

Paper Name : Western Political Thought

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Faculty Name: Dr.P.Kanagaraj

Mobile Number: 9443935919

Unit 5

5.1 Antonio Gramsci

- He was the famous Italian Marxist
- He was imprisoned by Fascist dictatorship in Italy. The Judge pronouncing the twenty year sentence of imprisonment stated that we should stop this brain from working for twenty years
- His writings are known as Prison Notebooks. He detailed his thoughts in the papers smuggled into prison
- He introduced the concept of Hegemony to explain the operation of the capitalist state.
- Hegemony means intellectual and moral leadership.
- The state manufactures the consent of the people through intellectual and moral leadership. It tries to create a false consciousness among people through propaganda. Its ideas are repeatedly driven into the minds of the people.
- Only when it fails to create the consent of the people it starts using brutal force to carry out its activities.
- Gramsci also argues that, to destroy the capitalist state the revolutionaries should use organic intellectuals and the communist party.
- The organic intellectuals will analyze the strength of the state and elucidate the means of destroying the state.
- The communist party will carry out the revolution and establish the ideal state of communism.

Comment on the Following

1. "All men are intellectuals, but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals"
2. Man is above all else mind, consciousness -- that is, he is a product of history, not of nature.

5.2 Louis Althusser

- He authored the book "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"
- Louis Althusser introduced further innovations in the Marxist concept of state. He argued that the capitalist State has two kinds of coercive instruments to safeguard itself.
- They are;
 1. Repressive State Apparatuses
 2. Ideological State Apparatuses.
- The Repressive State Apparatuses include police, military, law courts etc. They are repressive as they punish the people when their orders are not obeyed.
- -The Ideological State Apparatuses include family, schools, colleges, the media and trade unions. The State creates consent and support from people by ideological indoctrination, without violence.

5.3 Nicos Poulantzas.

- He was a Marxist thinker of the second half of the twentieth century
- He advocated a new school of Marxism known as Structuralism
- The state in a capitalist mode of production as taking a specifically capitalist form, not because particular individuals are in powerful positions as argued by Ralph Miliband in his Instrumental Theory of State
- The state reproduces the logic of capitalist structure in its economic, legal, and political institutions and therefore the capitalist state is favorable to the capitalists
- Institutions including state function in the long term interests of the Capitalism and not because of the short term interests of the members and officials of the capitalist class

For Further Reading

1. Das Capital by Karl Marx
2. Western Political Thought by C.L.Wayper
3. Western Political Thought by J.P.Sudha
4. Modern Political Theory by M.P.Jain
5. Prison Notebooks
6. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses