

LOCKE - MARX DIVIDE ON PROPERTY



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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M PHIL ) IN  
PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
THE NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY  
SHILLONG  
SEPTEMBER 2002

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DECLARATION

I, Mr S SANGCHUNGNUNGA, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me, or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the dissertation had not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institution.

This is being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M Phil ) in Philosophy.

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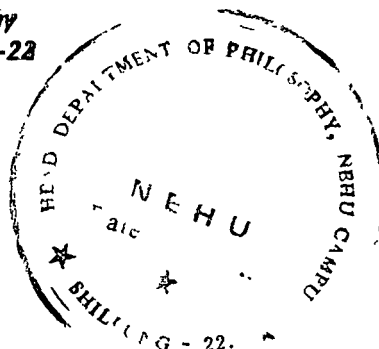
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the outset I would like to acknowledge the help and guidance I received from my supervisor and the Head of the Department, Prof. C.R. Agera. Without him I would not have been able to complete my thesis. His constant reminder to keep to the stipulated time for the submission of the thesis was not only a source of encouragement to me, but also instilled in me a sense of urgency.

The respected teachers of the Department Prof. (Mrs) Sujata Miri, Prof. Jagatpal, Dr. E.R. Tongper, Dr. Vanlalnghak, Dr. L. Lenka, Dr. Bhagat Oinam and Mr. X P. Mao have been generous to me with their suggestions, whenever I approached them. Dr. Oinam was of special help to me with an earlier draft of the chapters. I express my gratitude to all of them.

I must also thank my friends and research colleagues especially Zohmangaiha, Lalngurliana Sailo, Andrew H. Vanlaldika, J. Lalrinawma, M. Daniel, Mr. Thlenga, J. Zorema, Lalmalsawma Khiangte and Grace Zirsangliani. I thank the Office Staff of the Philosophy Department, Mr. Vanlalruata, Mrs. Roñ, and Mr. Padam Bhusal for their kind cooperation. My thanks are also due to the Librarians, Mr. Paul S. Nongsiej, Mr. Atong Longkumer and Mrs. E. Massar for their ever ready willingness to locate the books and Journals I was in need of.

Finally, I find no words, adequate enough, to express my innermost feelings to my parents, brother and sister for their silent

sacrifice, for my well being; without them I could not be what I am today. I dedicate this humble work to my parents, who have sacrificed all their comfort for my higher education.

Date: 25. sept. 02  
Place: Shillong

S. SANGCHUNG NUNGA

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# CHAPTER I

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The word 'property' is a very popular term, extensively used in our socio-political and jural discourse, from ancient times; possibly, it will remain in use in the human society as long as the society exists. What does it connote? On the face of it, it connotes 'things' valued economically, but it is not the case always, for it may refer to land, money, precious metals, at times, even to certain intellectual property rights. At any rate, property makes for better status for individual human beings; without it, survival is extremely difficult, if not impossible. One could not imagine how human life would be possible without property

As we know, properties human beings own are for the survival and development, although sometime it may have negative impact upon the life of human beings in various ways. The endless crimes and litigations on property issues are a case in point. It is a fact that, because of property, many people have lost their precious life. In modern times, when we think of property, it is not uncommon that a practice of materialism and consumerism comes to our mind. We are also aware of their impact in our life, especially in the developed and, to a limited measure, in the developing countries. Human happiness and completeness of life is often judged from the amount of possession of property. Along these lines, one may even entertain even a hedonistic pursuit of life and its values, for which, it is believed, material properties owned are indispensable. One can readily understand why

life of human beings is often held to be incomplete without property, therefore, why human beings try their utmost level to acquire and possess properties. The impact of possessing property on every aspect of life can hardly be questioned.

This is especially true of our political systems. The influence of property in our modern economic system can be seen in two major forms of government: democratic and socialistic. Both the systems claim to manage properties in an eminently rational way, so that a socio-political life is made possible to human beings with the near absence of conflicts of interest. They adopt, for the proper maintenance of properties, with a view for the welfare of the people, many a legislation. Indeed, the economic system of every country largely depends on how the government protects and regulates properties, both private and public, for the upliftment of the society. The success of the government is generally judged from the effective utilization of the properties in the country for the welfare of its people from the lowest to the highest level. Even as the improper management of property, at the individual level, gives rise to hardships to the person concerned and his family, ineffective management of the same, at the state level, gives rise to serious social and economic imbalances in the country. Mismanagement of properties can create mutual misunderstanding between sections of society, and the government itself may lose the confidence of the people it is to govern. This can engender class system in the society. People are divided into 'the haves' and 'the

have-nots', the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, to use a Marxist terminology. Mismanagement of property does not only lead to social stratification among the people, but entails grave threat to peace in civil society through violent human behaviour. For 'the have-nots', pitted against 'the haves', may have recourse to possess properties by unfair means, robbery, kidnapping and ransom, killing and what not. Also, in the case of those who have property, greed, implanted in human heart, can overpower them as to want more, making room for corruption, widespread everywhere in modern times, and deprive the legitimate share of the others.

History of mankind is one long struggle, on the part of man, to survive against all odds, in particular, the dangers of his natural environment and other related ills. To these natural dangers are to be added the dangers from fellow human beings, once a society comes into existence. For their security, men make weapons from stones, animal bones and metals; clothing from animal hides and furs; tools to forage and hunt their food. All these naturally become their property. Once man becomes a farmer, land, too, becomes property. From the fulfillment of the most basic needs of food, clothing and shelter, every human being tries to improve his material conditions. The formation of the concept of property then is natural. Even the street beggar is conscious of his property, be it his begging bowl or tattered clothing. Thus for the survival and the sustenance of his life, for the upliftment of his individual status, every human being tries to acquire some

'property' by various means. From time immemorial, every individual has exerted his utmost energy to possess some property. But the way he got his property may have varied from person to person, family to family and country to country. Nevertheless, the way they came to possess property largely depended upon the skill they had. These features have continued to dominate down the ages. Property owned by the individual is to provide not only his immediate needs but also the future needs.

The importance of properties in our day-to-day life can hardly be gainsaid. Because of property, it is universally acknowledged, there is a class stratification in the society. Therefore, it is generally held that the government should set the well-defined guidelines for the citizens in the acquisition of property, and ensure the prevention of the rise of social inequality among the peoples. The government is duty-bound to eradicate, as far as possible, social inequalities among the people. The property possessed by the individual sometimes gives rise to quarrels and contentions among individuals, groups and, at times, even the sovereign states. What is an adequate theory of property? In this dissertation, I would like to analyze two theories, propounded by Locke and Marx, and their influences on the modern economic systems. This chapter exclusively studies the concept, the nature, the kinds of property, and hopes to highlight the associated problems within the philosophies of Locke and Marx.

## A. THE CONCEPT OF PROPERTY

Our discourse on property often seems to be a discourse about 'things'. Things constitute property, however, only in as much as they can be assigned to owners. To own something is to have, in respect to it, certain rights and liabilities vis-a-vis other persons or public at large. Ownership, therefore, may be said to be a normative relation, or a complex of relations, between the owner, objects owned and the third parties. To refer to something, as 'property' is at once to locate it as a term in such a relationship. Some jurists, indeed, insist that 'property' refers not to things at all, but rather to a bundle of rights. This is obviously true of income titles, such as securities and annuities, and of rights to control over what has come to be known in our times as the 'intellectual property', such as patent rights and copyrights. These are 'things' only in a very abstract sense, as characteristic of complex normative relations. If so, the type of analysis of property we are expected to do becomes at once complex, subtle and demanding.

Every scientific analysis, including that of political economy, has to start, by clarifying the gist of the phenomena being studied, by examining their intrinsic nature. In others words, we are expected to study the basis of property as things. Hence, it is observed:

In the economic system of any society, this concept of property above all needs to be analyzed. For centuries, the best minds of the human race strive to divine the secret of property. It might appear, at first sight, that there is, in fact, no secret there at all. Property,

it could be said, is everything that people possess.<sup>1</sup>

Property, then, speaking scientifically, is a relation between human beings, which takes shape over appropriation or use of the means of production or articles of consumption. Consequently, it is a characterization of the social form, within whose framework, and through the medium of which, material values are appropriated, and the control is established over commodities and the force of nature for human purposes. This means that things in themselves do not constitute property, but only its material basis, the objects over which relations between men take shape. It has been rightly observed even by those sympathetic to Marxism:

Property, as a social relation, as a social form in which men appropriate material values, has existed in the past and will always exist in the future. It is unrealistic to demand the abolition of property. When communists are accused of wanting to abolish property, they reply: 'what we want to abolish is not property, but only its capitalist form, because it allows some people to live by exploiting others'.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear then that whatever objection is not against property as such, but against such of its forms that tend to be exploitative to human concerns. The history of the human society shows that one form of property gave way to another, while property itself has existed since time immemorial. We find that the change-over from one form of

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<sup>1</sup> L. Abalkin, and S. Dzarasov, (et al), *Political Economy: A Short Course*, Moscow Progress Publication, 1983, pp 270-273

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

property to another did not run either smoothly or peacefully. Property, above all, property in the sense of means of production, including the land, always has been object of uncompromising struggle, and, at the national level, a source of war and colonial aggrandizement. No class, in possession of the means of production, be it the slave-owners of Ancient Rome, or the Medieval feudal barons or the mill-owners of ancient Russia, ever gave up voluntarily and without a struggle, their right to the possession of property, including slaves, land, factories and instruments of labour.<sup>3</sup> The history of the struggle for property is exceptionally interesting, if also at times horrifying, but it falls outside the limited scope of this dissertation.

Let us begin with a linguistic analysis. The English word 'property' signifies something of the way the western man has thought about the scarce objects. The middle English word 'propete', and also the old French word 'propriete', are both derived from the Latin word, *proprietas*. The Latin word is the noun form of the adjective *propious*, meaning 'one's own', and it is akin to the French noun *prope*, which means 'what is close or near'. Thus, historically, 'property' carries the implication that one has exclusive rights to certain objects; because they are so close or near to oneself that they have become part and parcel of oneself through familiarity or usage.<sup>4</sup> Such implication is of

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Daniel L. Sills, (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia Of Social Science*, Vol. 11 & 12, London: Macmillan, 1972, p 590.

profound significance in the history and evolution of property in society.

What is one's own is property. Property thus is the name for a concept that refers to the rights and obligations, the privileges and restrictions, that govern the behaviour of man in any society toward scarce objects of value in the society. An Encyclopaedia observes,

People everywhere desire the possession of goods or things which are valuable by cultural definition and which are sanctioned by customs or police enforced laws, which define rights and obligations about the ownership, control, and competition for these desired goods. What is owned is property.<sup>5</sup>

In modern times, the concept of property, and of individual private property, can be interpreted in pursuance of the system of government in which we live. For instance, under the democratic form of government, every individual is permitted to own as much property as he can; here the freedom of acquiring private property is freely exercised. The government, and, for that matter, the society, has a duty to protect and preserve the individual properties. But, under the Socialist, or Communist, form of government, it is the government, and not the individual, who has the complete authority over the property; the individual person can own only a small amount of property, while the government controls and owns every property for the whole society. If no one is allowed to possess a huge amount of properties, it is because the government feels that, because of private properties, there

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

arises the dehumanizing class system in the society. When we put these two views of the democratic and the socialistic forms of government in juxtaposition, the role of the state in either system unmistakably expatiates itself. The state is required to look carefully about the 'ownership' of property, and to impose strict rules, uniformly applicable to the acquisition of property, and vigilantly guard against the illegal and unfair means of possessing property.

Property thus is a term, used popularly to refer to a thing owned by a person, but, used more accurately in law, to refer to a scheme of relations, which are recognized by the government, and that exist between individuals with respect to certain 'objects'. The object may be tangible, or intangible, but not necessarily. Since the object of property is not merely 'things', but also the protected relations, property may vary from society to society and from time to time. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint a least common denominator of property. 'My property' probably means at one level that the government will help me exclude others from the use or enjoyment of an object that I consider as 'my own'; hence, others cannot have an access to it except perhaps at a price previously paid to me on mutual agreement. We may once again fruitfully quote the Encyclopaedia:

Property rights to the enjoyment are exclusive or shared, present or prospective. The rightful possession of such rights is called ownership. Correlative rights to exclude others from enjoyment necessarily support ownership. Protection and control are given to ownership by custom or law by extension of usage, the things in which one has property rights, are called

one's property; thus the person who hold the title to hold a house, even though, there is mortgage outstanding, calls it his property.<sup>6</sup>

Property then signifies a number of things, which can be possessed as one's own. Hence, it can be said that some property is tangible, and some are not so tangible, while some clearly intangible. Therefore, in a sense, it can be said that anything that we own for the fulfillment of our needs can be put under the name of 'property'. For instance, in 'primitive' society the bows, the arrows, and spears are properties, because they are the means of sustenance to the primitive man. In the life of the Bushmen of Africa, their flocks and the sticks for preventing their sheep from straying away are the properties. In the life of modern man, his car, a television set and a computer that he owns is his property. But the right of ownership has to be extended from things to relations. The word 'property' is frequently used now judiciously to denote not only objects of rights, but also specific relations like intellectual property rights like patents. It is said:

Thus, land and chattels are said to be property; and rights, such as ownership of life, estates, and easements are likewise said to be property. Accurate legal terminology, however, usually reverses the use of the word property for the rights that persons have with respect to things.<sup>7</sup>

But I am aware of the limitation of my analysis. For the moment we include under property, complex relations that we have to objects.

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<sup>6</sup> Barbara A. Chernow and George A. Vallasi., *The Columbia Encyclopaedia*, Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1993, p.360.

<sup>7</sup> Robert P. Gwin, (ed.) *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 26, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989, p. 340.

Problems associated with property spill over into a host of other disciplines most notably ethics. If property is my relation to things, we can ask whole complex questions for which we may not have today adequate answers: Is my body my property so that I can dispose of it, in the way that I deem it fit (e.g. sale of human organs)? Can I rent a womb, for the nurture of a human embryo, the way I rent a car on a holiday? What would be the concept of paternity of such a test-tube child? Is a surrogate mother a true mother? The problem cannot be sorted out even at the biological level, because biology itself encounters difficulties at the genetic level. Does the ownership rest at the level of the incubatorial womb or cells of the donors or the genes? Such problems are extremely vexed to keep applied ethicists to rake their brains for ages. But these are genuine philosophical problems, which our society, faced, as it is with scientific possibilities hitherto unforeseen, can ill-afford to ignore. But am I digressing from my central problem? Perhaps, I do, but it poses the problem of property in its right magnitude.

It may be noted that everything is not controlled by property rights, nor are these rights themselves always governed by the laws of property. Even if I ignore the moral problems, I must not overlook the juridical problems of property. In most legal systems, including common laws, jurisdiction and systems of French family, the word 'things' apply to both physical objects and intangibles, which are copyrights, franchise agreements, patents, stocks, bonds, personal

annuities, and leases and business goodwill. In legal systems, following the German civil code, as well as the Japanese system, such intangibles, as the rights and obligations are not 'things'; nor are they, technically, objects of property rights. Once again, a great deal of philosophical classification is called for to help out the jurists. For, 'accurate definition of the word 'things' is indispensable, because only 'things' in the legal sense can be objects of property rights'.<sup>8</sup> Problems that we face here are clearly multidimensional, good enough to challenge the philosophers.

#### **B. KINDS OF PROPERTY**

Property is mainly divided into two kinds: personal property, or 'personalty' and the real property or 'realty'. Personalty are the largely personal effects, e.g. a car, a television set etc. Real property, or realty, are chiefly land and improvements built thereon. Sometime it is, comprehensively or loosely, described as lands, tenements (holdings by another's authority), and 'hereditament' (that which is capable of being inherited). When a house is bought, the purchase includes, as real property, the land, the building on that land, and such items as are permanently attached to the building. Perhaps, because land was traditionally the main source of wealth, the transfer of the realty from one owner to another used to be much more complicated than the transfer of the personalty. Since the Middle Ages, this difference has

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

greatly diminished, but not vanished altogether. The government may cause land to pass from some form of public ownership to private ownership by way of a grant, or endowment. When the owner of realty sells it to another person, the instrument of the transfer is said to be a 'deed', and the transfer of deed must be legally recorded by way of registration. When an owner chooses to leave his property to another person upon death, an execution of a 'will' effects the transfer. Where the property is in the name of two or more persons, with the rights of survivorship or in the name of a husband and wife, no single owner can execute a will to transfer the property to anyone he chooses; the property must pass to the survivors. Realty can be acquired by some specific claim of rights, often defined for a period set by statute.<sup>9</sup>

Personal property, on the other hand, consists mainly of movables and immovables. Tangible personal property is any physical object with intrinsic value. An automobile, sofa and other movable objects are examples of tangible personal property. Personal property of the intangibles type includes copyrights, franchise agreements, patents, personal annuities etc. The transfer of ownership of personal property is generally quite simple. The most common transfer of personal property is by way of the retail-rate transaction. The transfer of the intangible personal property often requires the formal registration of

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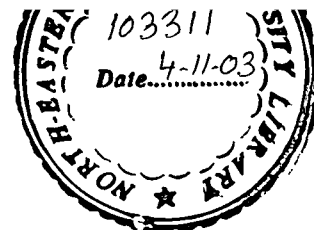
<sup>9</sup> S. S. Shasi, (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Humanities And Social Science*, Vol. 37, New Delhi: Anmol Publication, 1992, pp. 1399-1402.

the property in the new owner's name. Personal property may also be transferred by way of a will.<sup>10</sup>

The distinction of real property (realty) and personal property (personalty) served the purposes of the early feudal system in society, nearly everywhere. Then the social structure was such that the ownership and possession of realty, especially the land, was controlled to protect society. The ownership of personalty then was of minor importance. It came to acquire prominence only gradually during the late Middle Ages. Soon, personal property lost its subordinate position, and grew to be the economic mainstay of the rising middle class of merchants and manufacturers. Personal property could be bought and sold in relative freedom without the hindrances that usually beset the disposal of land. By taking advantage of its economic freedom, the middle class was able to replace quickly the landed autocracy as society's dominant class. Concurrently, it also sought to relieve real property of its medieval fetters in order to use it, along with personal property, as a revenue-producing capital. Gradually the law of real property tended, in all-important respects, to be assimilated to that of personalty itself. In course of time, land could be bought and sold with almost perfect freedom, and distributed by the execution of the will. Fundamentally, it joined the list of other commodities. Only the differences of detail in the law of real property and personal property

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*



still persisted, especially in the transfer of realty, which is attended with great formality, but in its use it became as good as personalty.<sup>11</sup>

However, in the case of the socialistic socio- politico- economic systems, the interpretation of realty came to be vastly different from that of personalty. In a socialist, or communist, form of government, all large property, or virtually all realty, was to be possessed and controlled by the government; only some small quantity of property was permitted to be kept by the individual as the personalty. Naturally, whereas the liberalist systems tended to reduce all property progressively to personalty, the socialist systems reduced it to realty under the control of the government. Thus the distinction of the kinds of property, originally acknowledged in any society, came to be severally and extensively emphasized, depending on the government prevalent in the societies.

Human history, ever since man turned away from hunting and foraging to a grain-based sustenance, has been largely agrarian. It has not ceased to be so even now, despite industrial revolution. In such agrarian society, the most sought after realty is land itself considered as the greatest source of wealth. The feudal system was essentially a land-centered system. But with the coming of the industrial revolution, personalty, especially in forms of stocks and bonds, gradually outstripped land of its centrality as the basis of the industrial nation wealth. Classical Marxism views the private ownership of both forms

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

of property, realty and personalty, as elements of the Capitalist monopoly, that need to be abolished to make way for a Communist society, where all realty is under the control of the government. Therefore, in most Marxist nations, very little real property is owned by the individuals. This would include all the wealth producing means of large-scale production of consumer goods, restricting personalty to such items as furniture and clothing. Small farms and dwellings in some Marxist countries remained privately owned, but most land was co-operatively owned. In some democratic countries of Europe, and also in the case of India, a mixture of private and public ownership of property generally prevailed.<sup>12</sup>

### C. PROBLEM OF PROPERTY

When the concept of property is carefully analyzed, we observe that the problems associated with property are inevitably linked with the concept of justice. The concept of justice is inextricably woven with that of property. That is why the social philosophers have always discussed the problems of property in close relation with justice, social, political, jural and, most notably, economic.

The institution of property has interested social philosopher in part, at least, because it raises the issues of justice. Like government, justice, too, is practically a universal concept, but it varies enough in its particular arrangement of its components to suggest the question what criteria are relevant in assessing the relative merits of various

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*

arrangements. Again, a student of philosophy will further take note of the fact that, because, justice discriminates between rights and fortune, it invites moral criticism on the institution of property in any given society. Such a moral criticism may call for a demand for either the condemnation or justification of property.

In the case of property rights, in olden days, the larger items of human sustenance were always regulated and maintained by society or community at large for all the members within society. This is especially true of the tribal communities, where land is substantially owned by the community. A small quantity of property is permitted to be owned by the individual. The property right is entrenched in the earliest stages of human culture with the question of justice, or the fulfillment of the needs of all the members of the community. In primitive societies, the conditions of property were bound up with the degree of the complexity of social organization. Generally, the social organization was relatively simple, its complexity, if any, was easily mastered by every member. Along with the community ownership of the land, put at the disposal of every family, there existed a provision for a personal or private ownership, though, usually in reference to such belongings as clothes, ornaments, foodstuff and weapons. Generally, the community regulated big items of value, ranging from livestock and the pastoral and agricultural land to designated hunting territories, were clearly demarcated and regulated by the community, providing for everyone's needs and without depriving anyone of his life's

sustenance. Such a system was very natural to nomadic groups, and the earliest agricultural settlers. The communitarian development of the agricultural land persisted into modern times, especially in European countries, where the society practiced an 'open field system' to ensure that all inhabitants of a society would have a plot of land to work. This is largely the practice among the tribal of the North-Eastern Region of India until the recent times. A pattern of 'consensus' existed within individual families, who provided all of their members, through a joint ownership based on family seniority, and life's sustenance. The system is largely egalitarian.

In respect of the institution of property, there can be a number of perspectives. For instance, one may strongly advocate the freedom of the individual to acquire private property, and believe that what he treats as 'his own' property cannot be enjoyed by others, and wish and demand that the government should only protect and preserve his property. This is the liberalist perspective. On the other hand, one may interpret that all property should be under the control of the government, and may advocate that there be no room for private property. This is the socialist perspective. These two perspectives on properties are represented by Locke and Marx, studied in this dissertation. Whatever the dominant perspective adopted in a society, all would agree on the need that there be a proper channel for acquiring property. The ownership of property by the individual or the

government should be judiciously regulated and properly maintained for the betterment of all citizens.

In countries, where property is owned as a matter of individual rights, there are generally two means of acquisition: First, there is 'derivative acquisition'. This involves the transfer of property and the rights thereto from one owner to another. The most common form of this is a sale, in which a voluntary exchange of money for property takes place. A donation or gift is another form of derivative acquisition. A third form of derivative acquisition is inheritance. Inheritance is a central concept of nearly all laws of property. Inheritance falls under this category, where it occurs as a result of a deliberate bequeathal, as in a will, or of laws of intestate succession in the distribution of property, in the event of there being no will left behind. Clearly there can be cases of derivative acquisition that are involuntary.

The second type of acquisition is 'original acquisition'. This acquisition is resultant upon the creation of new rights to property. For instance, a farmer has a right to his properties, crops and his newborn livestock, without having these new products formally transferred to him. This is called 'accession'. Accession is a valid means of original acquisition, when the item now possessed belonged to no one formerly. Secondly, under the original acquisition we can include property by way of what is known as the 'acquisitive prescription' in civil laws. A thing can be acquired, if it is possessed for a certain period of time,

the phenomenon is also known as 'adverse possession' in some countries. Thirdly, the public authority can confer certain privileges upon persons, ranging from the rights to mineral resources beneath the earth to electricity harnessed from a river to exclusive use of an invention, as types of original acquisition. Finally, there is the 'expropriation' of land, passing for original acquisition. Here, the land is acquired by the government for construction of a highway or such common big utilities as dams, railways, airports and so on. Such expropriation may not be a voluntary exchange between parties but demanded by the government for common utilities. But compensation to the affected party, to the tune of the property value, is commonly provided. The governments have to be extremely sensitive to the needs of the affected parties. Callousness in this regard in our own country in recent times has resulted in such movements as *Narmada Bachao Andolan* and *Justice to Tehri Dam Oustees*.

The type of property laws in a society, generally, may be taken as an index of its socio-economic system. For instance, a primitive pastoral tribe, closely united against its enemies, may hold its pasture-land with its enemies either in common or rotate ownership, thereby avoiding disruptive quarrels. In comparison, in a society, that enjoys an economic surplus and relative security, institution of private property may be highly developed with the marked division of ownership and a competitive struggle for control among the individuals. On the other hand, private property may be altogether

eliminated in certain other societies as in those envisioned by Marx. Modern Anglo-American property laws provide, at least potentially, for the ownership of nearly all things that have, or may have, value. In a sense, all land, presently or ultimately, belongs to the state, for whatever is not privately owned by the individuals, the public authority of the state may actually appropriate to itself by the so-called condemnation proceedings under the power of the eminent domain. In reality, much of the land in capitalist society is under the control of the private landlords, although the ownership of the sub-soil resources may be public. The terminology, and much of the content, of modern property laws stem from its origin in feudalism, be it in Europe or elsewhere. Paradoxically, feudalism, as a political system, may have changed, but it continues to dominate in the legal systems, especially in respect of the institution of property. This only indicates how important are the land-reform laws for the economic development of any country. India has yet to go a long way, here.

The Grecko-Roman law reflects a shift to the urban culture, in as much as it provides for the exclusive rights of private ownership of property, although the right is restricted to the oligarchical families. The Roman concept of 'dominium' posited the rights to absolute ownership. The Roman Empire may have collapsed, but its legal system continued to persist in modern European states, and through their impact, in other countries elsewhere. The only change apparently is the replacement of the oligarchical families by the citizens, without,

The theory, propounded by the British philosopher, Locke, is generally called the *liberal*, or the *individualist*, theory of property, on account of its advocacy of the ownership of private property by the individual. Locke's theory of property is one of the most prominent and distinctive features of his system of politics and political economy, that has had a long-lasting impact on western economic systems. In recent years, if its re-interpretation is attempted, it is to justify the western capitalistic economy; but it has also given to the new philosophical controversies and discussions. The echoes of desirable curtailment of liberalism are increasingly heard to save the society from atomized individualism that has little concern for common good in society. Locke's theory of property provides every man a right to possess property, which is said to be the legitimate fruit of the individual's owned labour. Law of nature supposedly guarantees his activity of acquiring property through social relations that men enter in. Thus, the state of nature is a state, in which men live together in peace, and each one in the state of nature is free to acquire and enjoy the fruits of his own labour. The government, that is formed of the society with juridical powers, has the duty to protect and to preserve the properties of its citizens without prejudice. The individuals are free to possess properties as much as he can without any let or hindrance. The state does not create the property; rather the state itself is created for the sake of protecting the property of citizens. The implication is that the state cannot take the properties of individual without his

however, radically restraining the headstart the landed gentry had vis-à-vis the new citizenry, in the economic development. The system of property ownership in Middle Ages in Europe, was feudalism. The feudal landlords owned lands under the ultimate dominion of the king, but certainly did not possess it. Instead, they let their vast landholdings to the serfs, who shared their product with the landowners in order to hold tenancy. Wherever the tenant died, the land was given to the new and different tenants of his choice.<sup>13</sup> With the change in monarchical government, the feudal landlords have come to wield great economic powers everywhere without the inapprobrium of feudalism under the changed political systems.

#### D. LOCKE AND MARX ON PROPERTY

In this dissertation, I propose to take up for my study an explication and evaluation of the debate on property between the liberalism of Locke and the socialism of Karl Marx. The theories of property, propounded by the two philosophers are generally placed in opposite camps. Hence, I have preferred to call it a 'divide', though it is not insurmountable. In my study, I would like to compare and contrast the two theories, and study their impact on the modern economic systems generally, and to conclude that, considered in itself, each of them is incomplete as a theory of property. Somewhere in their judicious blend may lie an adequate theory.

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<sup>13</sup> Philip W. Goetz, (ed.), *The New Encyclopaedia*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989, p. 340

consent.<sup>14</sup> However, every citizen may be obliged to pay taxes regularly to the state without fail, so that the state can effectively protect the individual's property. The crux of Locke's theory of property then is the conviction that the natural rights of his body and the works of his hands are his property, and that the material property owned by him is an extension of his own person.

On the other hand, the theory of property, propounded by Karl Marx, is generally said to be Socialist, or Communist, theory of property. It advocates that all property, big or small, movable or immovable, must be owned by the state. No individual has any right to property. All property should be equally shared by the people. Individuals are under the control of the government, and are apportioned by the government what is needed for their living. But the large property like land and natural resources, especially the means of production, are to be owned and controlled by the government. The institution private of property gives rise to class-stratification in the society. The government should eradicate the class system among the people, which the ownership of property engenders. The creation of the rich and poor classes of the people is brought about by the possession of private property. The abolition of private properties will therefore do away with the class-system among the people of the state. The government then should aim at a classless society, where everyone has

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<sup>14</sup> Vere Chapell, *The Cambridge Companion to Locke*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 236.

equal share, or, at least, as per one's needs, of resources of all property within the state. In order to achieve the goal, Marx suggests that the state should have the power to seize the property owned by the individual, if the needs arise. The equality of every person, from the lowest to the highest, should be honored as far as practicable. It is evident that Marx's theory of property is not only against Locke's theory, but also it aims at the upliftment of socio-political and economic system within the state, keeping in mind the welfare of the people, within its national territory. In Marx's theory of property, government is the owner and the guardian of all property within its territory. All authority and powers are vested in the hands of the government. All are equal before the laws. There should not be any discrimination on the basis of sex, colour and race.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. In this introductory chapter, I have dwelt on the statement of the problem undertaken for study in the dissertation. For this purpose, I have briefly outlined the origin and nature of property, kinds of property, before I introduce Locke's Liberalism and Marx's Socialism on property. In chapter two, I will discuss Locke's Liberalism on property exclusively. Chapter three will likewise be an exclusive study of Marx's Socialism on property. In chapter four, by way of comparison and contrast, I will highlight the divide between the two philosophers, or between liberalist and socialist theories of property. In the fifth and concluding chapter, I will discuss the influences of the two theories of property on the politico-economic

systems, to argue that neither of them, as a theory of property, is complete and adequate. I end the chapter with concrete suggestions. If our political economy has to be profitable to the societies, it may have to judiciously blend the positive and humane aspects of both liberalist and socialist theories of property. Besides, such a political economy may also have to put certain reasonable restraints on other negative aspects of both theories of property.

## **CHAPTER II**

## CHAPTER II

### LOCKE'S LIBERALISM ON PROPERTY

In this chapter, I will reflect on Locke's views on property. Although the chapter is entitled as Locke's Liberalism, I shall argue, after explicating his view, that his theory can be more appropriately called 'Individualistic'. The chapter proceeds in three stages. First of all, I shall address myself to the question, if the ownership of property is a natural right, as conceived by Locke. Secondly, I shall discuss Locke's division of property. Finally, I shall study the relation between labour and property, especially because a labour theory is inadequately discussed by Locke.

Locke's theory of property is based largely on his idea of natural right. This at once implies that his theory of property falls within wider theory of liberalism. Private property is an age-old institution, and it has constituted a subject matter for many theories both in the political as well as the economic fields. No serious philosopher could afford to ignore the discussions on property. While tracing historical growth of this age-old institution, it is observed:

Plato believed that property obscured men's reasoning powers and he therefore denied it to the guardians. Aristotle approved of property, but he said that any class, which became too wealthy, would constitute a threat to political stability. St Thomas refused to assert that property is sanctioned by Natural Laws and claimed that it is an addition enacted by human legislators. Hobbes allowed his citizens to own property but he gave the sovereign power to regulate the ways, which were employed. All

the theories have in short reservations about property.<sup>1</sup>

The theory advocated by John Locke is generally called the *Liberal*, or the *Individualist*, theory of property. Because liberalism is too wide a category, it would be more appropriate to call it the individualist theory. The more so, because Locke advocated undoubtedly the ownership of private property by the individual. To this end, I will direct the presentation in this chapter. Locke's theory of property is one of the most prominent and distinctive features of his system of political economy, and it has had a long-lasting impact on western economic system. In recent years, its re-interpretation has given to the new philosophical controversies and discussions. Locke's relevance today stands reinvigorated, especially after the collapse of the socialist forms of government in the Eastern Europe and the erstwhile USSR. The echoes of desirable curtailment of liberalism are increasingly heard to save the society from atomized individualism.

In presenting his theory of property, John Locke apparently understood 'property' into two senses, although he did not succeed in keeping them clearly apart. It is true that Locke somewhat confused the wider sense with the narrow sense, because in defining property he had to take into account the preservation of property, therefore, the reasons for entering civil society in unusually wider terms, as is evidenced in the following:

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<sup>1</sup>H R Mukhi, *A Simple History of Political Thought*, New Delhi: G. Lal and Company, 1966, p 41.

Man being born, as has been proved, with a title to perfect freedom, and an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the right and privileges of the law of nature equally with any other man or number of men in the world, hath by nature a power not only to preserve his property that is life, liberty, and estate.<sup>2</sup>

Here, Locke does not take the concept of property to stand for mere goods of our own but also includes within it our life, liberty and such other elements. In the same spirit, he further adds that 'for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estate, which I call generally property'.<sup>3</sup>

Locke does not always use the term 'property' in such a wide sense. In his crucial arguments on the limitation of the powers of government,<sup>4</sup> he clearly uses property in the more usual sense of lands and goods, or material possessions, of individual persons. But, when he does use property in the wider sense he lists estate along with life and liberty, as though the latter were the objects, for the preservation of which human beings set up the government. In other words, Locke extended the concept of natural rights to estate, too.

#### A. OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY AS NATURAL RIGHTS

The word ownership signifies the relation between an object and a person, forming the subject matter of his ownership. It consists of a complex of rights, being good against all the world, and not merely

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<sup>2</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Sects., 87 (Hereafter the text is referred to as the *Treatises*)

<sup>3</sup> *Treatises*, 123.

<sup>4</sup> *Treatises*, 138-139.

against specific person. But we need to identify certain features in this relationship. Some of them are right to possession, right of exclusion of others and the right to enjoyment. In his chapter on 'Of Property', Locke shows how the natural right to property can be derived from the natural right to one's life and labour. Every man has a natural right to property within the bounds of the law of nature. However, the chapter referred to carries in it much more significance. Surprisingly it removes the bounds of law of nature from the natural property rights of the individual. For Locke's astonishing achievement was to base the property right on natural right and natural law, and, then, remove all the limits of natural law from the property rights. This has sounded a jarring note in the liberalist theory of property to this day.

Locke's discussion on property has three elements: Firstly, there is an assertion, or supposition, about the original divine donation of the world to man. Secondly, it has a question, stemming from the assertion concerning the origin of private property. Thirdly, it has the promise of an answer to the question on the origin of property:

Whether we consider natural reason, which tells us that men being once born have a right to their preservation,...God has given the earth to the children of men..., (so that) <sup>men</sup> might come to have property in several parts of that which God gave mankind in common, and that without any express compact of all the commoners.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Treatises*, 25.

It is important for us to note that the phrase 'in common' refers to God's generous bounty of creation to man. In the original universal common of which Locke speaks, 'nobody has originally private dominion exclusive of the rest of mankind.'<sup>6</sup> According to the Lockean theory of property, every man is equal to every other man, and can enjoy the same right to every part of what is common. However, this cannot mean that every man has a share in the ownership of everything: rather it can only mean that in nature there was no ownership; there was no property at all, to begin with. In the universal common, every man had a right to help himself to any part of the common without the consent of the others. For, in that natural state, then, others have no property, for it is the nature of property 'that without a man's own consent, it cannot be taken from him.'<sup>7</sup> The assertion that the world was given to humankind in common means that in the beginning no one owned anything at all. The original universal common was a state of universal propertylessness. That is why Locke's question, 'How did anyone ever come to have a property in anything?',<sup>8</sup> becomes significant philosophical question.

In order to answer this question equally significantly, Locke has to make a single exception to the otherwise universal common: The person of each man to himself as 'his own', thus implying a primordial conception of property, is rooted in nature. Locke writes,

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<sup>6</sup> *Treatises.*, 26.

<sup>7</sup> *Treatises.*, 193

<sup>8</sup> Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, *History of Political Philosophy*, Chicago, Rand Mc Nally & Company, 1972, p 461.

Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet, *every man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right, to but himself.*<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, by way of extension, we may concede that every man owns not only his own person but also his own labour. One's labour is truly an immediate extension of one's person for 'the labor of his body and the works of his hands, we may say, are properly his.'<sup>10</sup> The 'property', which every man has in his own person and in his labour, is the original and natural property. It is the foundation of all property in the state of nature. All other property, then, is derived from that original, inalienable, natural and undivided property.

Locke draws the right to private property from the idea of private, or personal, freedom, which also suggests at once the right to self-preservation. God gave the earth to human beings for their use. But it to must be noted that the earth is given to 'man', in the general sense, not in the sense of specific individuals. But it is our common experience that it is the specific individuals who strive for possession of the earth and all it contains. The right of man in the general sense needs no consent or permission from other men, because it is everyman's freedom; otherwise, men cannot be said to be free. Besides the right to appropriate things, say, his own property, is blended with his labour with the raw materials which nature provides. He may till, plant, improve and cultivate a piece of land. Since his

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, (Emphasis is mine )

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

labour creates the new results in the form of new products and artifacts, they too, become his property.

Locke's assertion and justification of natural individual right to property were of epochal significance to western thought, especially of liberalism. It has since then become central to the western theory of civil society and government. Locke writes,

The great and chief end therefore, of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property.<sup>11</sup>

It is from this proposition, expressed in many ways throughout the Second Treatise, that most of Locke's conclusions, powers and limits of civil society and government, are drawn. The proposition clearly requires the postulate that every human being has a natural right to property, which was in existence, prior to, and independent of, the emergence of civil society and the government.

In Locke's theory of property, then, we can discern not only the possession of property, but the ownership as well in the state of nature. When men came together to form a civil society with their natural rights, the right to property was already there in their hands. The state did not create the institution of property, much less his ownership thereof, but the state itself was created in order to preserve and protect the property of its citizens. No government, therefore, can take either the whole or any part of the subjects, therefore their

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<sup>11</sup> *Treatises*, 124

property without their consent.<sup>12</sup> It is expected that the citizens, who enjoy the preservation and protection of their property by the government, should however contribute towards their share of cost of maintaining it. This is often done by the government by means of taxation. But taxation requires the consent of tax-payers. Of course, citizens should pay the taxes to the government without fail. Locke is forthright, here:

If any one shall claim a power to lay and levy taxes on the people, he thereby invades the fundamental law of property, and subverts the end of government.<sup>13</sup>

Though this is the theoretical stand, as a matter of practice, however, the necessary consent may be given indirectly, through people's representatives, who participate in the framing of legislation on taxes. Apparently we see here in the qualifications made by Locke a certain tension between the natural property rights and a sort of compulsion by the government in the levying of taxes. It may be argued that the qualifications impair the consistency of Locke's theory of property. Nevertheless, his main emphasis is not so much on the powers of the government as on the necessity for consent of some kind,<sup>14</sup> to which the government is subjected.

Locke insists that God gave the world, with its fruits and beasts, 'to Adam and his posterity in common'.<sup>15</sup> Because they are given to

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<sup>12</sup> *Treatises*, 139

<sup>13</sup> *Treatises*, 140.

<sup>14</sup> J.W. Gough, *John Locke's Political Philosophy*, as quoted by F. Pollock *Locke's Theory of the State*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1973, p 82

<sup>15</sup> *Treatises*, 25

mankind in its natural state, prior to the formation of any civil authority, they can benefit any particular man. 'There must of necessity be means to appropriate them some way or other.'<sup>16</sup> It is precisely at this point that Locke introduces the new idea that every man has naturally a property, or whatever he has 'mixed his labour with'.<sup>17</sup> This has not gone without a challenge, however. More than one philosopher has attacked Locke's notion of property. They adduce several reasons against its tenability as the foundation for a general theory of property. Pollock in his book, *Locke's Theory of The State*, criticizes Locke's notion of property:

Locke, when he wrote that every man has a property in his own person, was referring to men in the state of nature, not to citizens under the government.<sup>18</sup>

Pollock seems to make explicit the wider and the narrower senses of property used by Locke in driving a wedge between 'man in the state of nature' and 'citizen under the government'. The use of the word property in its wider, or general sense, then, may be said to apply to the so called property in one's own person. What Locke ascribes to man, it is argued, is clearly not the same as the legally recognized property as we generally understand, distinct from what each man has in his own person as property. It also rests on the law of nature, which 'willeth the peace and preservation of all mankind'.<sup>19</sup> This law

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<sup>16</sup> *Treatises*, 26.

<sup>17</sup> *Treatises*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> J W Gough, *John Locke's Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, p 85.

