus time*.

During the *necessary time*, the peasants produced what was needed for the subsistence of his family. During the *surplus time*, he created surplus products, which were appropriated by the feudal lords in the form of

land rent (labour, rent in kind or in money). The exploitation of the peasant serfs in the form of land rent constituted the main feature of feudalism everywhere. The feudal lords could not kill their serfs but could sell them. As such, there was non-economic coercion of peasant serfs to work for the feudal lords.

It is remarkable to also observe that under feudalism, the king related to his subjects only at second or third hand especially as it relates to the three great instruments of political power- army, revenue and administration of justice. It is also noteworthy to state that the relation between the serf and his lord were usually mutual even though it remained unequal. For instance, the vassal owed the lord the duties of loyalty and obedience, military service, periodic payments and attendance to the lord's court. The lord on his part was obligated to give aid and protection to his vassal and also to abide by the customs or the charter which defined the vassal's rights and immunities.

The end of the era began with the rise of the trading cities in the twelfth century even as many of the important political consequences of feudalism appeared after that date. The entire history of feudalism was one of fierce struggle between peasants and feudal lords, and this struggle became intense with feudal uprising which shook the foundations of the feudal epoch. This struggle against the feudal lords was championed by the emerging bourgeoisie class who made use of the serf uprising to seize political and economic power. The advent of industrial revolution which ushered in new means of production and productive forces eventually led to the end of feudal epoch. Thus, signaling the advent of another mode of production called capitalism.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit explored the nature and meaning of feudalism and how political leadership was organised under the feudal era. It identified the nature of relationship between the various social classes under feudalism and the strategic relevance of land to the socio-economic and political rights of the people. The feudal epoch came to an end with the emergence of new systems of social relations and advent of industrial revolution which ushered in the capitalist mode of production.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit examined the nature and features of feudalism during the medieval era.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

4. What are the main features of the feudal era?
5. Why did feudalism last for a very long time?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Nna-Emeka, C. Okereke. (2004). *Citizen and State: An Introduction to Political Discourse*. Lagos: Elim.

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UNIT 4 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (1225-1274)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and times of St. Thomas Aquinas
 - 3.2 Basic Works of St. Thomas Aquinas
 - 3.3 St. Aquinas and the Nature of Law

- 3.4 St. Aquinas on the Church and State
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the contributions of St. Thomas Aquinas to political thought. Specifically, attempts are made to examine the life and times of St. Aquinas and how these influenced his political writings. Similarly, efforts were made to expose the student to St. Thomas notion and classification of laws and how these are linked to the contention between temporal and spiritual authorities on issues of supremacy.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to expose the student to the political ideas of St. Aquinas
- to educate the student on the views and issues addressed by St. Aquinas
- to further examine the contentions on the relationship between the church and the state.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and times of St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas sometimes called the Angelic Doctor and the Prince of Scholastics was born in the Italian city of Roccasecca, near Naples. He joined the Dominican Order against the wishes of his mother at the age of sixteen and studied under Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great). He was educated at the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino and at the University of Naples. He was greatly influenced by the teachings of Aristotle and remains till date a leading Roman Catholic theologian and one of the finest scholars in medieval philosophy.

He was ordained a priest in 1250 and began to teach at the University of Paris in 1252. In 1256, he was awarded a doctorate degree in theology and appointed professor of philosophy by the University. He was summoned to Rome in 1259 by Pope Alexander IV where he worked as adviser and teacher in the Papal court. St Aquinas returned to Paris in 1268 where he engaged Siger de Brabant and the followers of Averroes in series of controversies because of the threats it posed to the integrity and supremacy of Roman Catholic doctrine.

Aquinas left Paris for Naples in 1272 where he established a new Dominican School. He was commissioned to the Council of Lyon by Pope Gregory X in March 1274 but died shortly after. He was canonized by Pope John XXII in 1323 while Pope Pius V proclaimed him the Doctor of the Church in 1567. His remains were laid to rest at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova. Some of his major writings include *Summa Theologica* (*Treatise on Law*), *De Regimine Principum* (*Treatise on Prudence and Justice*) and *De Regno* (*On Kingship*).

It is significant to observe that the work of St. Thomas Aquinas was crucial to the acceptance of the philosophy of Aristotle and its ascendancy as a cornerstone of Roman Catholic philosophy. This is because the ideas of Aristotle were initially treated with dismay and skepticism as bearing the stigma of infidelity. At this stage, the church was more inclined to ban such ideas. Similarly, the philosophy of Aristotle was forbidden at the University of Paris till 1210. He derived much of his forms of government from Aristotle's *Politics* and focused his interest on the moral limitations placed on the rulers. (Sabine and Thorson)

3.2 Basic Works of St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas conception of social and political life falls directly into his larger plan of nature. He conceived the society as a system of ends and purposes in which the lower serves the higher while the higher directs and guides the lower. Like Aristotle, he described the society as a mutual exchange of services for the sake of a good life to which many callings contribute. For instance, the farmer and artisan supplies material goods while the priest supply his prayers and religious observance. He argued that the common good require that such a system shall have a ruling part just as the soul rules the body or any higher nature rules the lower. From this he posits that leadership is simply an office of trust for the whole community. The ruler's action and deed is therefore justified because he contributes to the social pool of good like any other member of the society.

The duty of the leader therefore is the happy ordering of human life. His power is derived from God and is considered a ministry or service owed to the community of which he is the head. In this lies the moral purpose of government. It is the duty of the leader to direct the actions of every class in the state that men may live a happy and virtuous life, which is the true end of man in society. It is expected that this will outlive man's sojourn on earth to his celebration of his heavenly bliss. It is at this point that St. Aquinas maintain that the enjoyment of the heavenly bliss is

beyond human power and rest in the keeping of the priest rather than of the secular authorities.

St Aquinas also insist that the orderly organisation of political life is a contributing factor to man's attainment of his ultimate end; the enjoyment of the heavenly. Consequently, he contends that it is the duty of the temporal authority to put in place the foundations of human happiness by maintaining peace and order, to preserve it by seeing that all the services of governance that address the needs of the society and remove the obstacles to the enjoyment of the good of life are in place.

St Aquinas rejected tyranny and maintained that the moral purpose for which political rule exists implies that authority should be limited and exercised in accordance with the stipulations of the law. He argued further that justifiable resistance is a public act of a whole people and that those who resist must be responsible to ensure that their actions are less injurious to the general good than the abuse which they are resisting. He however described sedition as a deadly sin but insists that justifiable resistance is not tantamount to resistance.

St Aquinas was explicit on the issue of limitation concerning the powers of the King. He favoured a sharing of power between the king and the magnates of the realm. He also stressed the fact that true government is based on law as opposed to tyranny. Consequently, he identified two remedies which are available against tyranny. These are government in which the powers of the ruler are derived from the people. The other remedy rests on the ruler having a political superior such that the redress of grievances is by appeal to the superior.

Writing on the nature of the state, St. Aquinas posits that the state emerged from man's gift of social spirit which propels him to pursue and promote the good of life. He proposed in *Summa theological* that the man who has greater knowledge and sense of justice should use it to help others and not to dominate them. He however insists that the ultimate purpose of man which is the quest for the good of life and enjoyment of God can only be attained through divine grace. Not even the best secular government can guarantee it.

He classified government according to the interests they serve. A just government in his view aims at the good of all as opposed to perverted government which seek only the interest of the ruler. He however maintained that political authority emanates from God and must be obeyed. He classified monarchy as the best form of government and argued that it is suitable for the promotion of unity and peace in the state. In his opinion, effective mechanism must be put in place to curtail the excesses of the King in order to avert degeneration to tyranny.

3.3 St. Aquinas and the Nature of Law

Aquinas described law as a promulgated ordinance of reason designed for the common good and made by him who has care of the community. It is a rule and a measure of act, whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting. He argued that law did not have any human origin rather he often sought to relate human law to what he described as divine law. It is his view that law is something much broader in its scope than a means of regulating human relationship. He identified and distinguished four different types of laws. These are eternal law, natural law, human law and divine law.

Eternal law in the views of St. Aquinas implies God's mind which governs the universe. It is the eternal plan of divine wisdom by which the whole creation is ordered. In itself, eternal law is above the physical nature of man and is beyond human comprehension. He however maintains that although man's nature reproduces a distorted image of divine perfection, man still participates in the wisdom and goodness of God. This divine reason is not limited by time and as such is assumed eternal.

Natural law for him is a reflection of divine wisdom in created things. He argued that all things are subject to divine reason because they depend on divine providence. As such, there exists a natural inclination of all creation to seek good and avoid evil, to preserve themselves and to live as perfectly as possible the kind of life suitable to their natural endowments. This implies for man, the desire for a life in which the rational nature may be realised. Specific examples of this in his view include but not restricted to the following: the inherent inclination in men to live in society, to preserve their lives, to beget and educate children, to seek the truth and develop intelligence. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973).

He described human law as the particular determination given to the precepts of the natural law. It is the ordinance of reason meant for the common good and made by one who has care for reason. Human law is an integral aspect of the whole system of divine government whereby everything both in heaven and earth is ruled. It has its roots in the reason of God, which regulates the relationships between all creatures. Such laws also constitute an aspect of the cosmic reality. Human law is therefore law of nature which work through the fear of penalties and an unlawful ruler is a violator of human rights and a rebel against the whole system of law by which God rules the world.

Finally, he described divine laws as the divine ordinance that directs man to his supernatural goal which is eternal bliss. It is simply the *Will* of God as revealed in the scriptures. For him, such revelation adds to reason but never destroys it. An example is the specific code of laws which God gave the Jews as the chosen nation and the rules of Christian morals or legislation given through the church or the scripture. It is more a gift of God's grace than a discovery of natural reason.

3.4 St. Aquinas on the Church and State

St Aquinas defended the supremacy of the Church over the state. He argued that the chief purpose of man is to attain virtue through which he qualifies for the eternal enjoyment of God. From this he posits that since the Church is the avenue to attain this end, then the Church should be above the secular authorities as represented in the state.

He however maintained that since natural law is produced by the unaided reason and as such common to all men, then morals and government do not in general depend upon Christianity. The obligation to civic obedience is therefore not weakened, but rather strengthened. From this, he argued that the Christian subjects of a pagan prince are not justified in refusing him obedience. Furthermore, he maintained that the church may absolve the subjects of an apostate or heretic ruler but it ought not to depose a ruler merely because he is an infidel.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit explored the philosophy of St. Aquinas and how it relates to the dominant ideas of his era. Like St. Augustine, the ideas of Thomas Aquinas strengthened the position of the church as existing to pursue the attainment of the future life beyond the grave. He however maintained that the Christian still had obligation to obey the state especially in secular matters. Another significant focus of St. Thomas Aquinas is his focus on the nature and meaning of laws as highlighted above.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit exposed the political ideas of St Aquinas as it impacts on the church and state.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify and discuss the essential kernels of St. Aquinas's philosophy.

2. To what extent can it be argued that the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas reflect the dominant trend in political philosophy of the Middle-Ages?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 MARSILIO OF PADUA

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Marsilio's Theory of Secular State
- 4.0 Conclusion

- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the thoughts and writings of Marsilio of Padua. Specifically it seeks to identify and highlight Marsilio's contribution to the debate between the church and the state with regards to independence and supremacy of both institutions. Of remarkable note is the rationale underlying Marsilio's logics, his notion of social classes and the relationship between human and divine laws.

It is remarkable to note that a remarkable consequence of the philosophy of Marsilio is the attempt to subordinate the church to the state especially with regards to secular powers. This thrust of ideas was further expanded by other philosophers in what became known as the theory of the national state.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine perspectives on the contention between the church and the state
- to identify the main ideas of Marsilio of Padua
- to get exposed to other views on the changing theories of the state.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Marsilio's Theory of Secular State

Marsilio advocated the theory of secular government based on the practice and conception of the Italian city states. Marsilio exhibited some bitterness towards the papacy and as such was favourably disposed towards empire building by secular princes. His writing was designed not merely to defend the empire but to destroy the whole system of papal imperialism that developed under Innocent III and the theory of canon law. He sought to define the limits of spiritual authority to control the actions of secular governments. His writings specifically placed the church under the domain of the state.

Marsilio described the claim of the Pope to supremacy over the temporal rulers as a major source of strife in Europe. Consequently, his thoughts were aimed at seeking a cure for the associated disorder arising from this situation. Marsilio's ideas on this subject are expressed in his book,

Defensor Pacis. Here, he expressed his view that religion has social consequences in addition to its truth. The first part of the document contains the statement of Aristotelian principles and supplies the foundation for the second part where he discussed his conclusions regarding the church, the functions of the priests, their relations to civil authority and the evils which arises from a misunderstanding of these matters. The third part of the *Defensor Pacis* contains forty two theses drawn from the theories developed in the first two parts.

Marsilio conceives the state as a living being composed of parts which performs the functions necessary to its life. Its health or peace consists in the orderly working of each of its parts, and strife arises when one part does its work badly or interferes with another part. He also shares the organic theory concerning the emergence of the city which in his view evolved from the family. The city therefore exists as a “perfect community” which is able to supply all that is needed for a good life. It is important to note that a good life in the views of Marsilio implies both the good in this life and in the life to come. What Marsilio is saying is that the first good life is the proper study of philosophy by means of reason while the knowledge of the second depends on revelation which comes through faith. Reason shows the need for civil government as a means of peace and order while religion has its usefulness both in this life and in the life to come. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973).

Marsilio further identified the various classes which make up the society. These are farmers and artisans that supply material goods and the revenue needed by the government; and there are soldiers, officials and priests who make up the state in a stricter sense. The class which is the clergy constitutes the last group. This class generates special difficulty with regards to its classification. This difficulty is as a result of the two-fold purpose which religion plays in the society. Consequently, Marsilio identifies the function of a Christian clergy to include the knowledge and teaching of those things which the scripture qualified as necessary to believe, to do, or to avoid in the quest for eternal salvation and escape woe.

It is the position of Marsilio that in all secular relations the clergy is simply one class in society just like other classes. He further contends that the Christian clergy is precisely like any other priesthood since the end of his teaching is beyond reason and extends to the future life. What Marsilio is saying here is that the teachings of the priests are not properly a power of authority since it lacks the coercive power of implementation in this reality except in instances in which the legislator empowers the priest accordingly. Simply put, the Christian clergy is bound to obey the state in all temporal matters and must be subject to all social control like other human interests. This is because the church is

part of a secular state in every aspect in which temporal matters are concerned. It has been suggested that such a separation of reason and faith is the rot of secularism.

Marsilio further distinguished between divine law and human law. First he described law as a rule of reason or intrinsic justice emanating from a constituted authority and carrying a penalty for its violation. For him, divine law is a command of God directly, without human deliberation. Such laws are usually about the voluntary acts of human beings to be done or avoided in this world for the sake of attaining the best end, or some conditions desirable for man in the world to come. The rewards or penalty for compliance or violation of divine law is not administered in this life. Rather, they are administered by God in a future life.

On the other hand, human law is not derived from divine law rather it represents the command of the whole body of citizens or its part. Its source is derived from the deliberation of those empowered to make laws and these deliberation focus on the voluntary act of human being which should be done or avoided for the sake of attaining the best end. It is also designed to attend to the desirable conditions which man longs for in this world. Its transgressions are usually enforced in this world through the imposition of penalty to the transgressor. Consequently, any rule that involves earthly penalty belongs *ipso facto* to the sphere of human laws and derives its authority from human enactment.

It is the views of Marsilio that human laws arise from the corporate action of a people setting up rules to govern the acts of its members. In other words, he subscribes to the view that it is the whole people who make the laws in their city state. As such all authority is an act of the people and should be exercised in their name and their interests. From this, he maintained that a state is the body of men who owe obedience to a given body of law.

It is Marsilio's view that the executive and judiciary in the state are set up or elected by the citizens. The pattern of election should be peculiar to the custom of each state. However, he insists that the authority of the executive should be derived from the legislative act of the whole body and must be exercised in accordance with the law. Its duties and powers should also be determined by the people. The executive also has the duty to ensure that every part of the state performs its proper functions for the good of the whole. Where it fails, it is removed by the same power (the people) which elected it. He further maintained that the executive must be unified and supreme so that its power will exceed all other groups in the society. The attributes of unity and supremacy are necessary to avert the evils of strife and disorder.

In a nutshell, Marsilio's notion of a natural and self-sufficing political community is depicted in an organic whole composed of classes as well as physical and ethical components that are relevant to the pursuit of the good of life for the citizens in the secular sense. Its power of regulation is the inevitable right of such a corporation to regulate its own parts for the well being of the whole. (Sabine and Thorson; 1973) The executive power of the state therefore is the agent of the corporation to put into effect whatever the unity of the state requires.

The ensuing community is the guardian of its own civilization and if its citizens have a spiritual well-being, which is another realm beyond the life of the state of which it is powerless to touch that life. It is on this platform that Marsilio embarked on the quest to halt the incursion of the spiritual authority in what should otherwise remain in the secular realm of the self-sufficient polity. He argued that since the officials of the corporate community occupy positions of authority by the mandate of the people, it implies that the clergy whose authority is not derived from the people should have no claim to coercive authority. If ever they are to possess civil authority, it must flow from the people which constitute the base of such authority. It must be also realised that since the clergy are a class like every other class, they are subject to regulations like any other class and amenable to civil courts for violations of human law.

It is his views that issues of heresy or spiritual offense are only judged by God and punished in the next life since their penalties are incurred beyond the grave. However, if heresy is punished in this world, it is only as a civil offence whose spiritual penalty is damnation. Remarkably, this is also beyond the powers of the clergy. Similarly, it is his view that issues of excommunication belongs to civil authority. By implication, canon laws are not within the framework of distinct jurisdiction and the penalties of divine law are outside the sphere of this world while the penalties of earthly laws are within the powers of secular authorities. Consequently, the duty of the clergy is restricted to the celebration of religious rites, he can advice and instruct, admonish the wicked and point out the future consequences of sin. However, they lack the power to compel men to do penance.

It is the view of Marsilio that the church can hardly own property. Rather what exist as ecclesiastical property are mere grants or subsidies made by the community to support public worship. He further expressed the views that the clergy had no right to tithe and should not be exempted from taxation except where such rights are granted by the community. Simply put, ecclesiastical office like ecclesiastical powers is only a gift from the civil office and the clergy can be legally compelled to perform the offices of religion so long as they receive the benefits. Furthermore, he maintains that every church official from the Pope to

the least in hierarchy can be deposed by civil action. As such, Marsilio's treatise reduced religion to regimentation by civil power.

Marsilio believes that ecclesiastical hierarchy has a human origin and its authority is derived from human law and rest on entirely within the sphere of civil control. Consequently all priests are considered equal and the members of the laity are also churchmen. As such neither the Bishop nor the Pope has a spiritual quality that a simple priest lacks. He further maintains that the priestly character which authorizes them to celebrate the rites of religion is purely a mystical stigma derived from God which has no earthly origin or earthly power or ecclesiastical rank. In reducing the Pope to a position of spiritual equality with other Bishops, Marsilio eliminated papal sovereignty from the organisation of the church. He debunked the assumption that the Pope had authority as the successor of Apostle Peter.

Marsilio however identified the spheres of Christian beliefs where the church can act authoritatively. He opted for a general council which in his view should constitute the organ of the church for deciding on disputes. For him, the Pope and church hierarchy should not be permitted to pass on disputed articles of faith. He rather conceded a mystical infallibility to the General Council of the church as the one point of contact between reason and faith. In such a Council, he maintained that inspiration will join hands with reason to supply an authoritative version of divine law contained in the scripture and a satisfactory answer to reasonable differences of opinion that might arise about such matters.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analysis of the thoughts and teachings of Marsilio of Padua demonstrates that Marsilio favoured the supremacy of the state over the institution of the church. This supremacy is borne from the fact that the doctrine of the church seek to address the promises and punishment in a future life beyond the grave and as such not designed to address the aspirations of this life on earth.

It is also Marsilio's view that the clergy who direct the events of the church are not elected by the people and as such not answerable to them. Rather, they are a class like any other class. On the other hand, he insists that since the civil officials of the state are elected by the people, they should exercise all authority over other institutions in the polity.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit addressed the writings of Marsilio of Padua in relation to his debate to the contention of independence and supremacy between the church and the state.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the main points of Marsilio's theory of the church?
2. To what extent does Marsilio's thesis reflect the prevailing notion of his time? Give reasons for your answer.

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MODULE 3 THEORY OF NATIONAL STATE IN REFORMATION AND RENNASANCE

Unit 1	Nicollo Machiavelli (1469-1527)
Unit 2	Jean Bodin (1530-1596)
Unit 3	Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

UNIT 1 NICOLLO MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and times of Machiavelli
 - 3.2 Basic Works of Machiavelli
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the political philosophy of Nicollo Machiavelli. It specifically focuses on the contents of *The Prince* which outlined strategies recommended for the political leadership in the onerous task of pursuit, maintenance and utility of state power. It is noteworthy to emphasize that Machiavelli's ideas have attracted patronage from many modern political leaders.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the contributions of Nicollo Machiavelli to political philosophy
- get exposed the student to the nature of political theories in the era of reformation and renaissance.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and times of Machiavelli

Machiavelli was a native of Florence, Italy and he served as a Diplomat and Secretary to the Second Chancery in charge of Department of War and Interior Security. Politically, he had no strait-jacket commitment to any regime. Rather he was willing to serve any government irrespective of the political group or party that assumed power. For when the Medici came to power, he began to work overtime to get in good with them. The Medici, however, never fully trusted him since he had been an important official in the Republic. He was tortured and imprisoned and later banished on exile to his country estate at San Casciano. Despite the maltreatments, Machiavelli still strived to get good with the Medicis. In

his quest to regain his relevance in the government of Lorenzo de Medici, he wrote his major works while in exile at San Casciano. These works include the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, *The Prince*, and *The History of Florence*.

In Machiavelli's time, Italy was made up of independent warring and disunited principalities that were often prey to other European nations. Some of Machiavelli's primary concern was the restoration of Italian glory through the unification of the disputing principalities and kingdoms. Despite his hopes that the Medicis might prove to be those ideal rulers that could unite Italy, they did not remain in power for long. When Giulio de'Medici left Florence to become Pope Clement VII his successors poorly managed the city. The people soon overthrew the Medici rule and established the Third Republic of Florence in 1527. Machiavelli saw his chance and tried to get a position in the new republic, but the new rulers distrusted him because of his long association with the Medici. So on June 22, 1527, only a few months after the establishment of the Third Republic, Machiavelli died. That same year, Rome was sacked by Emperor Charles VII and the Pope was forced to ally with Charles. In 1530, the Pope and Charles led a punitive expedition against Florence and crushed it as an independent state.

3.2 Basic Works of Machiavelli

Machiavelli was the first to discuss politics and social phenomena in their own terms without recourse to ethics or jurisprudence. He divorced politics from ethics and deviated from medieval political teaching by asserting that man has no supernatural end rather, the end of man is solely on earth and this centres on attaining power, greatness and fame. This helped to free the monarchs from the bondage of religion and entanglements of morals in the conduct of political actions. This is why he is sometimes described as the first modern thinker to apply scientific method to the study of politics.

Machiavelli's real politic revolves on the pursuit, attainment and sustenance of state power. His central thesis is that any means to preserve the state is legitimate. Machiavelli identified two ways of contesting for power. One is by law which is fair to man and the other is by brute which is the way of the beast. The Prince has to adopt the fox to know the snares and the lion to scare and frighten the wolves. He holds that although men naturally acknowledged and praise honest princes who keep their power by law, he however advocated that it is the crafty Princes who adopt force that are often successful.

Underlying his thesis is the proclamation that the end justifies the means. It is based on this that he argued that if the Prince aim at

conquering and maintaining the state, then the means will be judged honourably and praised by everyone. What Machiavelli is saying is that everything else especially religion, morality that people associate with politics should be discarded unless they help one get and keep power. Machiavelli distinguished between private and political morality and argued that both be separated in the assessment of the conducts of the Prince. He strongly advocated that the Prince should make good use of falsehood, deceits and force where necessary. The prince in his view can manipulate religion or renege on agreement, employ cruelty, murder and fraud in his quest for the attainment, maintenance and utility of state power but that this must be done neatly so as to be admired by his subjects.

The single most articulated value in the work of Machiavelli is *virtù* (manly), which he described as the ability to enforce one's will on volatile social situations. This can be done through a combination of strong will, strength, brilliance and strategic and strategic thinking exerted towards the world on the one hand, or Fortune, which he compared to a Lady. He condemned the situation where the lady as an object of desire is approached and entreated and begged. His position is that the ideal Prince does not entreat or beg Lady Fortune, but rather physically grabs her and takes whatever he wants. This represents till date, a powerful translation of the Renaissance idea of human potential to the area of politics. He was branded an anti-Christ throughout the Renaissance because of his refusal to accommodate ethical considerations in political theory.

It will help to understand that Machiavelli was not talking about the state so much in ethical terms but in medical terms. For Machiavelli believed that the Italian situation was desperate and that the Florentine state was in grave danger. Rather than approach the question from an ethical point of view, Machiavelli was genuinely concerned with healing the state to make it stronger. For instance, in talking about seditious points of view, Machiavelli doesn't make an ethical argument, but rather a medical one – “seditious people should be amputated before they infect the whole state.”

He identified one main skill, which is vital to the game of power, as sound calculation. The social and political world of the *The Prince* is monstrously unpredictable and volatile; only the most superhuman calculative mind can overcome this social and political volatility. If the ruler makes one miscalculation, all the authority he has so assiduously cultivated will dry up like the morning dew. As such, he contended that the successful politician must therefore know when to act and what to say and do at any point in time.

Machiavelli admired such winners like Caesar Borgia who made use of force and trickery and Julius II both of who were greatly hated in Europe as ungodly Popes. He extolled their astonishing military and political success. In chapters such as “Whether a Prince Should Be True to his Word,” Machiavelli argues that any moral judgment should be secondary to getting, increasing and maintaining power. The answer to the above question, for instance, is “it’s good to be true to your word, but you should lie whenever it advances your power or security—not only that, it's necessary.”

4.0 CONCLUSION

Machiavelli’s work has attracted both admiration and condemnation since the release of his work. Some critics maintain that *The Prince* was inspired by the devil. However, despite the raging criticisms, even critics acknowledge that the ideas of Machiavelli are designed to strengthen political leadership and foster unity within the polity.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit addressed the era of reformation and renaissance through examining the nature of Machiavelli’s contribution to political philosophy.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

4. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* with the finger of the devil. DISCUSS.
5. Briefly discuss Machiavelli’s ideas on the Prince and State power.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 JEAN BODIN (1530-1596)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and Times of Jean Bodin
 - 3.2 Basic Works of Bodin
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary

- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the writings of Jean Bodin and how this relates to the prevailing orientation of political theories in the Age of Renaissance. Bodin's focus on sovereignty attracts attention in this unit. This is because Jean Bodin sought to liberate the temporal rulers from the dogma of religion.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the contributions of Jean Bodin to political philosophy
- get exposed to another perspective on the theory of the national state.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of Jean Bodin

Bodin was a French political philosopher, a lawyer and statesman. He was born in Anger and studied law at the University of Toulouse. In 1576, he published *Six Livres de la Republic* (*Six Books of the Republic*). The book was occasioned by the civil war in France and was designed to strengthen the king in an era when France was disturbed by wars and anarchies of wars. He advocated for absolutism of the state as a strategy to tackle the situation. For him, the sovereignty of the state should be recognised and explored to maintain order.

In another of his works, *Republic*, he liberated the idea of sovereign power from the limbo of theology. The work which was published four years after the massacre of St. Bartholomew was described as a defence of politics against parties. It formed the main intellectual anchor of a growing body of moderate thinkers, known as the *Politique* who represented strong central government which usually come in time of disorder. This group of scholars perceived the royal power as the only stay of peace and order and therefore advocated for monarchy as the centre of national unity, over and above all religious sects and political parties. Though members of *Politique* were mostly Roman Catholics by religious affiliation, they were among the first set of groups who accommodated the co-existence of different religions within one state.

Bodin favoured the historical and comparative study of law as against the exclusive development of Roman law. In his view, both law and

politics should be studied not only in the light of history but also in the light of man's physical environment, of climate, race and topography. Environment here, include the influence of the stars and the study of astrology. He examined the end of the state and family, marriage, private property and slavery and supported the blend of philosophy and history. It is his opinion that philosophy dies of inanition in the midst of its precepts when it is not vivified by history.

3.2 Basic Works of Bodin

Bodin conceives the family as the natural community from which other societies including the state and private property emanates. The family here implies the father, mother, children, servants and common property. He subscribed to the Roman conception that state jurisdiction ends at the threshold of the house from which he proposed the extreme control by the *pater familias* over his dependents including his slaves and property. It is the *pater familias* who becomes a citizen when he steps outside the house and acts in concert with other family heads. He further reasoned that many associations of family in search of common defence and mutual advantages merge to form villages, cities and corporation. A state eventually emerges, mostly through force when these associations are united in a sovereign authority.

Although Bodin attributed the origin of state to conquest, he was however reluctant to justify force as an important attribute of the state after it is established. He further noted that a well ordered state cannot exist until a sovereign power is recognised over the units of families which make it. He distinguished state from band of robbers by observing that the state exerts lawful coercion which distinguishes it from band of robbers who strive on force.

Jean Bodin had no clear theory of the end of the state which he defined as a lawful government of several households, of their common possession with sovereign power. He was however indefinite with regards to the end which the state should pursue for its members. For instance, while he observed that the pursuit of happiness which in the views of Aristotle was the end of the state was insufficient to the aspirations of his era, he was also reluctant to restrict the state to the quest for material and utilitarian advantages such as peace and security of property.

Writing on sovereignty, he maintained that the presence of sovereign power is the most important distinguishing feature between the state and all other associations in the society. He identified the defining features of the state as subject and sovereign and defined a citizen in terms of subjection to a sovereign. What Bodin is saying is that there exist other

forms of relationship in term of ethical, social and religious affiliation between citizens outside subjection to a common sovereign, but it is this subjection which makes them citizens. Bodin recognised that various individuals may have peculiar identities and attachment or laws. He classified such groups as *cite* corresponding roughly to ideas of nation or social union lacking formal political bond and insist that the *cite* is not a state in the sense of a Republic.

Bodin further described sovereignty as the supreme power over the citizens, unrestrained by law. Supreme power for him is perpetual and unrestrained by time. It is not delegated and if at all it becomes delegated, then it must be without limit or condition. It is also inalienable and not subject to prescription. He further asserts that the sovereign cannot bind himself or his successors and cannot be made legally accountable to his subjects. It is his opinion that the law of the land is nothing other than the command of the sovereign and consequently any attempt to limit the powers of the sovereign is simply extra-legal. To Bodin, the primary attribute of the sovereign is the power to give laws to citizens collectively or severally, without the consent of a superior, an equal or an inferior (Sabine and Thorson, 1973: 378). Other attribute include the power to declare war, and enter into treaty for peace, to commission magistrates, to act as a court of last resort, to grant dispensations, to coin money and to tax. It is the powers that demonstrate that the sovereign is the legitimate head of the state. It is based on this that he argued that a well-ordered-state must be based on the indivisibility of political authority.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Bodin described sovereignty as the supreme power of the state over its territory. His emphasis on sovereignty helped to liberate temporal rulers from the dogma of theology. It also contributed significantly to strengthening the powers of the state over the church and all other institutions within its territory.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit exposed Jean Bodin's perspective on the theory of the nation state with emphasis on sovereignty.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the contributions of Jean Bodin to political philosophy?
2. Establish the relationship between the ideas of Jean Bodin and the prevailing notion of political ideas in era of reformation.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

George H Sabine and Thomas L Thorson, (1973). *A History of Political Theory*. Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden.

Matthew Nwoko (1988). *Basic World Political Theories: Ancient to Contemporary*. Nekede, Owerri: Clarentian Press.

UNIT 3 THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679)

CONTENTS

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- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and Times of Thomas Hobbes
 - 3.2 Hobbes and the Social Contract Theory
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- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on the political ideas of Thomas Hobbes. Emphasis was placed on his doctrine of social contract where Hobbes explained his rationale for the emergence of the state. Furthermore, attempts are made in this unit to x-ray the life and times of Hobbes and how political events of his time contributed to shape his perception of political reality.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the contributions of Thomas Hobbes to political philosophy
- be exposed to the writings of Thomas Hobbes
- to further examine the nature of political theory in the era of reformation.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of Thomas Hobbes

Hobbes was an English Philosopher and political theorist who witnessed the puritan revolution and the English civil wars. He was educated in Oxford as a classicist and served as a tutor of William Cavendish. He later exiled voluntarily to Holland during the years of Parliamentary Rule as a result of his belief in absolute government where he devoted much of his time to the development and expression of a comprehensive philosophical vision of the mechanistic operation of nature. He returned to England after the restoration of Charles II and remained engaged in bitter political and religious controversies for the rest of his life while producing the English translation of the works of Homer. The moral and material devastation of these turbulent events are significant in explaining the nature of his political thought as contained in his work *Leviathan* in which he advocated for the absolutism of the ruler.

Hobbes's first systematic statement of political philosophy, *Elements of Law, Nature and Politics* (1640), relies heavily upon the conception of natural law that had dominated the tradition from Thomas Aquinas to Hugo Grotius. There was however some shift in his views two years later when he released the Latin version of his work known as *De Cive* (1642). The most complete statement of Hobbes political philosophy is expressed in *The Leviathan* (1651). This work has variously been described as a clearly materialistic account of human nature and

knowledge, a rigidly deterministic account of human violation, and a pessimistic vision of the consequently natural state of human beings in perpetual struggle against each other. In the work, Hobbes contends that it is to escape this grim fate, that men formed the Commonwealth, surrendering our individual powers to the authority of an absolute sovereign. From this he argued that individual obedience to even an arbitrary government is necessary in order to forestall the greater evil of an endless state of war.

3.2 Hobbes and the Social Contract Theory

Hobbes began his political inquiry with an analysis of the human nature. For him, man is essentially selfish and is moved into action not by reason but by his emotions. He argues that man originally lived in a condition of natural warfare, that is, a state of *homo homini lupus* wherein man is wolf to his fellow man. This is the state of nature in which men lived without any form of government or political authority over them. Hobbes qualified this as the condition of *warre*, that is, everyman against everyman. This is a situation characterized by a perpetual struggle of all against all.

In his attempt to explain this stage of human existence, Hobbes argued that since men are by nature equal and each man has aspirations which he sought to achieve, that the pursuits of such desired ends will lead to conflict and war resulting from competition, diffidence and love for glory. Since law and justice were absent, the life of man for Hobbes was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. This is the Hobbessian state of nature where there exist, no right, no wrong. Nothing is unjust and no common power over men. However, there was the fear of death and desire for peace and security. It is these conditions that propels man to enter into a bond or contract which culminated in the emergence of the state and civil society. Thus, Hobbes maintains that the only way to peace is for men to surrender all their rights to a supreme coercive power, the leviathan. The contracting parties here as observed by Appadorai are not the community and the government, but subjects all of who will boldly surrender all their right to the Leviathan on the condition that everyone does same.

From this contract, a state is created and this state must possess a government which is absolutely sovereign. This sovereignty is not held on condition because the sovereign is not party to the pact, but a result of it. The pact is not revocable at the pleasure of the subjects because men surrendered all their right to rebel to the sovereign which embodies in himself, the will of all. Here, the law is in general not counsel, but command. Hobbes concept of the sovereign need not necessarily be one

man but may be located in an assembly of men who must perform the functions of the modern day government.

It is important to note that Hobbes described the covenant through the individuals surrender their rights to self government as leading to the establishment of a common power, that is, a unity which has the power to enforce the contract. He called the emergent unity, the Leviathan or the mortal god to which we owe our peace and defence under the immortal God. This mortal god assumes the form of a Commonwealth. He further described the Commonwealth as one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defence.

The Sovereign and the Sovereignty

Hobbes located sovereignty in the commonwealth or Leviathan. In his view, sovereignty implies authority in all spheres of state activity. Here, the sovereign refers to one who takes up the person of the commonwealth and there could be no limitation to his authority. This forms the core of his absolutism. It is his view that the rights and faculties of the sovereign are as follows:

- The covenant of the social contract establishes the sovereign permanently and absolutely in power. The citizens are bound by the covenant and as such cannot alter the sovereign and his sphere of dominance or constitute another authority without his permission.
- Sovereign power cannot be lost, since the sovereign is not a party to the covenant but product of it. This also implies that the sovereign cannot violate any part of the covenant.
- It is unjust for one to contravene the institution of the sovereign by the majority. Rather, he is obliged to consent to the majority.
- The subjects cannot accuse the sovereign of injustice since they mandated all his actions. In other words, the subjects are the authors of whatever they intend to accuse the sovereign. As such, they cannot punish the sovereign.
- Since the sovereign is the author of peace and defence, he has right to determine the means to pursue these ends. Consequently, he is the judge of whatsoever doctrine he adopts for the pursuit of peace and defence of the commonwealth.
- The sovereign has the power to hearing and deciding on disputes in legal and factual terms.
- He has the right to make war and peace as he deems necessary.
- The sovereign has the powers to choose his counselors, ministers, magistrates and officers of the commonwealth both in peace and war.

- The sovereign has the right to punish offences or reward good life.
- The sovereign has indivisible rights and powers. It is the powers that distinguish the sovereign.

Hobbes identified three possible types of commonwealth in which the sovereign can operate. These are as follows:

- Monarchy which implies a situation where an individual usually the king assumes power of the sovereign.
- Aristocracy which implies an assembly of a part of all the people. It assumes the person of the people, that is, the assembly of the nobility nominated for the government of the commonwealth.
- Democracy which implies an assembly of all that will come together without distinction to assume the person of the entire people. It is referred to as popular commonwealth.

It is the views of Hobbes that there must be only three types of commonwealth, all of which must possess sovereign power which must be indivisible. He further maintains that what is mistaken as other forms of government are variations of these three forms of sovereignty. As such, those who are dissatisfied with monarchy described their resentment as tyranny those who are against aristocracy describe it as oligarchy while those against democracy called it anarchy. It is the position of Hobbes that mixed government defeats the goal of sovereignty since it divides the powers of the sovereign and thereby creating room for dissension against the peace and right of the people. (Nwoko 1988).

With regards to the sovereign representing the person of the people and also bearing private personality, Hobbes maintained that there will always be conflict between the private and public interests. He argued that monarchy will be preferable to other forms of government since it tends to draw private interests closer to public interests. Consequently, the wealth of the people in his view will become the wealth of the monarch to be protected and promoted. It is his view that the leaders are more prone to private interests in aristocracy and democracy and consequently tend to neglect the interests of the people.

Hobbes further identified other reasons which extol monarchy over other forms of government. Prominent among these reasons are:

- The monarch being able to choose his advisers gets better informed than the sovereign assembly (democracy or aristocracy) whose sources of information are limited to the members alone.
- Resolutions of the monarch are subject only to the inconsistency of human nature, but those of democracy or aristocracy beside

inconsistency from human nature suffer from the hazards of number. Monarch cannot disagree with himself but an assembly does.

- Sovereign dispossess subjects to enrich their favourites and flatters, but the monarch's favourites and kindreds are fewer than those of the assemblies.
- In the monarchy as in the sovereign assemblies (democracy and aristocracy) there could arise a type of caretaker government (such as *custodes libertatis* or curators protectors) on behalf of the future leader(s) still under formation. But assemblies under formation stand the chance of losing hold to power when formed than the young monarch.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Hobbes ideas as expressed in his *Leviathan* support the absolutism of the political leadership. This notion is derived from his position that the state which emerged from the contract between individuals in the state of nature is not party to the contract from which it emerged. Hobbes ideas have proved useful in legitimating absolute and arbitrary political leadership.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit examined the ideas of Thomas Hobbes and his reflections on the orientations of political theory in the Era of Reformation as well as his concept of sovereignty.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Tacitly describe the Hobbessian notion of social contract.
2. To what extent do the ideas of Thomas Hobbes reflect the orientations of political theory in the Era of Reformation?
3. Highlight the significant attributes of Hobbes concept of sovereignty.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- C. Nna-Emeka Okereke (2004). *Citizen and State: An Introduction to Political Discourse*. Lagos: Elim.
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MODULE 4 ERA OF REASON AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Unit 1	John Locke (1632-1704)
Unit 2	Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)
Unit 3	G.W.F. Hegel (1770 – 1831)
Unit 4	Utilitarian School
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UNIT 1 JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the contributions of John Locke to political philosophy. It highlights the events in Locke's life which helped to shape his political ideas. Specific attention is focused on Locke's theory of social contract. This exposes a remarkable disparity between the ideas of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. However, one central underlying fact is their focus on the reason of government and nature of political obligation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the contributions of John Locke to political philosophy
- get exposed to the political ideas of John Locke
- the reveal the nature of political theory in the age of enlightenment.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of John Locke

Locke was born in Wrington to Puritan parents of modest means. He was a British philosopher, Oxford academic and medical researcher who became a successful government official charged with collecting information about trade and colonies. He later became an economic writer, opposition political activist, and finally a revolutionary whose cause ultimately triumphed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In a nutshell, he was one of the greatest philosophers in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century.

Locke had what in his time was described an excellent education. In 1647 Locke went to Westminster School in London as a King's Scholar. From Westminster school he went to Christ Church, Oxford, in the autumn of 1652 at the age of twenty where he received a Bachelor of

Arts and Master of Arts in 1656 and 1658 respectively. He eventually became a lecturer at Christ Church School in 1660. He spent sometime serving in the government of Shaftesbury but went back to Oxford in 1674 where he acquired the degree Bachelor of medicine, and a license to practice medicine.

He fled to Holland on exile as a result of his sympathies for anti-state elements committed to the overthrow of King Charles and his brother James. While in exile Locke finished *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and published a fifty page advanced notice of it in French. His close association with English revolutionaries in exile made the English government to withdraw his studentship at Oxford. While Locke was living in exile in Holland, Charles II died on 6 February 1685 and was succeeded by his brother — who became James II of England. William of Orange eventually drove him away with the help of Dutch during the *Glorious* Revolution of 1688. The success of the revolution marked a watershed in English history. It resulted in the transfer of royal powers from the King to the Parliament. Locke returned to England in 1688 on board the royal yacht, accompanying Princess Mary on her voyage to join her husband and later died in 1704.

Locke wrote a variety of important political, religious and educational works including the *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *Two Treatises of Government*, the *Letters Concerning Toleration*, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Locke's work reveals his strong aversion to authoritarianism. He maintained that the individual should apply reason to search after truth rather than simply accept the opinion of authorities or be subject to superstition. He also insisted that there must be apparent distinction between legitimate and illegitimate functions of institutions in a bid to legitimate the utility of force by these institutions. It is his opinion that the application of reason to determine the legitimate functions of institutions will optimize human flourishing for the individual and society both in respect to its material and spiritual welfare.

3.2 Basic Works of Locke

John Locke wrote the *Two Treatises of Government* during the Exclusion crisis. They were designed to justify the general armed rising which the Country Party leaders were planning. *The First Treatise of Government* is a polemical work designed to refute the patriarchal version of the Divine Right of Kings doctrine as espoused by Sir Robert Filmer. Locke countered Filmer's logic that men are not “naturally free” and that kings having descended from the first man, Adam, ought to be obeyed absolutely. Early in the First Treatise, Locke denies that either scripture or reason supports Filmer's premise or arguments.

The Second Treatise of Government provides Locke's positive theory of government which he believed was necessary to prevent the dangerous belief that all government in the world is merely the product of force and violence. He focused on meaning of political power and the role legitimate government ought to play. Political power *was* considered a *right* of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the common-wealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good. In the second chapter of *The Second Treatise* Locke describes the state in which there is no government with real political power. This is the state of nature. He further maintained that it is possible to have in the state of nature either no government, illegitimate government, or legitimate government with less than full political power.

It is his view that the state of nature before there was government was a state of political equality in which there is no natural superior or inferior. From this equality flows the obligation to mutual love and the duties that people owe one another, and the great maxims of justice and charity. Whenever people have not agreed to establish a common political authority, they remain in the state of nature.

Furthermore, Locke contends that God created man as His property and the chief end set before us as individuals is survival. From this, he argued that man has no liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession. So murder and suicide violate the divine purpose. In his view, if one takes survival as the end, then the means to attain it will be nothing other than life, liberty, health and property. Since the end is set by God, it is Locke's view that we have a right to the means to that end. So we have rights to life, liberty, health and property. These are natural rights, that is, they are rights that we have in a state of nature before the introduction of civil government, and all people have these rights equally.

He argued that if God's purpose for me on earth is my survival and that of my species, and the means to that survival are my life, health, liberty and property — then clearly I don't want anyone to violate my rights to these things. This in his view, constitute the law of nature. It is the Golden Rule, interpreted in terms of natural rights. Thus Locke posits that the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it and this law of nature, which is revealed by reason, obliges everyone and teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.

It is the position of Locke that legitimate civil government is instituted by the explicit consent of those governed. Those who make this agreement transfer to the civil government their right of executing the law of nature and judging their own case. These are the powers which they give to the central government, and this is what makes the justice system of civil governments a legitimate function of such governments. Locke further made distinction between duty to society and duty to government, the distinction that permits an argument for resistance without anarchy. When the designated government dissolves, men remain obligated to society acting through majority rule. He however insists that it is entirely possible for the majority to confer the rule of the community on a king and his heirs, or a group of oligarchs or on a democratic assembly. Thus, the social contract is not inextricably linked to democracy.

Locke identified and distinguished between Paternal, Political and Despotic power. Paternal power is limited. It lasts only through the minority of children, and has other limitations. Political power, derived as it is from the transfer of the power of individuals to enforce the law of nature, has with it the right to kill in the interest of preserving the rights of the citizens or otherwise supporting the public good. Despotic power, by contrast, implies the right to take the life, liberty, health and at least some of the property of any person subject to such a power.

The aim of such a legitimate civil government is to preserve, so far as possible, the rights to life, liberty, health and property of its citizens, and to prosecute and punish those of its citizens who violate the rights of others and to pursue the public good even where this may conflict with the rights of individuals. In doing this it provides something unavailable in the state of nature, an impartial judge to determine the severity of the crime, and to set a punishment proportionate to the crime. This is one of the main reasons why civil society is an improvement on the state of nature. An illegitimate civil government will fail to protect the rights to life, liberty, health and property of its subjects, and in the worst cases, such an illegitimate government will claim to be able to violate the rights of its subjects, that is it will claim to have despotic power over its subjects.

Locke justifies the use of revolution on the grounds that an illegitimate civil government seeks to systematically violate the natural rights of its subjects. It seeks to make them illegitimate slaves. Because an illegitimate civil government does this, it puts itself in a state of nature and a state of war with its subjects. The magistrate or king of such a state violates the law of nature and so makes himself into a dangerous beast of prey who operates on the principle that might makes right, or that the strongest carries it. In such circumstances, rebellion is legitimate

as is the killing of such a dangerous beast of prey. Thus Locke justifies rebellion and regicide (regarded by many during this period as the most heinous of crimes) under certain circumstances.

3.3 Locke's Doctrine of Social Contract

Locke, unlike Hobbes maintains that the state of nature is a state of perfect freedom and equality. Men were their own judge and master, each seeking his own good individually. Locke insists that although man enjoyed liberty, that the state of nature was not a state of license. This is because, even if men had an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or property, yet had no liberty to destroy himself.

What Locke is saying is that the law of nature which is reason, governs the state of nature. In it, men have inalienable rights and acknowledge duties. The law of nature in the views of Locke emphasized the preservation of all men. This is at variance with the Hobbessian notion which emphasized self preservation. Ironically, there existed no central authority to safeguard and interpret this law of reason and each individual was left to his own interpretation.

Consequently, while state of nature was not state a state of war as envisaged by Hobbes, it was in the views of Locke, a state of fears and continual danger, and man's enjoyment of his rights became insecure. As Appadorai puts it, the peace among men, was so precarious as not to be easily distinguishable from anarchy depicted by Hobbes. It is the need to avert this scenario that in Locke's view formed the basis for social contract.

The social contract here is a pact which men freely consent to in order to enter into a political society which will remove the inconveniences and uncertainties of the state of nature. Consequently, the state which emerges from the contract is expected to:

- Establish laws received by common consent as the standard of right and wrong
- Act as an acceptable and disinterested judge with authority to determine all differences according to established law
- Must back and support the sentence of the judge when right, and give it due execution.

In order to attain these objectives, Locke posits that men will enter into a social contract. It is a contract of all with all and its chief purpose is to form a single body politic or Commonwealth to which all must submit their natural right of enforcing the law of reason, in order that life, liberty and property may be preserved. This does not mean that they will

in servitude, rather it means that they will forgo their legislatures and executive powers.

Locke unlike Hobbes locates the locus of power in the community and not the government and stress that the ensuing contract is not general but limited to only natural right of enforcing the law of reason. The legislatures powers thus constituted is a function of popular consent and become the supreme power in the commonwealth which must not be arbitrary.

What Locke is saying is that government in this sense is only a trust, that is a delegated power from the people who alone can dispose of it. This has prompted Professor Carpenter to assert that if it is asked who, then, is sovereign in Locke's state, the answer is that there is none in Hobbes sense. The community is supreme but this supreme power manifest through a government which must act in strict compliance to the trust reposed on it, when the government acts to contrary, the community will exert its right to overthrow and replace the arbitrary government with another. Locke doctrine buttresses the advocacy for constitutional or limited government and in essence emphasize that governments may be dissolved but the civil society must remain intact. This doctrine found empirical authentication in the American Revolution of 1776.

4.0 CONCLUSION

There exists no overstatement in the expression that Locke's ideas of social contract and the issues of political obligation is a radical departure from the views of Hobbes. The apparent differences in opinion may have emerged from the disparities in their idiosyncrasies. Consequently, Locke remains relevant in political history as a proponent of limited government. His ideas have come to be embedded in the political processes of most states in contemporary times.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit examined Locke's political ideas as it concerns the reason of government and character of political obligation.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. To what extent did Locke's experiences influence his political theory? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What are the main logics of Locke's version of Social Contract?
3. To what extent does Locke's Social Contract deviate from the views of Hobbes?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke (2004). *Citizen and State: An Introduction to Political Discourse*. Lagos: Elim.

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UNIT 2 JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)

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 - 3.2 Rousseau's Doctrine of Social Contract
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the contributions of Rousseau to political theory. It gives a brief account of his life and reveals the impact of his theory on the formation of Rousseau's thoughts on the polity. Specifically, his doctrine of social contract is examined along with other spheres of his thought all of which reveal more of the contradictions in Rousseau.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the contributions of Rousseau to political theory
- to expose the students to the writings of Rousseau
- to shed further light on the nature of political theory in the age of reason and enlightenment.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of Rousseau

Jean Jacques Rousseau was born in Geneva, Switzerland, into a Protestant family of French refugees. Rousseau's mother died of puerperal fever shortly after his birth. His father, who was a watchmaker of unstable temperament, fled from Geneva after being involved in a brawl. Having lost his parents at an early age, he was forced by the vagaries of life to take care of himself after leaving his aunt and maternal uncle. Rousseau received very little regular training, and never adopted ideas of rigorous discipline. Rousseau resisted any external restraints on himself and since he was in a society regulated by laws, he became a lonely wanderer. This brief account explains his paradox of freedom: man is born free, and is everywhere in chains.

At the age of 16 Rousseau left Geneva and spent the next 20 years of adventurism, traveling and studying. Succumbing to the influence of his mistress and benefactress, the Vaudois Madame de Warens Calvinist, Rousseau quit Calvinism and became a Roman Catholic. It was while in her country home, Les Charmettes, near Chambéry in Savoy, that Rousseau began his first serious reading and study. This was between 1731 and 1740. While in Paris, Rousseau did some secretarial work and musical copying to earn a living. It was while serving as a Secretary to the French Ambassador Comte de Montaignu to Venice that he experienced his first close contact with political life and institutions. In 1741 he met Thérèse Le Vasseur, a dull and unattractive hotel servant girl, with whom he stayed for the rest of his life, never marrying her. They had five children whom Rousseau allegedly consigned to Enfants-Trouvés, a foundling hospital.

This became a major point of contradiction in Rousseau's life. He also had little formal education but was a renowned educationist. He was sometimes described as an unsociable and quarrelsome human being, yet he championed man's innate goodness. Until he was 37, Rousseau had written nothing except libretti for his own music. In his later life, Rousseau became one of the dominant thinkers of the 18th century Enlightenment.

Rousseau came to reckoning at the age of 38 after he participated in the competition in which the Dijon Academy was offering a prize for the best essay on the subject "Has the progress of the arts and sciences contributed to the purification or the corruption of morals?" Rousseau won the prize for his essay *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*. Rousseau argued that the development of the arts and sciences, did not improve man in habits and moral. His position was that the development in arts and sciences promoted inequality, idleness, and luxury instead of improving human behavior.

Around 1750 Rousseau began to promulgate the romantic conception of the noble - or innocent - savage. The theme was elaborated in Rousseau's second essay, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), where he maintained that only the uncorrupted savage is in possession of real virtue and that it is "The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said, 'This is mine,' and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society." People were subsequently divided into poor and rich, and laws solidified the state of affairs permanently. He further maintains that despotism is the ultimate end of historical development and that we are all equal because we are slaves of one ruler.

Rousseau's naturalism was in great contrast to all that his great contemporary Voltaire considered the quintessence of civilization. The cultured man is degenerate, Rousseau thought, and the whole history of civilization a betrayal. Based on this thesis, Rousseau decided to "reform" and lived the simple life. He returned in 1754 to Geneva, reverted to Protestantism, and regained citizenship. In 1756 Rousseau moved to a cottage near the forest of Montmorency.

His work, *Émile* paved way for the liberal modern educational experiments. It stated that experience should come not from books but from life. Rousseau's theory of education rests on two assumptions: that man is by nature good and that society and civilization corrupt the native goodness. Only through proper education in youth could the "natural man" come to being. Children should be kept from books until the age of 12 and youth should be taught "natural religion" only. Girls were to be trained solely as wives and mothers. After its publication, *Émile* was

banned both in France and Switzerland. The French parliament ordered the book to be burned, and in 1762 Rousseau was condemned for religious unorthodoxy. He fled to Switzerland, first to Neuchâtel (1762-65), then to Bienne (1765). When the government of Berne ordered Rousseau out of its territory, he visited England. Rousseau's misanthropy and growing persecution mania led to quarrels with his new friends, among them David Hume, and he went to France, where he lived for a time in disguise. In 1768 he married Thérèse, and in 1770 he was officially permitted to return to Paris - if he do not write against the government. Rousseau's later works include *The New Heloise*, and *The Confessions*. He died of apoplexy on July 2, 1778. Rousseau's remains were placed with Voltaire's in the Panthéon in Paris in 1794.

3.2 Rousseau's Doctrine of Social Contract

Rousseau's doctrine of social contract was a blend between the views as expressed by Hobbes and Locke. His conception of the state of nature was not as gloomy as Hobbes but not as optimistic as that of Locke. Rousseau maintains that men in the state of nature were free and equal, essentially good and sympathetic. The state of nature was as such a period of idyllic happiness which was governed by the law of self preservation. Man cannot therefore renounce his freedom without renouncing his humanity with its rights and corresponding duties.

However with the increase in human population and quest for private property, a time comes when men can no longer live as isolated savages who individually defend his rights. At this point man will be compelled by rational calculation to give up his natural freedom but is inadvertently confronted with the problem of establishing a form of association which protects with the whole collective force, the person and property of each associate, and in virtue of which everyone, while uniting himself to all, remains as free as before. This to Rousseau is the motif force for the emergence of civil society through the social contract.

His work *The Social Contract* (1762) starts with the famous declaration, "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. Its catchphrase 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité', inspired the French Revolution. He argued that although man thinks himself the master of others, he still remains a greater slave than they." It is his position that it is only by surrendering to the general will, can an individual find his fullest freedom and that the general will is always right if it is directed essentially toward common good. The citizens of a united community exchange their natural liberty for something better, moral liberty. In this theory political society is seen as involving the total voluntary subjection of every individual to the collective general will; this being both the sole source of legitimate

sovereignty and something that cannot but be directed towards common good. The social contract sought to resolve the problem of individual freedom and social stability.

In it, Rousseau asserts that the individual obeys only himself and remains as free as before, while enjoying the collective strength. In Rousseau's social contract, equality is guaranteed because every individual surrenders all his right over all as they have over him, and in essence, gains from all, the equivalent of everything he surrenders in addition to the greater power to preserve what he has. The supreme control of the community is thus embodied in the General will. Its members call it the state, when it is active, they call it the sovereign and when it is compared to others of its kinds, they call it power: Its members are individually called citizens because they share in the sovereign authority. Collectively, they are referred to as the people but in relation to laws of the state, they are called subjects.

The social contract therefore established not only the civil state but also the sovereign, citizenship and the people. In it man substitute justice for his instincts, uphold rights and duties and in the process, attains ultimate freedoms limited only by the General Will. In Rousseau's Social Contract, law is only an expression of the General Will and can be made only in an assembly of the whole people. The sovereign remains a collectivity of the citizens acting as a people who pledge allegiance and loyalty to the General Will. Rousseau's ideals as encapsulated in the social contract inspired the French Revolution of 1789 which was a revolt against the despotic French monarchy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Rousseau's life remains a study in contradictions. Yet his political theory has for long contributed to the structure and functioning of many political systems. It is remarkable to observe that his doctrine of social contract is a mid-way between the theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and the ideas expressed by him will for a long time remain vital for understanding the thrust in political philosophy in the Age of Reason.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the political theory of Rousseau and its contribution to the structure and functioning of political systems.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

5. The life of Rousseau remains a celebration of contradictions. Discuss.
6. Enumerate the main logics contained in Rousseau's doctrine of Social Contract.
7. How valid is the assertion that Rousseau's Social Contract is a reconciliation of the perspective of Hobbes and Locke?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 G.W.F. HEGEL (1770 – 1831)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on the writings of Hegel. It is designed to explore the nature and contents of his interpretation of history and how this impacts on the evolution of political theory. It is necessary to state here that the writings of Hegel influenced the writings of Karl Marx and subsequent scholars to a reasonable extent.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the contributions of GWF Hegel to political philosophy
- to expose to the writings of Hegel and its impacts on political theory.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 G.W.F. Hegel (1770 – 1831)

The German idealist thinker, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in Stuttgart in 1770. He studied theology and philosophy at Tübingen but was encouraged by his teachers to abandon philosophy. The basic focus of Hegel's political philosophy centres on the right of the will which he described as comprising *the freedom of the subjective will*- or the absolute free will. This freedom is further described as the moment of exclusive individuality which reflects right imprisoned in itself. Here, the individual is in communication only with himself and constitute negative actuality in relation to the real world. Hegel posits that at this stage, the individual is not actual and therefore not rational since only what is actual is considered rational. Hegel's position is that the individual must shift from his shell and relate with the external world. This out-going of the subjective freewill objectifies itself beginning from the family where the individual strives to realize his material and spiritual needs.

The will of the individual must further transcend the narrow confines of the self and family into the larger *civil society*. Here, the individual engages with a larger community of families and association and now seeks public interest in the pursuit of private interests. As such, man move further outwards towards a universal order which opens further avenue for the realization of the common social life. In this context, the so-called individual assumes the form of *civil freedom* which includes the regimes of social and economic rights of individuals and groups. For Hegel, the full realization of the individual will (or the ethical will) is only possible within the framework of the state. Here, free will assumes the form of political freedom while rights achieve its full concreteness in the *Constitutional Law* of the state thereby resolving the existing conflict between private and public interests.

Hegel insists that the State is the actuality of concrete freedom and concrete freedom implies that personal individuality and its particular interests not only achieve their complete development and gain explicit recognition for their right (as in the family and civil society), they also pass on their own accord into the interests of the universal. They know and will the universal, even recognize it as their own substantive mind. They also take the universal as their end and aim and are active in its pursuit. The result is that the universal does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular interests and through the cooperation of particular knowing and willing.

From this, Hegel contends that the State is the highest embodiment of right- the spirit, reason and idea fully realized or concretized in history. Hegel maintains that the family and civil society constitutes only distinct phases in the development of reason in history. The family for him is the substance of the ethical mind immediate to itself and draws from the consciousness of the members whose unity is love. It emerges from the tie between two persons who unite in free consent and objectifies itself in the family capital and property as a legal entity in relation to other families.

The civil society is a community based on selfishness but less selfish than the family. It comprehends the universal and subjective element of each individual and protects them through the codification of legal systems. In attending to regimes of need, the civil society carries within itself some elements of control and characteristics of the state. However, it can only satisfy universal wants partially. It is on this platform that Hegel conceives a higher order, the state, which in his view, depicts the highest embodiment of right and genuine freedom. From this he contends that the individual or particular interests are fully realized in the universal interests of all and this is only realised by the individual and groups through obedience to the state.

In his work, *Reason in History*, Hegel posits that the subjective will have also a substantial life, a reality where it moves in the region of essential being, which is the union of the subjective will with the rational will. This constitutes the moral whole, the state. It is that actuality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom, but only as knowing, believing and willing the universal. The emerging state which is constituted by the union of the universal and subjective will is itself *morality*, that is, the vitality of the state in the individual.

Hegel further identified three major moments of the state to include the constitution or constitutional law which he described as the state in its actuality as self-dependent entity, the organisation of the state and the

self-related process of its organic life and its individuality, uniqueness and exclusivity in relation to other states. It is his view that government which is a living totality is a necessity to make the abstract existence of the state to assume life and reality through the Constitution. This is because the establishment of government helps the concrete functioning of the state by distinguishing those who should command and those who should obey.

The government for Hegel consists of the legislative power, the crown and the executive. Invariably, he subsumed the judiciary in the executive which serves the crown or monarchy. These branches make up the totality of the constitution and should freely cooperate as they are part of an organic whole. The foregoing indicates that Hegel favoured monarchy, which is a polity where the King or Queen embodied the state, overseeing its functions but not directly controlling it.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit set out to examine the main features of Hegel's political philosophy. It showed that Hegel applied metaphysics in his analysis of the society and how this exerts influence on the structure and functioning of the polity. It is also remarkable to note that Hegel's methodology was applied by subsequent scholars of political theory.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has explored the nature and contents of Hegel's interpretation of history and its impact on political theory evolution.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the main highlights of Hegel's doctrine?
2. How consistent are the ideas of Hegel to the prevailing orientation in political theory during his era? Give reasons for your answers.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 UTILITARIAN SCHOOL

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)
 - 3.2 Life and Time of James Mill
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the political philosophy of the utilitarian school. Specific focus is given to the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. One central theme of utilitarian scholars is the emphasis on the pursuit of happiness for the greatest number. It is remarkable to note that this theory attracted applause from radicals in Europe who were agitating for reforms in the society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the nature and logics of utilitarianism
- to examine the contributions of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill to the doctrine of utilitarianism
- to understand another thrust of ideas in the Age of Reason and Enlightenment.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)

Jeremy Bentham was a British philosopher, economist, and jurist, who founded the doctrine of utilitarianism. He was born in London on February 15, 1748. A prodigy, he was reading serious treatises at the age of three, playing the violin at age five, and studying Latin and French at age six. He entered the University of Oxford at 12, studied law, and was admitted to the bar; however, he did not practice. Instead he worked on a thorough reform of the legal system and on a general theory of law and morality, publishing short works on aspects of his thought. In 1789 he became well known for his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

Bentham was the leader of the Philosophical Radicals, whose members included James Mill and his son, John Stuart Mill. They founded and edited the *Westminster Review*, which served as an outlet for their reformist ideas. Bentham died in London on June 6, 1832. In accordance with his wishes, his body was dissected before friends. His skeleton, fully clothed and provided with a wax head (the original was mummified), is kept in a glass case at University College, London, which he helped to found.

His fundamental teaching as advanced in his work, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, is that: All men desire happiness, which may be defined as the surplus of pleasure over pain. He argued that nature has placed man under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we

ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. It is to these two phenomena that we owe all our ideas and refer to them in our judgments and all the determinations of our life. Pleasure and pain for him are therefore the main springs of human action.

Bentham further maintained that the sources of pleasure and pain are physical (good scenery), political (good laws), moral (public opinion) and religious (in relation with God). As such, he contends that it is then the task of legislators to manipulate these sanctions to promote the good and happiness of man. A central thesis in the Benthamite calculus of pleasure and pain is that everybody counts as one and nobody for more than one. He insisted that for the individual, the value of a pleasure or pain taken by itself depends on a number of factors including its duration, intensity, certainty (or uncertainty) and nearness (or remoteness). With regards to a group, he acknowledged that the number of persons affected becomes another factor. Here, the concept of hedonism in which pleasure is regarded as the chief good or the proper end of an action becomes admissible.

Bentham ideas are espoused through his doctrine of utilitarianism which he advocated as the basis for reform. The essential doctrinal kernel of utilitarianism is that all actions must be judged by their results, by their fruitfulness in pleasure which must find an actual expression in the lives and experiences of definite individuals. He claimed that one could scientifically ascertain what was morally justifiable by applying the principle of utility. Actions were right if they tended to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Happiness was equivalent to pleasure. Through a kind of moral-mathematical calculation of pleasures and pains, one could tell what was a right or a wrong action. If all pleasures and pains were of the same order, then a utilitarian evaluation of moral, political, and legal activities would be possible. Also, Bentham argued, if values were based on pleasures and pains, then theories of natural rights and natural laws were invalid.

Bentham's doctrine of utilitarianism attracted significant criticisms. Appadorai observed that it assumes that the business aspect of human affairs alone governs man's conduct and does not seem to appreciate pure disinterestedness which it ultimately resolves into the pursuit of individual pleasure. Furthermore, it is argued that a sum of pleasure may be an attractive phrase but when it comes to estimates of human happiness or misery, such arithmetic in politics is not usually much helpful than politics in arithmetic. This is because there exists no proof that by pursuing the happiness of the greatest number will always produce the greatest happiness and since men are not equal, a particular pleasure may be felt unequally by different men. John Stuart Mill,

severely modifying some of Bentham's principles, discounted Bentham's method for calculating quantities of happiness.

Bentham's ideas had great influence on the reforms of the latter part of the 19th century in the administrative machinery of the British government, on criminal law, and on procedure in both criminal and civil law. His other works include the *Rationale of Judicial Evidence* (1827) and the *Constitutional Code* (1830). As such the formula remains highly advocated for in the course of politics because it supplies a slogan which is imprinted in popular mind and also supplies a standard, with which one can assess state actions. The doctrine has also been described as a hook in the nostril of the Leviathan (The State) and supposes that The State should act to remove the disabilities that hinder the welfare of her subjects as the failure to do this erodes the State's right of sanctity.

3.2 Life and Time of James Mill

James Mill was born in Scotland in 1773 to a family of modest means. He was sponsored at the University of Edinburgh by the generosity of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart which at the time was one of the finest universities in Europe and trained for the Presbyterian ministry under the auspices of admired teachers like Dugald Stewart, who was an effective popularizer of Thomas Reid's philosophy. However, James Mill moved over to London where he began his writing career after his unsuccessful experience as a Minister.

With his meager income, Mill got married to Harriet in 1805 and lived without financial security for about a decade. However, he often received assistance from his friends and companion, Jeremy Bentham whom he met in 1808. Both men subsequently formed an alliance that built the movement of "Philosophical Radicals" that strengthened the British Radical Party in the first half of the 19th century. Mill was able to secure a stable and well paying job which enabled him to support his wife and nine children with the East India Company following the publication of his work, *The History of British India* in 1818.

Bentham's financial support boosted the activities of the philosophical radicals in the early 19th century and they subsequently became strengthened enough to confront the Whigs and Tories. It enabled the Radicals to establish the *Westminster Review* (1824) to counter the Whig *Edinburgh Review* (1802) and the Tory *Quarterly Review* (1809). This medium was effectively utilized by the Radicals to espouse their advocacy for legal and political reform, universal male suffrage, the use of economic theory (especially Ricardo's) in political decision-making,

and a politics oriented by human happiness rather than by conservatism or by natural rights.

The Radicals in contradistinction from the Whigs and Tories exhibited such political temperament that indicated rationalism—their willingness to recommend re-structuring social and political institutions under the explicit guidance of principles of reasons (e.g. the principle of utility). Specifically, while Whig intellectuals and Radicals tended to align with each other on economic issues, both tending towards pro-urban, pro-industrial, laissez-faire policies, Tory intellectuals focused on defending traditional British social structures and ways of life associated with aristocratic agrarianism. These alliances manifested in disputes over the Tory-supported Corn Laws, legislation meant to protect domestic agriculture by taxing imported grains.

3.3 James Mill and the End of Government

The question with respect to government is a question about the adaptation of means to an end. The end of government has been described in a great variety of expressions. By Locke it was said to be 'the public good'; by others it has been described as being 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' These, and equivalent expressions, are just; but they are defective, inasmuch as the particular ideas which they embrace are indistinctly announced, and different conceptions are by means of them raised in different minds, and even in the same mind on different occasions.