<sup>19</sup> *Treatises*, 7

can only be fulfilled, and God's bounty be made use of, if individuals can appropriate what they need, especially, the food required for survival. The labour of the individual, therefore, while a necessary stage, is only the final stage in the process of making property.<sup>20</sup>

#### B. LOCKE'S DIVISION OF PROPERTY

In some respect, Locke seems to think of property in terms of *common* advantage rather than of private advantage of the individual person. He remarks that, when God gave the world to mankind in general, or in common, he commanded man to labour, 'to improve the earth for the benefit of life'.<sup>21</sup> Here, again, some critics have attacked Locke's notion of property. Kendall is one such critic, who declares Locke's theory of property to be collectivist rather than individualist. He further declares that Locke conceived of the rights of property simply as 'a function of a man's duty to enrich man's common heritage'.<sup>22</sup> But such a view may be an instance of too far-fetched interpretation of Locke. I tend to believe that Locke lays more emphasis on the individual, and less on the collective, factors in the situation. This is borne out incontestably from the following:

Though the things of nature are given in common, yet, man, by being master of himself and proprietor his own person and the action and labour of it, had still in himself the great foundation of property; and that which made up the great part of what he applied to the support

<sup>20</sup> J.W. Gough, As quoted by Willmore Kendal, "Locke and the Doctrine of Morality Rule", *Social Science*, xxvi no 2, Illinois, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> *Treatises.*, 37.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72

or comfort of his own, and did not belong in common to others.<sup>23</sup>

Some writers tend to emphasize the moral inconsistency between Locke's limited right of allocation in the state of nature and the acquisition of the unlimited property made possible by the introduction of money. But such a judgment equally tends to overlook an important factor. We ought not expect Locke or his contemporaries to share in the outlook of modern socialist. They belong to different time and space with different preoccupations in the world of ideas.

There are three issues which may be said to arise from Locke's theory of property. Firstly, whether the right of possessing property by labour of individual person is unlimited? Here, Locke appears to impose a limit, when he says that a man may appropriate so much as he ought to leave behind enough for the good of others.<sup>24</sup> This limit, explicitly stated by Locke, while it ensures the justification for each man's right of his life, also imposes a restriction on him to guarantee other's right for their own preservation and the appropriating of life's necessities. Locke's writes,

As much as anyone can make use of any advantage of life before it spoils; so much he may by his labour fix a property in; whatever is beyond this is more than his share, and belongs to others. Nothing was made by God for man to spoil or destroy.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Treatises*, 44

<sup>24</sup> *Treatises*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> *Treatises*, 31

The sense of the limitation is not meant to be lost sight of, or made irrelevant even in our times. The limitation cannot be evaded even by the use of money in modern times. If surplus products would be spoiled, if hoarded, then, there is a need to specify a limit to the process of the acquisition of property. Locke suggests, in a sense, a labour theory of property, but the concept of labour is not yet fully worked out. While labour entitles one to acquire property, there are, it seems, certain limitations to the amount of property one may possess. One may possess only so much as anyone can make use of it for any advantage of life before it is spoiled. Moreover, one may only take from the common stocks when 'there is enough ... left in common for others.'<sup>26</sup> However, Locke does not develop the related theories of labour, or of what constitutes 'the enough', nor does he face the real difficulties that arise in connection with the possession of private property for the fulfillment of one's needs. He is content to show that the possession of private property is fundamental in human life, and that it belongs to man in the state of nature.

Locke, while focusing his attention on the appropriation of property, reminds us of the injunction that nothing is spoiled or goes waste. The injunction becomes both relevant and adequate under conditions, which are obtained in nature. The quantities of the natural sources are not unlimited, nor are they fit for immediate use. To enhance them, as well as to make them fit for consumption, there is a

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<sup>26</sup> *Treatises*, 33

genuine need on the part of man to mix things in nature with his labour. If this were not the condition obtaining in nature, there would be no need for property. Properties are needed precisely because man has to work on what nature provides him with, so that he can fittingly make use of it. If natural resources are limited, and not fit for immediate use, there is need for property as well as for rules governing the acquisition of property. Otherwise, the lazy ones could exploit the industrious by seizing the fruits of the latter's industry. However, even in the above case, there will have to be rules of property, in particular, the injunction about letting nothing spoil or waste. If natural resources are limited, I am bound by the injunction to let nothing spoil or let go waste of what I mixed my labour with. There ought to be always enough for other individual person to mix his labour, so that he too can have as much claim on the products as I have. I cannot, by my waste, invade the share of my neighbour's property.

However, it appears to me that, in a real sense, Locke never troubled himself to enquire what conditions must hold good to make sense of his rule about letting nothing spoil or waste. He probably condemned 'spoil' or 'waste', because his common sense approved of it, without however looking closely either into its social consequences or its philosophical anomalies. He took it for granted that the institution of property arose first in sparsely populated countries, whose needs were not too many, and where the work of any man could

be done or got done in a limited way. For, in a relatively unsophisticated society, one could practice the injunction without serious social drawbacks, and appropriate private property little more than the fruits of his own and family's labour. In such situations, a man, who took too much land, would soon find some of it going to spoil or waste. This is what Locke wishes to avoid in his injunction.

Locke's injunction therefore is suited well enough to the agrarian societies of relatively unsophisticated farmers living in fertile and thinly populated areas, where the entire family works to maintain itself, taking almost nothing to market. If it did take something to the market, it was for barter of goods rather than the acquisition of money to dominate the same markets. Such societies did not witness the accumulation of vast land, letting an acre of it go waste. Whatever land was acquired was cultivated for one's own sustenance, or allowed to be utilized for the sustenance of men one hired to cultivate. The surplus, which was not unmanageable, at any rate, was exchanged within the society. Howsoever 'luxurious' his style of living, howsoever rich he is in comparison with other people, he wastes nothing and lets nothing spoil. The economy of such societies are 'natural economies'.

In a natural economy, where the use of money is much restricted, some men, to be sure, can become relatively richer than the others. This is not because they work harder, but because they have the possession of land, while others do not. They can become rich

without wasting anything or letting the produce spoil. There needs no fertile acre of land left uncultivated; nor anything produced on their land, not used to someone's advantage, their own or others.

Secondly, the right of bequest, or legacy, Locke tacitly includes in the right to private property. He does not derive it either from the right to liberty and the right to preserve oneself or from the right to set aside for one's own exclusive use what one has mixed one's labour with. It seemed so evident to Locke that the natural right of property included within itself the right of bequest, or legacy, that he did not bother to prove it. Where a philosophical justification is warranted, Locke is unfortunately silent. However, if the right to property arises naturally, as he says it does, this is by no means obvious. If so, the right to bequest is equally non-sequitur naturally, it does not merely follow the definition of property as the right for exclusive use. Right to use something, to the exclusion of other people, does not logically include the right to decide who shall use it after the owner is dead. But both the right to private property and the right to bequest may be called the rights of property; and it may be granted that right to private property is the first right. However, the concept of the second right is not implicit, or included in the first. A man's right of exclusive use is not curtailed, if he has not also the right of bequest or legacy.

Thirdly, Locke derives the appropriate right over external objects as property from two other rights: the right of self-

preservation and man's right of property in his own body. Some reflection is warranted on the sources concerned. In the first place, it includes more than the bare right to keep oneself. It includes the right to make provisions for living commodiously, or for living as it suits to live, provided we respect the same rights in others. There is obviously a connection between living commodiously and the right to keep oneself alive, which is the right for self-preservation. However, when we come to the right to bequest, there is no clear connection between it and the right of self-preservation. Is it not at all clear how the two are inextricably related. Is it the case that one cannot keep alive, and live commodiously and freely, unless one can also decide who will inherit one's property after the death of the owner? This does not seem so.

The right of exclusive use is only one of the several rights, commonly called rights of property. The right of bequest is only one among them, if any, for there are still other rights.<sup>27</sup> Locke has derived one of the rights, that is the right of exclusive use, from the right to self-preservation, and this, in turn, is said to carry other rights with it. The other rights that Locke grouped together with the right of exclusive use, in order to constitute the right of property, have often been rightly contested, since his time, by socialists. This attack on the right of bequest is the strongest. It is not my intention to validate the socialist attack. However, here, my purpose is not to

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<sup>27</sup> John Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, Vol. 1, London. Longman Publication, 1974, p. 124.

suggest that the right of bequest, or legacy, is not less defensible than other property rights. I wish only to show that Locke failed to explain, or justify, his contention, though he himself was convinced that he had done both.

To keep himself alive and to live commodiously, a man needs goods for his own exclusive use. He has the right to acquire them by mixing his labour with what nature provides, and what nobody else has appropriated. The right to self-preservation, even thus widely understood, does not allow him to appropriate as much as he pleases without caring for what is left over for others. Other's right to acquire property by their labour is as good and valid as his own. Even so, it does not establish exclusive right to what he was the first to appropriate against other people, who have no choice but to mix their labour with what nature provides everyone with to make it their property. There is nothing else left for them to mix their labour with. The right to self-preservation and the right to acquire property by labour, if exercised properly, would be able to curb inequalities. It is obviously clear that those who work hard have the right to gain more property, provided they do not by their labour deprive other people the chance to acquire the same. It is equally clear that the right to legacy or bequest does not follow from these two prior rights of self-preservation and the acquisition of property. But these rights are closely related to one another. There is one virtue however in Locke's concept of property. He does not only mean 'security', or 'happiness',

in the life of human beings, but he also thought of property as a means to some sort of liberty, when he advocates acquiring private property as a kind of expressing our rights.

### C. LABOUR AND PROPERTY IN LOCKE'S VIEW

Locke's reflection on labour, which is an extension of the human person, though not developed fully as a theory, serving as the origin of the rights of property, inevitably takes us to a theory of values.<sup>28</sup> He declares that it is labour which differentiates anything as a value. In virtue of labour exerted on something, that something becomes valuable. Land, tilled, planted and cultivated is worth more than unimproved wasteland, largely because the effort that man puts on it transforms it into the products of the earth for human consumption. Thus, the enclosed land under tillage becomes a value for man.<sup>29</sup> Land is an earliest value for the sustenance of man, and it has continued to be so, despite radical changes in the economic systems of mankind. The acquisition of land put under the tillage injured no one in the earliest times, when the population was sparse, and the area of waste land available so huge that, whatever one man took, there was still 'enough and as good left over for others'. Though Locke did not develop fully a labour theory of value, it was seminal to numerous eighteenth century writers, so that it was to become common to all economic theories in the a subsequent years.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, criticism

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<sup>28</sup> J W. Gough, *John Locke's Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, p. 92.

<sup>29</sup> *Treatises*, 42-44

<sup>30</sup> B N Ghosh, *Political Economy, (A Marxist Approach)*, New Delhi: 1990, pp 120-126.

against Locke are aplenty. It has been pointed out that Locke failed to discriminate between the capitalist labour and the wage labour, a distinction crucial to the socialist theory of labour. Locke however, was aware that the labour, which goes to the making of a commodity, may be contributed by a multiplicity of persons.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, he was thinking primarily of the labour of proprietors who owned and cultivated the land; he also included under labour the efforts of those who produced the tools for the use of the proprietors of the land.

Locke did conceive of the necessary limitation to the acquisition of property in the state of (primitive) nature. But it was of a general nature, in the sense that the acquisition of property was not to deprive the other of his opportunity to acquire private property. He did not envisage that the invention of money allowed large accumulation of property. Naturally, he did not question the possible unequal distribution of property that began to prevail even in his own times.<sup>32</sup> Hence, he saw the function of the government as primarily protection of the private property rather than the ensuring of the equal distribution of wealth. In fact, within the state, all citizens could legitimately expect the force of government to be used to protect whatever property they had. Therefore, it was the duty of the government to provide protection and preservation of the private property and not to 'endeavour to take away or destroy the property of

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<sup>31</sup> *Treatises*, 43.

<sup>32</sup> *Treatises*, 50

the people, or reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power'.<sup>33</sup> It is the sole duty of the civil government impartially to enforce equal laws, to preserve and to protect and secure for all the citizens in general the right to property. Its laws are made, and rules set, as guards and defenses to the properties of all the members of the society. Locke however, may not be treated as an advocate of *laissez-faire* economy. For he did not believe, as many early nineteenth century economists did, that economic relationship would automatically balance and adjust themselves. Locke, at base, may be seen as a mercantilist, for he did not believe in the regulation of trade. He would not have placed political control in the hands of a property-owning minority, but expected them to exercise their right impartially in the interest of all.<sup>34</sup>

To conclude. Locke's theory of property is one of the important formulations in the economic systems of the world, especially during his time. It has continued to be so, even today, with certain modifications. It has exerted considerable influence on the liberalization of the economy and the concept of free markets. At its root is the Lockean liberalism. It is true that the relation between the individual and the community is not finally solved by Locke. But Locke's individualism is a fact, and it has come to the fore in contemporary economic systems, at least, in the west. Locke is, first of all an individualist, in so far as he sets as narrow limits as are

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<sup>33</sup> *Treatises*, 222.

<sup>34</sup> J. W. Gough, *John Locke's Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, pp. 94-95.

possible to the state's power. Government can demand individual's obedience only in limited spheres. The individual is wholly free, for instance, in his family relations or, again, in his religious life, so long as he does not interfere in the liberty of others. In the second place, Locke is an individualist, in the sense that he views the government itself as the greatest good of the greatest number, ensuring the public goods. Here, he does not rule out that an occasional individual may find his own goods sacrificed at times. Notwithstanding this, government is an instrument to be used for the individuals. The state is made for the individual, and not the individual for the state. It is this sense, more than any other, that makes me believe that Locke is the champion of individualism, rather than liberalism, as it is understood today.

Locke was primarily concerned with two things, freedom and property. He believed that these two things are closely related each other. In the wider sense, in which he uses the word 'property,' property includes freedom, and in the narrower sense, freedom includes property, or goods. Presumably, Locke was not interested in the redistribution of wealth so unequally distributed among the peoples. From this point, too, it seems to me that he was only concerned more about the freedom of the individuals than the economic, or distributive, justice. He was not seized with the latter in his day.