James Mill maintained that in general terms the lot of every human being is determined by his pains and pleasures, and that his happiness corresponds with the degree in which his pleasures are great and his pains are small. He maintained that human pain and pleasure emanates from either our fellow-men or by causes independent of other men. We may assume it as another principle that the concern of government is with the former of these two sources: that its business is to increase to the utmost the pleasures, and diminish to the utmost the pains, which men derive from one another.

Of the laws of nature on which the condition of man depends, that which is attended with the greatest number of consequences is the necessity of labor for obtaining the means of subsistence, as well as the means of the greatest part of our pleasures. This is no doubt the primary cause of government; for if nature had produced spontaneously all the objects which we desire, and in sufficient abundance for the desires of all, there would have been no source of dispute or of injury among men, nor would any man have possessed the means of ever acquiring authority over another.

However, when nature produces the object of dispute that is insufficient for all, the source of dispute between men becomes exhaustive and every man has the means of acquiring authority over others in proportion to the quantity of those objects which he is able to possess. In this case the end to be obtained through government as the means, is to make that distribution of the scanty materials of happiness which would insure the greatest sum of it in the members of the community taken altogether, preventing every individual or combination of individuals from interfering with that distribution or making any man to have less than his share.

He further argued that when it is considered that most of the objects of desire and even the means of subsistence are the product of labor, it is evident that the means of insuring labor must be provided for as the foundation of all. The means for the insuring of labor are of two sorts: the one made out of the matter of evil, the other made out of the matter of good. The first sort is commonly denominated force, and under its application the laborers are slaves. This mode of procuring labor we need not consider, for if the end of government be to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number, that end cannot be attained by making the greatest number slaves.

The other mode of obtaining labor in his view is by allurement, or the advantage which it brings. To obtain all the objects of desire in the greatest possible quantity, we must obtain labor in the greatest possible quantity; and to obtain labor in the greatest possible quantity, we must raise to the greatest possible height the advantage attached to labor. It is impossible to attach to labor a greater degree of advantage than the whole of the product of labor. This is because if you give more to one man than the produce of his labor, you can do so only by taking it away from the produce of some other man's labor. The greatest possible happiness of society is therefore attained by insuring to every man the greatest possible quantity of the produce of his labor.

James Mill is of the view that this can only be attained through one mode; the government, which emanates from the union of a certain number of men to protect one another and that this can best be attained when a great number of men combine and delegate to a small number the power necessary for protecting them all. Mill further identified two critical issues in relation to the power of government. The first dealt with the power with which the small number is entrusted while the second concern focused on the use which they made of it. It is the position of Mill that all the difficult questions of government relate to the means of restraining those in whose hands are lodged the powers necessary for the protection of all, from making a bad use of it. He

argued that the very same reasons for establishing government which is to ensure the safety of individual from the mighty is the same reason that stimulates concern on the uses of the powers conferred on the government supposedly run by a small set of individuals.

There are three modes in which it may be supposed that the powers for the protection of the community are capable of being exercised. The community may undertake the protection of itself and of its members. The powers of protection may be placed in the hands of a few. And lastly, they may be placed in the hands of an individual. The many, the few, the one correspond to the three forms of government: the democratic, the aristocratic, and the monarchy.

- *The democratical.*— It is obviously impossible that the community in a body can be present to afford protection to each of its members. It must employ individuals for that purpose. Employing individuals, it must choose them; it must lay down the rules under which they are to act; and it must punish them if act not in conformity to those rules. In these functions are included the three great operations of government—administration, legislation, and judicature. The community, to perform any of these operations, must be assembled. This circumstance alone seems to form a conclusive objection against the democratical form. Since it is expensive and difficult to assemble the whole of a community as often as the business of government requires, and since this will adversely affect performance. What they uniformly do is to choose a certain number of themselves to be the actors in their stead. Even in the case of a common benefit club, the members choose a committee of management and content themselves with a general control.
- *The aristocratical* - This term applies to all those cases in which the powers of government are held by any number of persons intermediate between a single person and the majority. When the number is small, it is common to call the government an oligarchy; when it is considerable, to call it an aristocracy. The cases are essentially the same, because the motives which operate in both are the same. This is a proposition which carries, we think, its own evidence along with it. We therefore assume it as a point which will not be disputed. The source of evil is radically different in the case of aristocracy from what it is in that of democracy.

He maintained that the community cannot have an interest opposite to its interest. To affirm this or to wish that the community can within itself and with respect to itself have sinister interest would be a contradiction in terms. It is his opinion that one community may intend the evil of another; never its own. While he accepts that the community may act

wrong from mistake, he however maintained that to suppose that it will deliberately design such for itself would be to suppose that human beings can wish their own misery.

The circumstances from which the ineptitude of the community, as a body, for the business of government arises—namely, the inconvenience of assembling them, and the inconvenience of their numbers when assembled—do not necessarily exist in the case of aristocracy. If the number of those who hold among them the powers of government is so great as to make it inconvenient to assemble them, or impossible for them to deliberate calmly when assembled, this is only an objection which has no application to an aristocracy not too numerous when assembled for the best exercise of deliberation.

The question is, whether such an aristocracy may be trusted to make that use of the powers of government which is most conducive to the end for which government exists. There may be a strong presumption that any aristocracy, monopolizing the powers of government, would not possess intellectual powers in any very high perfection since intellectual powers are the offspring of labor. He further contends that if powers are put into the hands of a comparatively small number, called an aristocracy,—powers which make them stronger than the rest of the community,—they will take from the rest of the community as much as they please of the objects of desire. They will thus defeat the very end for which government was instituted. The unfitness, therefore, of an aristocracy to be entrusted with the powers of government, rests on demonstration.

- *The monarchical.* On monarchy, he maintained that in most respects the monarchy form of government agrees with the aristocracy and is liable to the same objections. In his view, if government is established on this, as a law of human nature, that a man if able will take from others anything which they have and he desires, it is sufficiently evident that when a man is called a king it does not change his nature; so that when he has got power to enable him to take from every man what he pleases, he will take whatever he pleases. To suppose that he will not is to affirm that government is unnecessary, and that human beings will abstain from injuring one another of their own accord.

From the above, James Mill drew the conclusion that whenever the powers of government are placed in any hands other than those of the community—whether those of one man, of a few, or of several—those principles of human nature which imply that government is at all necessary, imply that those persons will make use of them to defeat the very end for which government exists.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The underlying logic of the utilitarian school as demonstrated above conceives the end or purpose of government as the pursuit of happiness for the greatest number. It is this endeavour that James Mill and Jeremy Bentham were preoccupied with in the course of the philosophical inquiries.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the doctrine of utilitarianism through the perspectives of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What in your views is the high point of Mill thesis on the end of government?
2. How does the doctrine of Mills reflect the principles of utilitarianism?
3. Critically examine the main points of the Benthamite calculus of pleasure-pain principle

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UNIT 5 JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and Times of JS Mill
 - 3.2 Basic Work of JS Mill
- 4.0 Conclusion
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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

John Stuart Mill was said to have ruled England in the “region of thought” between 1860 and 1865. His ideas were made popular through his writings on logic, epistemology, economics, social and political philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, religion and current affairs. He has also been described as the greatest British philosopher of the 19th century. The background to this intellectual domination has its roots in the foundations laid by his father, James Mill, on the younger Mill.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the contributions of JS Mill to political philosophy
- to explain another dimension to political philosophy in the era of reason and enlightenment.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of JS Mill

JS Mill was born in London in 1806 to the great utilitarian thinker, James Mill. He was taught Greek and Latin at a tender age and could read histories and Roman classic quite early in life. He was conversant with the work of Newton at eleven and studied logic, mathematic, political economy, legal philosophy and metaphysics in his early teens. As such, the young Mill was seen as the crown prince of the Philosophic Radical movement. Having assimilated the doctrine of utilitarianism, he joined the British “Philosophical Radicals” and contributed immensely to advance the philosophy. He was also significantly influenced by the ideas of Auguste Comte and Alexis de Tocqueville.

JS Mill developed interest in French thought and politics while living in France and was at a point employed as editor by Bentham and began to contribute articles to periodicals like the *Westminster Review*. He also established a number of intellectual societies and study groups in his lifetime. In his autobiography, he described the stress of his education as his “mental crisis.” The ensuing crisis marked the Mill’s struggle to revise the works of his father and Bentham in the spirit of enlightenment. In response to this crisis, Mill began exploring Romanticism and a variety of other European intellectual movements that rejected secular, naturalistic, worldly conceptions of human nature.

In 1830, he met Harriet Taylor and later married her after two decades of romance in 1851 following her husband’s death. Mill was most probably swayed by her competence and knowledge in politics, ethics and social thought. Mill was recruited to stand for a Parliamentary seat where he sponsored a Bill where he sought to amend the 1867 Reform

Bill to substitute “person” for “man” so that the franchise would be extended to women. Though the effort failed, it generated momentum for women’s suffrage. He died in 1873 and was buried next to Harriet. Some of his outstanding political writings include *Essay on Some Unsettled Question of Political Economy* (1844), *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), *On Liberty* (1859) and *Utilitarianism* (1863) and *the Subjection of Women*.

3.2 Basic Work of JS Mill

JS Mill addressed the issue of justice in his work *On Liberty* published in 1859. He began the essay by asserting that the subject was not the so-called liberty of the will, but civil or social liberties which focus on the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by the society over the individual. Here, he traced the history of struggle between rulers and ruled and suggests that social rather than political tyranny is greater danger for modern, commercial nations like Britain. This social “tyranny of the majority (a phrase borrowed from Tocqueville), arises from the enforcement of rules of conduct that are both arbitrary and strongly adhered to. It is the practical principle that guides the majority to their opinions on the regulation of human conduct and the feeling in each person’s mind that everybody should be required to act as he, and those with whom he sympathizes, would like to act.

Mill however, believes that human nature is so poor that unhappiness will always remain. He maintains that not even the Benthamite calculus of pleasure and pain could help legislators to bring good change. There will be unjust laws because of poor human nature. Man is always selfish whether he be the ruler or the ruled. He further contends that democracy could suppress tyranny and become oppressive itself, because of the lack of fair representation of all the members of the society. It is from this background that Mills cautions against the *so-called* “tyranny of the majority” which like other tyrannies, is still vulgarly held in dread, chief as operating through the act of the public authorities. Mills therefore advocates for a rationally grounded principle which governs a society’s dealings with individuals. This “one very simple principle”—often called the “harm principle”—entails that:

- [T]he sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the

opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him, or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise. (*On Liberty* 51-2)

What Mill is saying is that men collectively or individually should not interfere with the liberty of action of anyone except for self protection. He could be persuaded but not restrained. This is because, “over himself, his body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

This anti-paternalistic principle identifies three basic regions of human liberty: the “inward domain of consciousness,” liberty of tastes and pursuits (i.e. of framing our own life plan), and the freedom to unite with others. It is the sphere of action in which the society different from the individual has only indirect interest and control if any. It concerns directly the person’s life and conduct alone and can only affect others by free consent and participation. It is within this context that Mill conceives and expresses his idea of liberty.

Mill makes no appeal to “abstract right” in his justification of the harm principle. He advocates the freedom of the individual to act as they choose, so long as they cause minimal or no harm to others since this will promote “utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being.” Rather, he insists that abiding by the harm principle is desirable because it promotes the “free development of individuality” and the development of our humanity.

A basic philosophical problem presented by the work is what counts as “harm to others.” Where should we mark the boundary between conduct that is principally self-regarding versus conduct that involves others? Does smoking and use of drug cause harm to others to warrant prevention? Does prostitution, Pornography or public nudity constitute harm? Mill polemics provide the readers with a principled way of deliberating about them.