It may be seen that, since Locke's time, the freedom to acquire property has been curtailed by the unrestricted power of the wealthy, depriving the majority their right to property. If we today confuse property rights with personal freedom, Locke cannot be held guilty of our misunderstanding. Nobody disputes the close relationship between property rights and personal freedom. Freedom of man must depend in any society, largely, on how property is distributed. We have to guarantee the exercise of freedom for all by ensuring that all men have private property rather than by transferring the right of property from private to public domain. It is the right of the poor to acquire private property as much as of the rich.

The system of government Locke preferred is surprisingly aristocracy. It, of course, may be said to be liberal aristocracy. Though he may not be said to be a democrat, the principles that he proclaimed, in an era of aristocratic resistance to absolute monarchy, are still used in the western countries, today, to justify the liberal democracy, of the liberal theory of possessing property by the individuals. I, therefore, reiterate that Locke is more an individualist than a liberalist.

## **CHAPTER III**

## CHAPTER III

### MARX'S SOCIALISM ON PROPERTY

In this chapter, I will explicate Marx's concept of property. Marx's theory of property may rightly be called the socialist theory of property, and it is at the heart of his politico-economic philosophy. The chapter proceeds in three parts. Firstly, I shall discuss the salient features of the concept of property, as understood by Marx. Secondly, I will study why Marx considers property as the cause of social class, or stratification. Finally, I will dwell upon the Marxian understanding of the relation between property and alienation. My own critical evaluation will be interspersed in each of the parts.

The root instinct of man is self-preservation. Because he must prevent himself from the dangers against self-preservation, he has developed an acquisitive faculty, which now forms the basis of most human institutions. Acquisition of property is an expression of the said faculty. Possibly it is not the possession of property as such, but the harmony in the shape of security it engenders that makes property a value sought after. Prof. J. Laski rightly points out that 'a man of property has no fear of starvation and does not bother about what surrounds himself with that environment, but which makes of life an artistic thing.'<sup>1</sup> That is not at all. A man of property can avoid the

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<sup>1</sup> Harold J. Laski, *Grammar of Politics*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973, p.173.

grim routine of providing for himself and his family members the basic necessities of life, and become an explorer in intellectual hinterlands where the creature faculties most readily discover their channels of self-expression. Thus, a man of property can protect his children and other dependents against any dread of wants, and explore the development of the tastes, which give him and his dependents the joy in the creative life. This is not to suggest that a man of property will necessarily possess all those valued things. Or that the propertyless men are necessarily in a vale of misery of a life, devoid of basic comfort and meaning. It is not at times uncommon that the poor can sometime know the rarest things that life can offer. The exception only proves the general conclusion that property apparently is a means for the enjoyment of good things of life. How does Karl Marx conceive of property?

#### A. MARX'S CONCEPT OF PROPERTY

Karl Marx, born in Germany in 1818, was a revolutionary scholar in more than one sense. Even during his studies at the University of Berlin, he was involved in the *Young Hegelian Movement*, and became the editor of the liberal newspaper called *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne. When the authorities suppressed the paper, he went to Paris, where he met Frederick Engels. He returned to Germany following the out-break of the revolution of 1848 to found and edit the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. After the suppression of the revolution, he moved

to London, where he lived the rest of his life, giving shape to his ideas of socialism and revolution in his monumental works *Das Capital*.

At the time of his death, Marx was known chiefly as the editor of *The Communist Manifesto*, written jointly with Frederick Engels in 1848. With the exception of an extended *Critique of Proudhon*, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), the most significant works of Marx were not published until many years after he was dead. *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1848* and the full text of *The German Ideology*, written in collaboration with Engels (1845-1846), did not make their appearance until 1930. *The Grundrisse* (1857-1858) and a draft of *Critique of Political Economy* did not become generally available until 1953. All these works, while explicating the socialist revolutionary philosophy, discussed extensively on the institution of property.

In *The Economic And Philosophical Manuscript of 1848*, Marx engaged himself with the works of Hegel, Feuerbach and other Young Hegelians to argue out his thesis that productive activity, or labour, should be seen as an essential component of human beings.<sup>2</sup> His theory of labour is painstakingly crafted by a master artist, to say the least. Within his excellent craftsmanship, private property represents the product of labour, as if it were 'things'. We will see how the reification is closely related to the alienation of labour from man

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, (trans), Dirk J. Shink, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1848*, New York: International Publisher, 1964, p.20.

himself. But, how does he arrive at such radical thinking? Marx continues to use Feurbach's method of objectification of the subjective human nature. Proceeding along the Feuerbachian path, he shows that property itself inverts the relations between the human subject and the world of objects.<sup>3</sup> Marx argues that property is transformed in Hegel's hands from an object of the will to a master to enslave man. Saying that a person is determined by his class status is as good as saying that man becomes a predicate of his property that determines his status. In other words, Marx's first discussion on property has a direct bearing on Feuerbach's method of objectification, or reification, of one's own subjectivity. Property then is an instrument of the process of dehumanization. Hence, the Marxist thesis: The institution of private property must be abolished.

Communism is only a special brand of socialist philosophy that advocates the abolition of private property, in the context of the evolution of a bourgeoisie class. It deals with the evolution and achievement of the bourgeoisie class, which arose out of the erstwhile 'Feudalism', to gave birth to 'Modern Capitalism' and the consequent class of the proletariat, economic anarchy and the periodical crises.<sup>4</sup> *The Communist Manifesto* also highlights that the history of humans, since the creation of private property, has been a history of class struggle, the conflict between freemen against slave, between the

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<sup>3</sup> Shloma Anivery, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p 136

<sup>4</sup> *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, Vol 1., Moscow Progress Publisher, 1977, p.120.

capitalist against labourer. It speaks for the active role of the proletariat and the revolutionary action of their leaders. It advocates, in particular, the abolition of private property, and invests all ownership of property with the state. The *Communist Manifesto* criticizes other schools of socialism. Marxism, being the outcome of the revolutionary unrest of the mid-nineteenth century Europe, heralded a new economic order. In order to achieve this, Marx advocated the use of force to capture the state with all its machinery of exploitation used by the rich powerful ruling class of the bourgeoisie.

In Marxist social theory, therefore, the notion of property and some of its related categories (e.g. property relations, forms of property etc) have a central significance. Marx did not regard property only as the possibility for the owner to exercise his (property) rights, or as an object of such of his activity as oppressing to, and exploitative of, the proletariat, but as an essential relationship, which has a central role in the complex system of classes and the social strata. Within this system of categories, the ownership of means of production has an outstanding importance, to Marx.

Marx, along with Engels, held that the changes in forms of property mainly characterize the succession of socio-economic formations. This was an epochal perception for social analysis. The idea led to a strict periodization of the history itself of humanity, and

became even more simplified in the Orthodox versions of Marxism. A valuable feature of the original classification challenged the assumption commonly made in the West at that time that bourgeoisie forms of property must everywhere be the norms. This stimulated historical research into land rights in Medieval Europe (and in pre-British India, for that matter). Anthropological research, too, questioned the fixed notions of the bourgeoisie on the property rights. History of economics institutions, in particular, tended to show the absence of private property, at least, in lands holdings among many tribal communities.

Marx had already discussed the diverse forms of property. Property originally meant in its Asiatic, Slavonic, ancient classical and Germanic forms, the relation of the working subject to the conditions of his production as his own. It will, therefore, have different forms depending on the conditions of his production. Marxists thinking stresses on the need to analyze adequately the property relations and forms in countries, where the private ownership of the means of production has been eliminated. Thus Stalinism, for example, in erstwhile USSR, took over the means of production into state ownership in the most important branches of economy. It experimented with the collectivization of agriculture, small industry and small trade. It is a moot point if the experiment failed in the long run. The property problem apparently was solved; at least that was claimed. It sought to transform co-operative property into the public state property. The

theoretical base for viewing property as the relation, that the subject bears to his means of production, has within itself a measure of philosophical consistency.

It is necessary to introduce and clarify the concept of possession, which means the exercise of ownership and property rights as distinct from juridical ownership, if we are to get an insight into the thinking of Marx. Often an adequate distinction between property and possession is not carefully maintained in common parlance and scientific thinking. Possibly the semantic confusion may owe its origin to lexicographical or syntactic considerations. Marx, however, was perceptive of the distinction in recognizing that the serf under feudal system, being a direct producer, could be called a possessor, but not a proprietor. For the serf's surplus labour belonged in feudalism to the owner of the means of production. Hence, if real situation is analyzed with the help of the concept of possession, two fundamental controversies may be said to unfold: In the first place, the exercise of possession possibilities by the state administration may come in conflict with the exercise of property rights by the whole society. This involves mainly the problem of state management. Similar conflict may arise at a local level, too, concerning the exercise of property rights by the local community.

Secondly, the exercise of possession possibilities by the professional apparatus of economic enterprises may be in conflict with the exercise of property rights by the enterprise collectives. This

problem emerges, first, in the large and medium scale firms, both in the state and the co-operative sectors. Within the same framework, in small-scale industry and trade, too, there is a possibility for the development of relatively independent associations of producers, which may introduce new forms of socialist ownership.<sup>5</sup> The unfolding of the above dichotomies, and the developments of small producers associations, represent a first step in the further socialization of the economy of the countries. Chinese socialism, having begun this, has however gone so far today as to find it difficult to recognize its own socialist agenda. They are closely connected with the movements and ideas, which criticize and contest the prevalence of bureaucracy that can often retard spontaneity and creativity. Nevertheless, this is a different story.

To revert to our central concern, Marx's theory of property goes under the name of 'Socialist Theory of Property'. It advocates that all properties, big or small, movables or immovables, are to be owned by the state. No individual person has any rights over private property. It should equally share by the people. Individuals are under the control of government. The government should eradicate, or abolish, class system among the people, which the ownership of properties engenders. The creation of the rich and poor classes of the people is on account of the possession of private property. The government then should aim at a classless society, where everyone has an equal share, at least, as per

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<sup>5</sup> Tom Bottomore, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, London: Basil Blackwell, 1983, p. 235.

his needs, of resources of all property within the state. In order to achieve the goal, Marx suggests that the state should have the power to seize the property owned by the individual, if the need arises. The equality of every person, from the lowest to the highest, is implicit in the public possession of property by state. Marx's theory of property aims at the humane upliftment of socio-political system within the state, keeping in mind the welfare of the people.

One of the most characteristic features of the Marxist social analysis has been its insistence on the outstanding importance of the dominant property relations in the life of concrete social and economic formations. It further deduces, from these essential relations, the existence of historical forces such as classes and the class struggles. Marx explains how differing socio-economic formations develop and succeed each other primarily through the changes in property relations. The formations result from the social struggles, and from the development of the forces of production; and, he defined the periods of social progress mainly on the basis of the changes that occur in forms of property relations. If we wish to analyse the socialist societies, our point of departure must be the property relations that have developed in them. It has been rightly observed:

Property relations are always embedded in society as a whole; that is to say, they do not consist solely in the ownership of objects, but are kind of central point in the complex system of relationships between different classes and strata.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Tom Bottomore, *Interpretation of Marx*, London: Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 204

Marx sees that the bourgeoisie private property is 'the sum total of the bourgeoisie relations of productions'. The concept of property relations, as essential social relations, is one of the points of departure for any significant social analysis. They must be understood as deeply embedded in social relations as a whole. He wrote,

To define bourgeoisie property thus is simply to give an exposition of all the social relations of bourgeoisie production. To try to give a definition of property as an independent relation, a category apart, an abstract and eternal idea, can be nothing but an illusion of metaphysics or of jurisprudence.<sup>7</sup>

In the light of what is stated above, we can ask some closely related questions. How can one define the concept of property in socialism? Why is it necessary for us to take into account all the essential social relations, which are dominant in these societies for an adequate definition of property? Why should the attempt to do otherwise be 'an illusion of metaphysics or of jurisprudence?'

The indebtedness of Marx to his mentor Feuerbach's theory of objectification or reifications is often forgotten by the scholars. Feuerbach had spoken of the possibility of the reifications of the subjective nature, which is at the root of every form of alienation.

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<sup>7</sup> Marx Karl, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1955, pp. 141-142.

Marx ingeniously applies the Feuerbachian concept to his theory, in suggesting that the so called property is the reification of the relation that a subject bears to the means of production. Therefore, he goes on to argue that the definition of property must take into account the property relations in the society. Hence, we must first survey all those social consequences in which property relations are manifested, and in which they assume a concrete form. From these relations we must further seek the phenomena, through which property relations as essential social relations 'materialize' into decisions and social actions. In the same way, we may also note that the immanent, essential attributes of the commodities, their value etc. express themselves in the price attached to them. We should term the exercise of property relations as the 'ownership-exercises'; moreover, we must include their legal and practical capacities within the scope of the concept of property. We can identify four such capacities, not all of which are approved by Marx, however. Firstly, there is the capacity to direct people's activities as the executors of productive labour. Secondly, there is the capacity for the disposal of the means of production. Thirdly, there is the capacity to use, appropriate, or at least, distribute the surplus product. Finally, the capacity to 'alienate' and transfer, by way of hereditary rights of possession, the objects of properties, the means of production or financial capital. Marx, because of his indebtedness to Feuerbach, may be said to give primacy to the property relations in the ontological sense. But, he found the need for

highlighting, as though he were setting a corrective to Feurbach's pure speculations, the historical emergence of capitalist property. He sees the political rule of the bourgeoisie class as a consequence of the modern production relations, which are, in his opinion, deceptively proclaimed as inevitable and eternal by the bourgeoisie economists. But Marx insisted that property relations gave rise to the class system and the social inequalities inherent therein.

#### B. PROPERTY AS A CAUSE OF SOCIAL CLASS, OR CLASS SYSTEM, IN THE SOCIETY

The concept of social class, or social stratification, is one of the fundamental concepts of Marxian doctrine. In a certain persuasion of political thought, it became the symbol of Marx's doctrine and a basis for a political programme. Through it, Marx effected a revolutionary change in the whole conception of world history itself. Marx was able to prove that the whole of previous history was a history of class struggles; that, in all simple and complex political struggles, the only thing at issue has been the social and political rule of social classes.<sup>8</sup> Marx however left the problem of giving a definition of the social inequality, or social stratification, unsolved in the society. But the question, what constitutes a social class in the society? is important. Does private property create a social class in the society?

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<sup>8</sup> Charles H. Anderson, *The Political Economy of Social Class*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1974, p. 124.

Marx contended that the institution of private property is at the root of class and social stratification. Property therefore is central to any definition of class. We have two major classes, the propertied, or the capitalist class, which owns and controls the means of production, and the propertyless working class, or the proletariat, which sells its labour power. The proletariat sells their labour power to earn their livelihood, therefore, for their very survival as human beings. The capitalist, or the bourgeoisie class, on the other hand, lives entirely, or chiefly, off the surplus value. But the proletariat, or the working class, lives entirely, or chiefly, off the income ploughed back to them for value-creating labour. Thus, the source of income, whether it is from the capital or from the labour, is a pivotal criterion of class placement. The source of income itself is, in turn, determined by its relationship to property ownership; for, income is entirely, or mainly, dependent on the sale of one's own labour. Anderson puts it rightly, commenting on the prevalence of social class in the society:

In brief, class position is broadly determined by a person's property placement and relationship to the means of production.<sup>9</sup>

Needless to say, the Marxist thesis on the social stratification is quite sharply accentuated, leaving no room for differences within the system. Despite its finality, it may be conceded by us that, with the modifications of this broad generalization, the members of a given

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

society may be classified as either of the capitalist or the working class (or at the least, the non-capitalist), as belonging, in terms of their objective interest, primarily to one or the other of these historically decisive classes.

Marx presumes that human history witnessed a class struggle since the break-up of the organisation of the tribal community. In fact, humanity has evolved continually to higher stages of development through class-conflicts. Marx is, in his methodology, a thorough-going Hegelian, though in his content, he is anything but a Hegelian. His is an uncompromising dialectical, indeed, historical, materialism. Each system of production gives rise to two principal, but mutually hostile, classes, the owner and the toilers. In every society, the class, which is able to control the means of production and distribution, governs the society. By economic necessity, it will have to govern oppressively; exploitation of other classes is inherent in the dialectics of economically defined classes. Exploited class cannot survive unless it resists the oppression and exploitation by the capitalist, or bourgeoisie class. Throughout the human history, there have been class struggles between the exploited and the exploiters; that is to say, the slaves against the guildsmen, landless against the landed aristocracy, proletariat against the capitalist. Marx, is forthright in his *Communist Manifesto*:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word,

oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open, fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, it is clear that, not only in modern times but also in the earlier times, societies were characterized by the class system. The property people owned cause the system itself. It is property that divides the society into two major groups, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie class, 'those who have' and 'those who haven't', the property.

The ruling class appropriates to itself a disproportionate share of the social product, and makes legal, political and social institutions to subserve its own class interests. Therefore, it is against change in those institutions, and it wants to preserve and protect the existing order. The statusquo suits its purpose. On the contrary, the exploited class wants to take advantage of the benefits, resulting from the expansion of productive forces beyond the limits imposed by the existing legal, political and social institutions of the day. It wants to change these institutions, and to develop an evolutionary, more often, a revolutionary, outlook. Hence, the conflict between the ruling and the ruled, the exploiter and the exploited classes, become inevitable. Marx's insightful social analysis is not without an element of

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<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, in *Selected Works*, Vol.1, Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1975, pp 108-109

eschatological prediction, if also a kind of utopianism. The conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the ruler and the ruled, at the historical juncture of the industrial revolution of our times, differs from all previous class conflicts, because it is the final conflict. The inevitable victory of the proletariat will make the society classless, where there can be no more class conflicts. It is the revolutionary conflict between the classes, which will change radically the ownership relations and establish new interests and new divisions of labour. The empowerment of the proletariat will inaugurate a new era.

Marx believes that the existing class struggle in the modern period is simpler than the earlier one. This is because of the greater polarization of the classes, today, compared with the one of the earlier days. Today, the society is being split up into two hostile camps or classes of the capitalist and the proletariat, facing each other. The basis of division of classes, according to Marx, is economic, in general, and property, in particular. A group of individuals becomes a class, when it bears a particular relation to the means of production, and develops an attitude of conflict with other groups, who have a different relation to those means of production. It may be granted that one of the greatest contributions of Marx has been his conception of the evolution of social classes and of the social struggle, to which he

gave not only due importance but also a precise form<sup>11</sup>. The class struggles inevitably initiate changes, and contribute towards progress of the existing society, in general, and of the working classes, in particular.

Marx may be said to be the first to interpret history in terms of class interests, attitudes and struggles. However, his contention that the classes have always and everywhere been economic classes in their nature may not go uncontested. Further, it may also be difficult to maintain that, while there have been always struggles between classes in human history, all human history has to be interpreted exclusively in terms of conflict. The development of human society, its culture and civilization, is as much a result of social co-operation as of class struggle. Above all, the prediction that the Marxian view of class struggle would result in the downfall of the capitalist and the assertion of the supremacy of the proletariat may not be based on sound logic or scientific probing into human nature. This reservation is not because of the actual and considerable collapse of socialism everywhere, but because of the philosophical anomalies in the Marxian theory of property.

### C. PROPERTY AND ALIENATION

A significant feature of Marx's concept of property is alienation that it engenders. Marx speaks of alienation as arising sometimes from the private ownership of the means of production; sometimes from a

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<sup>11</sup> Lenn, *Marx-Engels*, Moscow Progress Publisher, 1975, p. 14.

certain kinds of division of labour; and sometimes from the consequences of commodity production, or market economy. In his early writings, he dwelt more elaborately on the first two types of alienation. Hence, it is incumbent upon me to turn my attention to the concept of alienation, however brief it may be. The idea of alienation is not originally from Marx. He forms his ideas of alienation through his association with the Hegelian philosophy, especially the concept of *Entfremdung* in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. But Marx's creative use of a concept, borrowed from the then preferred philosophy of the continent, cannot be questioned, although Marx's discussion, to begin with, only related to issues of general philosophical significance. His transition however from the general philosophical significance of alienation to the more limited idea of alienation, in respect of property and labour, is certainly remarkable. This is something that is ungrudgingly acknowledged by great thinkers like Lucas, especially in his monumental *Geschichte* in 1923.

One of the meanings of 'alienation' is 'transference'. In this sense it is transference of one's subjectivity to the realms of objectification, or reification. In the process, something essential to one's subjectivity is irrevocably lost. Secondly, closely following on the first meaning, alienation is a kind of 'estrangement' (*Entfremden*) from oneself, from a part of one's own personality. It is this sense that is developed by Marx in the context of property and labour. One's labour is an integral part of one's subjectivity. It, when mixed with

matter, becomes a product, which is one's own. Yet, one is estranged from it, because it is no longer the labourer who owns the capital as well as the means of production. The labour is hired by the proprietor against a wage. Product itself becomes the income of the proprietor. Under such situation, the labourer is alienated from his labour, the fruit of that labour and also the means of production.

Marx identifies three sources, all closely interconnected, namely, private property, or the ownership of the means of production, a certain kind of division of labour, and finally the commodity production, serving as the alleged causes of alienation. The institution of private property itself represents one's relation to the means of production, but it no longer belongs to the labourer. Secondly, Marx argues, that alienation spring from a kind of division of labour, characteristics of a market economy. In it the private ownership of the means of production is juridically recognized. The manager is not the same as the labourer; he debars the labourer from the ownership of the means of production. Thirdly, there is the alienation, where the labour is treated as a commodity, hired for wage, and it is so treated in a market economy. Where there is such comprehensive alienation, stemming from the different sources, one reinforcing the other, man feels helpless, as he is pitted against a system in which he does not understand, and cannot control, though it consists only human activities, his own activity included among them. The capitalist economy therefore, is an oppressive, in other words, alienating, system, an economy in which

the means of production are privately owned by small group within the society, who make profitable use of the labour, hired and fired, as per their own pleasure.

In his analysis of private property, Marx tells us that private property is apparently the basis and the cause of alienated labour.<sup>12</sup> However, he also tells us, especially in his early writings, how private ownership of productive resources emerges as an effect rather than a cause of one's labour being alienated. It is legitimate for a student of philosophy to raise the question, What is the causal relationship between private property and the alienation of labour? What is cause, and what is effect, here? His analysis of the movement of property does not imply that property is the cause of alienation. However, it is equally true that surplus labour of the worker in the form of products is ploughed back as the private property of the proprietor. Here, clearly it is an effect. The causal relation between property and alienated labour will have to be worked out in greater detail.

Secondly, Marx thinks that the division of labour is a cause of alienation. It is not clear just what kind of division of labour that he has in his mind. Wherever there is co-operation of any kind, it is legitimate to expect a division of labour. The modern society has become increasingly inter-dependent; division of labour in it has become a norm rather than an exception. Presumably, then, Marx, when

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<sup>12</sup> John Plamenatz, *Karl Marx: Philosophy of Man*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 145.

he says that alienation is an effect of the division of labour, did not mean every kind of division of labour as alienating. If so, what is the kind of division of labour that is alienating, as distinct from the non-alienating division of labour? Thirdly, speaking of alienation, today, in modern society, we can identify in it such forms of man's alienation as from nature, from himself and from humanity. These three aspects are interconnected with one another. In the history of human thought, religion, psychology and philosophy have studied rather closely the three types of alienation as problems of evil, of schizophrenia, and of inter-subjectivity etc. In recent times, faced with the global environmental crisis, alienation from nature has been specially accentuated. If not for the environmental concerns, Marx's concept of alienation from nature has something to do with the economic concerns. This has a direct bearing on our understanding of *homo faber*, being also *homo economicus*. In alienation from nature Marx, shows man's alienation from his faculty of shaping his world. This aspect of alienation, expressed in the appearance of the man-shaped world as man's master, determines his conditions of life. Then, the concept of alienation presupposes an essential image of man as the object-creator, a worker (*homo faber*). Liberation from this type of alienation would be the attainment of an image of man, who fashions<sup>the</sup> world and remains its master. The most obvious phenomenal expression of alienation, as entertained by Marx, is the worker's inability in capitalist society to

own the products of his works. Marx says that the conditions of productions dehumanise the worker's. This however, is painfully true.

Fourthly, what constitutes the alienation of labour? Often a view is expressed that work is external to the worker, that it is not a part of his nature, as was generally thought of by great many philosophers, including Marx. Consequently, it is said that man does not develop freely his mental and physical energies by many forms of work, but that he is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker, therefore, feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary, but imposed 'forced' labour. This argument has an element of truth in it, though it is one-sided argument clearly. Work need not be debasing, but ennobling human energies.

Finally, political economy, as conceived by Marx, ideologically reflects an alienated life, by insisting that its concepts have objective, ontological reality that they attain validity external to the specific human relations. Alienation is created in capitalist society not by the production of commodities, but by the transformation of productions. The radical analysis of political economy leads Marx to the conclusion that alienation cannot be overcome, while productive relations alienate human relations into relationship between objects. And, the economists tend to forget that the essence of commodities is human objectified labour. Marx's discussion of property and alienation attempts to subvert the Hegelian identification of property and personality. For


Marx, clearly, property is not the realisation of personality, but its negation. But, we ought not to forget that the several types of alienation identified, here, visit not only the propertyless man but also the propertied man. Hence, the analysis of alienation exclusively in terms of property may be philosophically constrictive.

## **CHAPTER IV**

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DIVIDE BETWEEN LOCKE AND MARX

A theory of property must be concerned with the description, comparison, justification and evaluation of property systems. How do the theories propounded by Locke and Marx fulfill their tasks, if they claim to give us the theories of property? The political theory of property focuses on the relation between the explanatory and the justificatory discussions on property. It also focuses on the political issue of who gets what, when and how. The difficulty with any theory of property is that the boundaries of theories of property are extremely vague and controversial. What is more, the controversy often extends to most other elements associated with property. My comparison between the theories of Locke and Marx has to take into account all the complexities inherent in the concerned theories. The description and the comparison of property have often been related to theories of history, which attempt to show how societies themselves pass through a number of stages.

The political theory of property is concerned with the means by which resources are allocated and, along with them, the power. The political theory of property, therefore, has close connections with the legal, economic and the political systems. Its association with the political systems is of great significance, because the political theory of property will prove to be a meeting point for many others complex ideas, such as the power dynamics,  about the operation and the

regulation of markets, and the legal systems. More importantly, precisely on account of its serving as a meeting point, it makes for our specific approaches to political analysis such as liberalism, or individualism and socialism, or collectivism. This is of special significance to my present concern since the divide between Locke and Marx is a divide between liberalism and socialism concerning a wide range of related concepts.

The institution of private property bears some resemblance to that of the private home, where assigning the right of possession is given to each individual as his own, and, yet, the individual is the constituent of the family. Without the juridical sanctions imposed, the right of possession is ungrudgingly acknowledged. However, private property is a legal privilege of using and disposing of the goods, together with a security against other people using or disposing of the same goods. Apparently, it suggests that if I own something, I am at liberty to use it, nay more, dispose of it, and other persons have duty not to use it and dispose of it, without my permission and consent.

We naturally think of property as land or material objects, over which a person or a body of people has control of ownership. However, this view is inadequate, because it is not the case that only land and material objects are property. For it is possible that copyrights of some books, patents, plays or musical compositions, which are unlike land and material objects, are still considered as genuine properties.

The central argument for private property is that it is associated with human freedom, and thereby property represents extended freedom. The institution of private property can assist to resolve the conflict between one man's liberty and another's, much the same way as one man's private home is not another man's private home, if we are to go back to the analogy used earlier by me. It is true of most goods. There are goods, which I own, but there are goods similar to what I own, but owned by others. We have exclusive rights over them. Thus the fact that one man has exclusive rights over one piece of property leaves it open for another man to have equally exclusive rights over a comparable piece, affording him reasonably acceptable alternative sources of action and enjoyment.