Mill further contends that the best form of government is the one that promotes and respects social or civil liberty. He identified this in what he referred to as Representative Democracy which in his view promotes the growth and development of individuality which shields the sphere of civil liberty. Since it is participatory, representative government gives individuals good opportunity to identify their personal interests and interests of the society. Furthermore, this form of government creates avenue for proportionate representation of all groups or classes both minority and majority. This helps to avert the tyranny of the majority.

Mill further contends that a convincing criterion of a good form of government depends on the qualities of the human members composing the society, over which the government is exercised. Such qualities as virtue and intelligence are extolled over selfishness, ignorance, stupidity and prejudice. From this, Mill contends that the best government is one which fosters the sum of the virtue and intelligence of the people it governs individually and collectively. This criterion is also expected to extend to the structure and composition of the machineries of government.

4.0 CONCLUSION

J S Mill was concerned with the nature of constraints which the society can legitimately exercise over the individual. It is his view that the individual is sovereign over himself and should only be restrained to prevent harm upon others. It is his view that good government can be assessed through the quality of its individual members.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the political philosophy of John Stuart Mill especially his tenets on the doctrine of liberty.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Examine the main tenets of JS Mill's doctrine of liberty.
2. To what extent did the doctrine of utilitarianism influence the political ideas of JS Mill?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 6 KARL MARX (1818-1883)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Life and Times of Karl Marx
 - 3.2 Basic Works of Karl Marx
 - 3.3 Historical Materialism
 - 3.4 Marx Notion of the State
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the life and contributions of Karl Marx to political theory. It focuses on Marx notion of historical materialism, nature of state and issues of political obligation. Attempts are also made to explore how his understanding of social classes and how relations between the classes help to shape the development of society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- to examine the contributions of Karl Marx to political philosophy
- to discuss the works of Karl Marx and their relevance to political theory.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life and Times of Karl Marx

Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a comfortable middle-class home in Trier on the river Moselle in Germany on May 5, 1818. He came from a long line of rabbis on both sides of his family and his father, a man who knew Voltaire and Lessing by heart had agreed to baptism as a Protestant so that he would not lose his job as one of the most respected lawyers in Trier. At the age of seventeen, Marx enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the University of Bonn. At Bonn he became engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, the daughter of Baron von Westphalen, a prominent member of Trier society who introduced young Marx to the teachings of Saint-Simon. The following year Marx's father sent him to the more serious University of Berlin where he embraced Hegelianism which ruled in Berlin at the time.

Marx became a member of the Young Hegelian Movement. This group produced a radical critique of Christianity and, by implication, the liberal opposition to the Prussian autocracy. In October 1842, Marx became editor, in Cologne, of the influential *Rheinische Zeitung* a liberal newspaper backed by industrialists. Marx's articles, particularly those on economic questions, forced the Prussian government to close the paper. Marx then immigrated to France in 1843.

While in Paris, Marx rapidly made contact with organized groups of émigré German workers and with various sects of French socialists. During his first few months in Paris, Marx became a communist and set down his views in a series of writings known as the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript* (1844). He joined the Communist League, an organization of German émigré workers with its center in London of which Marx and Engels became the major theoreticians. At a conference

of the League in London at the end of 1847 Marx and Engels were commissioned to write a succinct declaration of their position in what came to be known as *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848).

He was once again expelled from Paris at the end of 1844 and he moved to Brussels where he devoted himself to an intensive study of history that produced what came to be known as the materialist conception of history. Remarkably, Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time. Governments, both absolutist and republican, deported him from their territories. Bourgeois, whether conservative or ultra-democratic, vied with one another in heaping slanders upon him. He remained in an era of nationalism, a man without a nation.

Marx returned to Paris in 1848 from where he immigrated to Germany where he established and edited the *New Rheinische Zeitung* as a result of the 1848 revolution in France. The paper supported a radical democratic line against the Prussian autocracy and Marx devoted his main energies to its editorship since the Communist League had been virtually disbanded. The paper was suppressed by the government and he fled to London in May 1849 where he rejoined the Communist League to begin the “long, sleepless night of exile” and devoted the remaining years of his life to the study of political economy. Marx died March 14, 1883 and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in North London. His other works include *The Poverty of Philosophy* a polemic he wrote to counter the idealism of socialism as espoused in P.J Proudhon’s work *Philosophy of Poverty*, *The Grundrisse* (or *Outlines*), *Das Capital*, *The Civil War in France*, *The Class Struggle in France*, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

The centerpiece of Marx work is an incisive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of capitalism. Marx argued that all commodity value is determined by labour content- both the direct labour and indirect labour embodied in capital equipment. For example, the value of a shirt comes from the efforts of textile workers put together plus the value of the person who made the looms. By imputing all the values of output to labour, Marx attempted to show that profits- the part of output that is produced by workers but received by capitalists- amount to unearned income. It is the opinion of Marx that the injustice of capitalist receiving unearned income justifies transferring the ownership of factories and other means of production from capitalists to workers.

On the surface, Marx lived an eventful life, studiously poring through books in the British Museum, writing newspaper articles and working on his scholarly studies of capitalism. Although originally attracted to German universities, his atheism, pro-constitutionalism and radical ideas led him to journalism. He was deeply moved by the struggle of the working class and hoped to improve their lot. He wrote the epitaph that

appears on his gravestone: “Up till now philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, though, is to change it!”

3.2 Basic Work of Karl Marx

Marx argued that the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production. This thesis was developed in his manuscript published posthumously as *The German Ideology*. Marx further traced the history of the various modes of production and predicted the collapse of the present one industrial capitalism and its replacement by communism. In the *Manuscripts*, Marx outlined a humanist conception of communism, influenced by the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach and based on a contrast between the alienated nature of labor under capitalism and a communist society in which human beings freely developed their nature in cooperative production. It was also in Paris that Marx developed his lifelong partnership with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). In *Capital*, Marx elaborated his version of the labor theory value and his conception of surplus value and exploitation which would ultimately lead to a falling rate of profit in the collapse of industrial capitalism.

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844), Marx argued that the more wealth the worker produces, the poorer he becomes. He maintained that the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. This is because the increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion to the devaluation of the world of men. As such, labour produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity and does so in the proportion in which it produces commodities generally.

Marx borrowed the concept of dialectics from Hegel and used it to explain his historical materialism. Marx described his dialectics as nothing more than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought. From this he argued that it is the material economic base of society and the social classes that are instrumental to the progress of human history.

The *Economic Interpretation of History* is one of Marx's lasting contributions to western thought. Marx argued that economic interests lie behind and determine our values. He contends that people's beliefs and ideologies reflect the material interests of their social and economic class. This explains why business executives vote for conservative parties and labour leaders support candidates that advocate rises in wages or increasing employment benefits.

3.3 Historical Materialism

Marx argued that the highest determinant of human history is the sum of the relations involved in economic production. In other words, that the economic structure of society constitutes the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. What Marx is saying is that it is economic production that ultimately directs man's social advancement in history not other factors. Engels explained this further when he remarked that historical materialism implies that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the change in the mode of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct social classes and in the struggle of these classes against one another.

Marx notion of historical materialism presupposes that there exists two levels of relationship in the process of production; the relationship between man and nature on the one hand and relationship between man and man on the other. The relation between man and nature is determined by available forces of production. However, he observed that men not only act on nature in order to produce but also on one another, cooperating mutually in the exchange of activities which involves relations of production. Such relations often assume the nature of domination and subordination, exploitation and expropriation, oppression and repression between the owners of means of production and their exploited workers.

It is the views of Marx that the development in human society is dependent on the level of advancement between these spheres of relationships involved in the process of economic production. These relations of production are both complementary and contradictory. This is because although the owners of means of production and the exploited workers need each other in the process of production, their relation is often characterised by antagonistic class struggle which heightened the contradictions in each mode of production. Marx used the concept of class to describe the relationship of individuals to the means of production. He contended that every succeeding generation finds itself in possession of the productive forces required by the previous generation which serve it as the raw material for new production. At a stage, coherence arises in human history as the productive forces and social relation become overdeveloped. The emerging contradictions will metamorphose into a higher mode of production. Based on this logic, Marx identified five major historical epochs in the evolution of society as primitive communalism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and communism which is preceded by socialism. From this he contended

that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles.

3.4 Marx Notion of the State

Marx associated the emergence of state with the emergence of private property and located this phenomenon under the slave owning mode of production. It is his position that the state exist not for the interest of the generality of the populace but as a medium for the protection of the interest of the dominant and propertied class. Writing on the bourgeois state, Marx contended that it is nothing other than the form of organisation which the bourgeois necessarily adopt for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests. In the *Manifesto of the Communist party*, Marx described the executive in a modern state as merely the committee for the management of the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. From this he argued that the state and its agencies is only the tool which the dominant class utilize to oppress the bulk of the masses of the society. In a nutshell, this constitutes Marx primary view of the state.

In his other works, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and Class Struggle in France*, Marx however observed that the state may not represent the interest of any class and that in the case of the Bonapartist state, it is independent from and superior to all social classes, as being the dominant class. It is this new twist in conception of the state that resulted in the State Autonomy theory in which the state is conceived as a site and arena of class struggle with fractions competing for dominance within the state arena. In this sense, the state becomes a factor of cohesion and an institution regulating class conflict. The bourgeois state for him can only wither away as an instrument for the protection of private property under a communist society in the aftermath of the proletarian revolution that will establish the dictatorship of the proletariats. This is because the bourgeois state is like a sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of evil which he has called up by his spell.

Marx further contends that capitalism will inevitably lead to socialism. His argument is that technological advances enable capitalists to replace workers with machinery as a means of earning greater profits. He observed that the increasing accumulation of capital has two contradictory consequences. For instance, as the supply of available capital increases, the rate of profit on capital falls. At the same time, with fewer jobs, the unemployment rates rise and wages fall. In Marx terms, the reserve army of the unemployed would grow, and the working class would become increasingly impoverished and their working conditions would deteriorate and workers would grow progressively alienated from their jobs. The business climate will

become more violent as mass poverty will increase the incidence of under-consumption.

The continued decline in profit margins and investment opportunities at the domestic level will compel the dominant bourgeois class to resort to imperialism. Marx maintained that the capitalist system will not continue with this unbalanced growth forever. As such he predicted that the increasing inequality will result in the intensification of class consciousness among the proletariat. Finally a cataclysmic depression will sound the death knell of capitalism which like feudalism, contains the seed of its own destruction.

It is his view that since the state is an instrument of oppression by the members of the minority dominant bourgeois class over the mass of the proletariat or working class, the state is essentially evil by nature. In line with this, he argued that the notion of political obedience to the state is simply absurd and an abuse to common sense. Consequently, Marx contended that the state must be overthrown through a bloody revolution by the class of the proletariats. This revolution will usher in a society based on socialist principles characterized by collective ownership of private property and means of production and exchange. The highest stage of socialism will emerge under communism. The features of communism as outlined by Marx include:

- Dictatorship of the proletariat.
- Abolition of private property
- Existence of classless society
- The withering away of the State
- The distribution of social surplus will be based “from everyone according to ability” to “everyone according to need.”

4.0 CONCLUSION

The contributions of Karl Marx to political theory are immense. It is his view that the existence of social classes signifies the inevitability of social inequalities and antagonistic class struggles. His study of the history of economic relations in the society reveals a transition from primitive communalism to scientific socialism. This focus on historical materialism remains useful to students of social sciences and law and gives a good foundation to understanding the structure and functioning of the society.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the political theory of Karl Marx premised on how relations between the classes help shape the development of society.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Examine Marx concept of state in a society dominated by capital.
2. What do you understand by Marx idea of historical materialism?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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