Property thus represents an extension of freedom, a legal, privilege in using and disposing of what one has as one's own. Although sometimes it is good to make men accountable for what they do, how they use and how they dispose them off, it is neither feasible nor desirable to make men always accountable, especially if it infringes on their freedom. Thus, the general arguments for freedom carry over to property as well. It is natural to define disputes, actual or potential, with reference to particular areas, volumes, or movable objects. It is also natural to confer authority to decide what shall happen in these areas, or volumes, or the movable objects, on some person, or persons, or body of persons. But this does not jeopardize the inalienable

freedom. Against this backdrop, I project my comparison of Locke and Marx.

#### A. DEBATE BETWEEN LIBERALISM AND SOCIALISM

In the formulation of the theory of property, Locke and Marx are clearly ploughing the very different terrain, in as much as they are entertaining diametrically opposite ideas. Needless to say, their theories of property were significant to socio-political and economic systems of earlier days. That significance has continued to percolate in the system in our days, too. That significance is evidenced from the fact that the political economies of the modern republics identify themselves with either liberalism or socialism, or a judicious blend of the two.

The two theories of property initiate the debate between liberalism, or individualism and socialism, or collectivism. The theory propounded by Locke can be said to be called liberalism, although I prefer to call the brand of Locke's liberalism associated with property as individualism. Locke emphasized on the individual freedom and liberty to acquire properties, and, at the same time downplayed the role of authority, government, or even society, in matters of regulations. But, Karl Marx emphasized the authority of the government or society, and downplayed the right of the individual person. Marx indeed, was for the abolition of private property, since, in his opinion, it gave rise to structural evils in the society. His theory then may be said to be socialism or collectivism. The purpose avowedly of introducing his

theory of property is to bring equality to all citizens in the society. He visualized in Locke's theory the dangers of capitalism.

The two theories of property then can be distinguished into individualism and collectivism. Without considering the needs of the whole society, and the common good of the collective, Locke goes on to defend individual liberty and the freedom for acquiring and possessing property. As far as property is concerned, Marx, on the contrary, wants to defend the society against the predatory tendencies of the individual, and, yet, with an eye for the equality of all people in the society. He believed that, by way of proper framing of rules and regulations, equality of all individual persons could be achieved, provided that all ownership of property rests not with the individual, but with the government; and that it must not be permitted to the individual to wrest that right from the society as such, more specifically, from the government.

The Latin word *individuum* means 'indivisible'. The term 'individual' is applied nowadays to anything that <sup>can</sup> be viewed as single, or of unique occurrence, regardless of whether it is simple or compounded.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, by 'collective', we imply a multiplicity of individuals. We can at once recognize here the primacy of the concept of the individual. Collectivism presupposes the primary notion of the individuals. But, for the advocates of the theories of property, Locke

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<sup>1</sup> C. D. Kernig, *Communism and Western Society*, in *A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 2, New York: Herder & Herder, 1972, p. 234

and Marx, it is not a question of the logical priority of the one or the other concept. It is rather a matter of emphasis that determines the types of political theories in respect of the acquisition of property. This, in turn, is related to the power structure of the society reflected in the type of government in the society.

The problems associated with the conceptual pair, 'individual' and 'collective', relate, among others, to statements that are made about the collective. The collective is made out of the individuals; individuals are said to be contained therein. The question then arises of the precise sense in which a collective may be said to have been constituted of an individual, and how the individual itself is constituted, in a sense, within the collective, and, above all, how the individual relates itself to the collective. These are complex conceptual issues. Moreover, in human collectives, these questions are all the more difficult to answer, because many social relationships are constituted by their being in mutual relationship: There is no collective without the individual, and vice-versa. To further complicate the matters, many social relationships are constituted only by their being recognized as such. That is to say, individuals are, in many respects, only members of a collective, only in so far as they are aware of belonging to it. However, an 'unawareness' of belonging can also be construed as a case of one's not yet being aware, so that it then becomes possible to postulate human collectives that are unknown to the individuals comprising them. The evolution of social classes into

collectives of the latter type is a central socio-political problem in considering the relation between the individual and the collective.<sup>2</sup> Both Locke, to a lesser degree, and Marx, to a heightened degree, of philosophical awareness, were engaged with this evolution.

By individualism, we mean a belief in the rights of the individual persons. On the contrary, by collectivism, we mean a belief in the collective services owned and rendered to such rights by the government or society. Yet, these are overlapping concepts. This is partly so, because 'the individual' is a word, which is used in varied and even conflicting senses. It can be used, and is often used, to denote a doctrine that the state leave the individual alone, 'letting him do and letting him go' as he himself thinks best. This sense has prevailed even in the economic activities of the society, to say nothing of other spheres. The *laissez-faire* economy is based on such individualism unhindered by the state.

The radical difference between liberalism and socialism, individualism and collectivism should not however blind us to certain points of convergence, at any rate. After all both are theories of property. There are some meeting points between the two theories of liberalism and collectivism. Both of them, in their theories, expressed the importance of property in the socio-economic-political systems of the state. Their views do have a bearing on the creation, possession and the management of the property, be it at the

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 234-235.

individual or the collective level. Their solutions may be different, but their concerns are common.

While discussing the liberal and the socialist view of property, we can also talk of communist and the non-communist view of property. But this distinction is only a form of social and liberal theories discussed here. Scholars of both theories agree that 'both individual (personal) and communal (collective) forms of ownership existed in the most primitive societies known to us and that the laws and customs pertaining thereto vary according to the type of property owned'.<sup>3</sup> Thus at the root of the types of ownership is the type of property owned, so much so that property gives rise to the socio-political systems which manifest in a variety of economic institutions and activities.

The views of liberalism and socialism are different, however, in respect of the significance attributed to one kind of ownership or another. The socialist, or the collectivist, believes that the individual ownership was only a marginal phenomenon in the primitive society. On the contrary, the individualist, or liberalist, assumes that, even when communal forms of ownership in primitive society prevailed, there existed a well-developed awareness of individuality, and a corresponding sense of private property. He goes on to admit that personal property was legally acquired by virtue of labour or occupancy rights, inheritance and so on. Thus, both the socialist and

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol.7, pp. 71-72.

the liberal views of property in primitive society do converge to the belief that in non-stratified societies, with or without the social distinctions, property distribution tended to be equitable, or was largely rendered so by way of regulations.


Whatever the agreements and convergences of views, liberalism and socialism have continued to be belief systems at loggerheads, irrespective of their application to political, social and economic systems. Thus, the problem of acquiring and possessing individual ownership of property and the ways in which they are solved are primarily responsible for the division of the world, in particular, into two different political systems, viz., the liberal and the socialistic democratic forms of government. The governments of the erstwhile USSR and USA are the classic illustrations of the difference of governments referred to here.

Liberal view of property believes that there can be no freedom without the right to private property. But the socialist view declares that humankind can be liberated through communism alone, that is, through the non-possession of private property. It is borne out, however, in experience, that the countries, that follow the liberal view of property, are becoming aware of certain socialized virtues. Likewise, the socialistic countries too are possibly becoming, in guarded measure, liberal. This is at once a realization that both the systems are not self-sufficient, but are inherently flawed; that,

nonetheless, there are saving elements in each that can effectively be used as correctives to each other.

For a better understanding of the distinction between liberal and the socialistic views of property, we may further elaborate on the criticism of Locke by Marx. Locke directly gave ~~emergence~~ <sup>rise</sup> to the emergence of capitalism:

Capitalism can be understood as the organization of production, and it attributes an absolute value to capital, independently of the institutional structure and of property.<sup>4</sup>

This criticism is important, is as much as liberalism grows into capitalism. In other words, capitalism is an economic structure that entrust the primacy to financial capital to the conducting of the great financial enterprises. Capital is at the heart of the liberalist political economies with all its complex variations. The difficulty of defining the capitalist system derives both from the variable ideology it has undergone and by the historical evolution. Liberalism, or capitalism, as distinct from socialism, has certain essential characteristics, such as private property, free labour, free enterprise, and free choice of  the consumers. In this system, people have the right to acquire private property through production, exchange and the right of inheritance. They are also entitled to control and dispose of it. If we speak of labour in the capitalist societies, every one has the right to control his own labour, sell or dispose of it, as he thinks it fit, in contrast to

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<sup>4</sup> Dario Composta, *Moral Philosophy And Social Ethics*, Bangalore. Theological Publication, 1988, p 152.

the concept of a labour of the living serfs bound to their lords. The idea is that, in the capitalist system, each acts as a free agent, social and economic relations among human beings being governed by contract rather than by command or custom.<sup>5</sup>

In direct opposition to capitalism, the concept of socialism is both a criticism of liberalism, or capitalism, and correspondingly of an advocacy for an alternative society. Socialist ideology criticizes that liberalism of properties, therefore, capitalism, is primarily responsible for the economic inequality, poverty, exploitation, suppression of workers, concentration of wealth in a few hands, unemployment and inflation, racial and sex discrimination, — — in short, the imperialist domination of other countries, often engendering continual conflicts and wars within and among nations. The protest against these malpractices, or evils, by the working class inevitably leads some thinkers to conceive of a new vision for society, which combines political democracy with common ownership of the means of production as the best way of satisfying human aspirations. This allegedly ennobled vision of a society assumes the forms of socialism. Socialism is therefore described as a system that brings about a society of co-operation and collective ownership, in which there is a high degree of equality, no discrimination, no exploitation and no conflicts and wars. It denotes the doctrine that community as a whole should

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<sup>5</sup> Krishna Roy and Chhanda Gupta, (eds ), *Essay in Social And Political Philosophy*, New Delhi: Allied Publisher, 1989, pp 386-387.

hold the ownership of property and the means of production, land, — — in short, the capital, should be held by the community as a whole and be administered in the interest of all.

The central principle of socialism thus is that wealth must be equally distributed among all individual persons in the society. Socialism is a programme of transforming the economic life and the constitution of the society according to the clearly defined ideals. It is the aim of socialism to transfer the means of production from private ownership to the public ownership, that is, the state ownership. The socialistic state is supposed to own all material factors of production, and thus rationally direct its use. Socialism assumes three economic and basic rights, namely, the right to the full produce of labour, the right to existence, and the right to work. These further entail the right to equal distribution of consumption of goods, common ownership of the means of production and, above all, the common participation in the productive process. Thus, socialism is a theory of just distribution. The socialist movement throughout the world claims to be an effort to achieve this ideal. This prepares for the ground for our comparison between Lockean liberalism and Marxist socialism in respect of property.

#### **B. LIBERALISM AND SOCIALISM ON PROPERTY**

In Locke's liberalist theory of property, which also could be called the individualist theory of property, every individual person can possess, acquire, use and dispose of the property as much as he can. It

is the legitimate fruit of the individual's own labour. The law of nature administers man's activity of acquiring, possessing, using and disposing of, of properties through social relations that he enters in. The state of nature is a state, in which all men live together in peace and harmony, and each one, in the state of nature, is free to acquire and enjoy the fruits of his own works. Further, in Locke's theory, the government is formed of the society with juridical powers, and it has the obligation to protect and preserve the properties of its citizens without prejudice. It must be unequivocally asserted that the state does not create the properties; rather the state itself is created for the sake of preserving and protecting the properties. Without the consent of individual, his properties cannot be taken away by the state. However, Locke grants, every citizen is obliged to pay taxes regularly to the state without fail. This is the premium that the individual pays to the government for protecting his property. The crux of Locke's theory of property then is that the natural rights of his bodies and the works of his hands are also his properties. The material property owned by him is simply an extension of his own personal efforts and abilities.

On the other hand, Marx's theory of property is radically different from that of Locke. In Marx's theory, complete authority over the property, whether big or small, movable or immovable, rests with the state. Without the permission of the state authority, individuals cannot either possess or acquire properties. No individual has any right to properties, property belongs to the state. Individuals are under the

control of the government. But, the government is to ensure that all property of the state should be equally shared by the people, or at least as per their needs. In view of this, government is entrusted with the task of eradicating the class system among the people, which the ownership of property, as a matter of fact, engenders. Marx accused that Locke's theory of property gave rise to inequality of men, and the total and untrammelled freedom of acquiring and possessing of property only creates the social class conflicts among the people of the state. Marx therefore wants to abolish private property and, in doing this, he aims at the creation of a classless society, where every one has equal share, or, at least, as per one's needs of resources of all property within the state. To eradicate the social class system in the society, Marx further suggests that the state should have power even to seize the properties owned by the individual, if the need arises. Marx's theory of property, in intention, aims at the upliftment of a socio-political and economic system of the state, keeping in mind the welfare of the people within its territory. In fact, in Marx's theory of property, government is the owner and the guardian of all properties within its territory. In it, all powers and authority are vested in the hands of the government, and every individual person is to be treated as equal before the laws. There should not be any discrimination on the basis of sex, colour and race.

The theories of property, propounded by Locke and Marx respectively, we may note, have been considerably influential in the

socio-economic and the political systems, in earlier days of their presentation, and also in modern period, of the sovereign states. Their influence can be seen palpably in many countries in many ways. The economic and political systems of the west, especially of England and the United State of America, are mainly based on Locke's liberal, or individualist, theory of property. In these countries, individual persons have the freedom in acquiring and possessing properties, engaging themselves in free enterprise with the minimum of interference from the state. They can possess property as much as they can, provided that it is mixed with their labour, and it is acquired by fair means. Diametrically opposed to this, Russia, some countries of Eastern Europe, China and Cuba are under the impact of Marx's socialist theory of property, and, accordingly, they are governed by the socialist, or communist, forms of government and economy. Not a few countries have a judicious mixed economy, if not also governments. Under such government there is no unmitigated freedom for acquiring and possessing private property. The state generally controls every property, be it the land, housing, raw material or public utilities, excepting a small amount of goods, which are considered as basic needs; no individual can have huge personal properties. The state tries to maintain the relative equality among the citizens as far as possible, and aims at eradicating the social divisions among the citizens, which manifest in the forms of class stratification of the society.

There is also a crucial difference between Locke and Marx in the sense in which property is understood. Locke understands property in both wider and narrower senses. For Locke the twofold senses are important for defining the limitation of powers of government in respect of private property. In the wider sense, he includes under property life, liberty and estates.

For the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates, which I call generally property.<sup>6</sup>

But throughout the chapter on 'Of Property', he understands property in the narrow sense, to include lands, goods or material possessions of individual persons. What is significant for us is that, in both broad and narrow senses, he still classifies estate as property, and lists it along with life and liberty, as objects of man's natural rights, objects for the preservation of which people set up their government. In other words, estate as property, for Locke, had to be shown as a natural right. In contradistinction, we do not find any categorization of the manifold senses of property in Marx. He rather understands property primarily as the capital and the means of production, which, in his opinion, must not be permitted to be accumulated in the hands of the individual to the detriment of the egalitarianism in the society. He is avowedly against the concentration of a large quantity of wealth in the private possession of the individuals. Nevertheless, Marx is not against the individual persons for keeping a small amount of property for their

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<sup>6</sup>*Treatises*, 123

basic needs. A huge amount of properties however should be under the control of the government for equal distribution, and for the welfare of whole society.

Speaking of the source of the individual right to acquire property, Locke and Marx considerably differ. Locke upholds his theory of property for the sustenance and for the upliftment of the individual status. He therefore emphasizes the individual freedom and liberty to possess properties according to people's ability and efforts. More importantly, he believes that the individual freedom of acquiring and possessing property comes from the 'divine' authority. It is said to be an exclusive right given 'to Adam and his heirs in succession.'<sup>7</sup> He believes that God gave the world to men in common, to make use of it to the best advantage of their personal life. The earth and all that is therein are given to man for the support and comfort of his and his prosperity's life. But Marx strongly opposes this position of Locke. He refuses to draw support from divine right theory, here. He further argues that, if God gives the earth and all therein for men, in common, why should any individual person try to own for himself, and himself alone? Why should it not be shared by all citizens? Thus, Marx strongly upholds that all citizens, without any partiality and prejudice, should equally share all properties. Equality of every person from lowest to the highest is thus strongly advocated by Marx.

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<sup>7</sup> *Treatises*, 25

Does the right to property admit any limit and curtailment? On this question, too, there is the divergence of opinion between Locke and Marx. Despite some similarity with the proponents of the theory of 'natural law', Locke's own; naturalism' differs considerably from the view of his contemporary writers of the school of 'Natural Law'. Locke believes that men, with their natural rights, come together to form a civil society. Of the natural rights, the right to property ranks quite high in the order of priority. In virtue of its life-sustaining functions, it may be even viewed as the first among natural rights. The state does not create property, but property creates the state for its protection and preservation. Even the collection of taxes by the state requires the consent of the individual. Locke believes that the protection of property is the main function of the state. But, precisely at this juncture, it is legitimate to ask, if the individual has unlimited right to possess and acquire properties. Locke apparently does not want the state to curtail, or delimit, the rights of the individual. He seems to suggest that, though, in the state of nature, individual may not be said to have any such rights, in the civil society, however, the individual need not observe any such constrictions or limitations of his rights. Individual may possess any amount of properties by his hard works, and, thereafter, enlist the force of the state to protect it. As a matter of fact, it is the duty of the state to protect the properties of the individual

On the other hand, Marx clearly sets a limitation on the right of possessing property by the individual person. He suggests that all properties belong to the state, and that, as such, they should be shared equally, or at least, as per one's needs. In order to achieve this goal, Marx suggests that the state should have power even to seize the properties owned by the individual, if the need arises. He thus strongly opposes Locke's advocacy of the right and the freedom of possessing and acquiring properties as much as an individual person can. He believes that Locke's theory of properties gives rise to social classes among the citizens. He therefore had no hesitation to set a limit on the right to personal property.

There seems to be in operation two diametrically opposite assumptions in the respective theories of property propounded by Locke and Marx. In Locke's theory of property, it is the legitimate right of the individual person to keep properties for his personal use, and acquire it without any limits. No one, not even the state, can have a power on the property acquired by the individual. For they are acquired through his 'labour of his body and the works of his hand, and we may say, are (they) properly his'.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Marx not only does not approve of Locke's position in respect of the acquisition and the use of private property, but also condemns the institution of private property as engendering the socio-economic inequality in the society, where private property has been recognized as one of the fundamental

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<sup>8</sup> *Treatises*, 27

rights of the citizens, economic inequality is endemic to that society. Inequality is evil because it is unnatural and obnoxious. Herein lies the core of the Marxian objection against what, in this line of thinking, is called 'bourgeoisie democracy'. Our attention is drawn by the Marxist scholars to the choice between two fundamental assumptions. Either 'private property is natural and justified and consequently economic inequality among citizens is a phenomenologically given fact'. Or 'private property is unnatural and acquired through the misappropriation of other's labour and the surplus value generated by it.'<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, the choice is radical to the Marxian Scholars.

Finally, there is the question, if we can justify the institution of private property. To be sure, it is a necessity for Locke's his liberalism; to Marx, however, it is dangerous to justify and legitimize the institution. Locke justifies it on the ground that, since every man has a property in his own individual person, in the form of his life and liberty, the properties of estate and material goods are created by human efforts and abilities, which are mixed with the natural resources to make them one's own. This alone justifies private property. This, of course, has a far-reaching implication to human societies. When Locke defends personal properties, on the ground of individual efforts and initiatives, he at once protects the productive capacities of a new commercial and industrial capitalism. By making labour the title to property and the source of value attached to property, individual

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<sup>9</sup> Krishna Roy and Chhanda Gupta (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 466.

capabilities were soon to supplant the concept of labour itself. Labour could now be hired against wages by those who own the capital. Thus comes about a capitalist theory of labour. Locke thus facilitates the rise of a new class of power of capitalism in terms of a new political capitalist economy.

Marx also does not deny the position that property is created by human labour exerting on the natural resources. But he is keen on the limitation of the right of acquiring and possessing properties by the individual ownership. Besides, he does not permit the overpowering of labour by the capital. Such dominance will result into the alienation of man from his own products. Marx accuses that Locke's liberal theory of property gives rise to modern capitalism and the conflict of classes among the citizens. In contrast to Locke's liberalist theory of labour, he formulated a socialist theory of labour, and, correspondingly, of property, where every individual is equal to every other individual before the laws in acquiring and possessing properties for the fulfillment of basic material needs. Marx, in his labour theory, was keen on maintaining the dignity and the primacy of labour over the capital.

To conclude. Notwithstanding the differences between Locke and Marx, or between liberalism and socialism, the actual practice of the two philosophies, in a given social, political and economic system, we may note, has made us painfully aware that neither of the two theories on property is fully satisfactory, or completely sufficient unto itself, in

ushering in the objectives it envisages for itself. This is at once suggestive of the serious drawbacks in both theories, despite their humane agenda. Can there be a meeting point between the two? The meeting point may emerge, only when they have each given up their extreme views on capital, labour, liberty, and means of production and so on. Both the theories may have to be closely associated with the duties of the state in creating, preserving and protecting the property, both public and private. Some kind of regulation of the exercise of the right to property will have to be admitted, if the capital is not to be exclusively owned by the individuals. Even so, the state will have to create humane social conditions whereby the individuals are goaded to create properties, and, more importantly, also to ensure that no citizen is allowed to employ unfair means in acquiring and possessing properties. Closely associated with this regulation of the ownership of property is the system of taxation as an effective means at the disposal of the state to ensure a measure of equal sharing of resources. And it is the obligations of all citizens to pay the taxes and levies to the government without failure, so that the state will be better equipped to effectively protect and preserve the properties of the state, in general, and of the individuals, in particular. This whole problem brings me to the concluding chapter, that will deal with the integration of the insights of the two great philosophers on property.

## **CHAPTER V**

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing and critically examining the theories of Locke and Marx, my task of integration of the elements of both theories is based on my findings that both their theories individualism, or liberalism and collectivism, or socialism, have their own serious drawbacks. Not too long ago, a couple of decades in the past, serious scholars were hailing that the Marxian analysis was one of the best social analysis that we have. It lent a fair amount of credence to the belief in socialism in the heydays of USSR, and the Warsaw pact countries. Men of letters aligned themselves closely with the socialist thoughts to lend certain legitimacy to their own intellectualism. This has suffered a major setback with the dismantling of the major socialist countries in recent times, though socialism as a philosophy has not disappeared from the world. But the swing of the pendulum is now to the other extreme. Liberalism, though it had not disappeared at any time, in the West, in particular, manifests now in the form of liberalization and globalization in the political economy of the countries. But we are now conscious that liberalization is only a new and respectable name for the neo-colonialism by the developed countries. In their extreme forms, both socialism and liberalism are essentially flawed. The politico-economic systems, sustained by the philosophies of liberalism and collectivism, make me painfully aware that neither Locke's nor Marx's theory of property is fully satisfactory,

both theoretically and practically. Yet, both of them have within themselves invaluable insights, not only in respect of human nature but also in respect of the dynamism of collectivities of human beings in society, polity and economy. In this chapter, I will dwell on the influence of these theories on modern socio-economic and political system of some countries and their philosophical implications, which should be of abiding significance to political economy of any society.

#### A. LIMITATION OF THE THEORIES

The two theories of property that are advocated by Locke and Marx essentially represent the debate between individualism and collectivism or liberalism and socialism. Both the theories have their own philosophical assumptions in respect of the dynamics of human nature, natural resources, human societies, polity and so on in defence of their respective theories. In themselves and in moderation, they are extremely useful and significant to the organization of human life in communities. Yet, in their extreme form, they tend to lose their essential perspective on human life. I believe, their tempering by Aristotle's *Doctrine of the Mean* can make them more effective and useful theories of property. One-sided emphasis on either liberalism or socialism renders them not only imperfect and incomplete, but also detrimental to the upliftment of social, political and economic systems of a country. Therefore, a great deal of modification of the vast store of ideas and opinions in their theories may be warranted before either of the systems is accepted as conducive to the welfare of the society.

The final criterion is what conduces both theoretically and pragmatically for the welfare of the individual and the society. A healthy dialectics, within a single political economy between the liberalist and socialist elements, may be much more salutary than the external opposition between two irreconcilable philosophies.

Locke in his liberalist theory of property, stresses the individual freedom and liberty for acquiring and possessing properties. This he considers as a natural right, under no circumstances alienable. On the other hand, Marx emphasizes the authority and the powers of the government and the society over the individual ownership of property. Locke theory of property was mainly followed by the countries, USA UK where the democratic forms of government took over the state machinery. On the contrary, Marx's theory of property was mainly followed by the socialist, or the communist countries, with variegated modifications. The newly emergent independent countries, especially after the world wars, followed mixed economies, but often with a clear tilt towards one or the other philosophies. But all of them may be said to have suffered from ills that could have been evaded with a clearer vision of the philosophies that they were following. Countries, that followed largely Locke's theory, liberalize their economic activities in the state, and individual persons therein enjoy a large measure of freedom to acquire properties in the form of capital, allowing for Locke's 'acquisition of property as much as you can till and plant'. However justified theoretically this freedom guaranteed to the

individual the inalienable right to acquire unlimited property in a limited world, in practice, engenders conflicts with other's freedom. It inevitably leads to a vast rift between the rich and the poor among the citizens. One's abilities and efforts ensure one to own properties as much as possible. By implication, it also means that those, who have less abilities and efforts, end up owning lesser amounts of goods and properties. Conversely, the ablest man acquires greater amount of goods. Unfortunately, in modern times, the abilities no more refer only to personal capacities, but they extend to the material 'abilities' in the form of capital and the means to enhance the capital. To be sure, to make the economy of the countries develop, individual freedom for displaying initiatives, risks and hard work is essential. Without the incentives of acquiring properties, there can be no development of a country. In the countries where there is a liberalization of the economy, as borne out by experience, the rich have a greater advantage, because they start with a capital in the competition; besides, the state government has no power to control or regulate or limit their economic activities for acquiring more and more properties. The inevitable result of this unfair game of competition is that the rich become richer, and the poor become poorer. So long as the basic needs of the poor are met with a reasonable degree of satisfaction, the acerbity of the disparity is not acutely felt. But the fact is that the resources of the country get concentrated in the hands of a few rich ones. In course of time, the economy of the state comes totally under

the control of the rich and powerful of the society, and this will have its own impact on the nature of the political power too, in the state, either directly or through economic lobbies. In fact, following the liberalist theory of property, the economy of the state can develop in many ways, but it also gives rise to unbridgeable rift between the rich and the poor. Even when the state may have provided a semblance of equal opportunities, in actual practice, every individual is not capable of seizing those opportunities in developing their economic status.

Locke's affirmation and justification of natural individual rights to possess properties constitute his central theory of civil society and government. He writes,

The great and chief end therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property.<sup>1</sup>

It is from this proposition that most of Locke's political theory, and the duty of the government towards its citizens emerge. It is clear that man has a natural right to acquire and possess properties; that the concerned right is prior, independent of the existence of society and government. Again, from this proposition, there emerges Locke's main purpose, namely the development of the individual status rather than of the society as a whole. I tend to believe that this indeed is the main defect or demerit of his theory of property. Economic development of the individual today is not like the development of the musical talent of an individual. It is inextricably linked with the economic activities

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<sup>1</sup> *Treatises.*, 124.

of the society as a whole. For the welfare and development of the individual are dependent on the welfare and development of the whole society. Therefore, neither the economic system of a country nor the wealth of the nation can be permitted to be held captive by a few individuals, however gifted they may be in their individual capabilities.

This is precisely the reason why Marx found fault with Locke's theory of property as making for a capitalistic system that perpetuates the radical inequalities in the society. If the economy and the material resources of the nation are under the control of a few people, then, the poor people have much less chance of improving their own economic position and status. It was the well-intentioned dream of Marx that everybody within the society should have an equal share of national wealth and an equal participation in the production and management of the goods needed for fulfillment of the needs of the individual. Therefore, he advocated an economic system, socialistic or collectivistic in its nature. In his dream, he envisaged every individual person to have a chance to participate in the state economy, and thus have a feeling of collectiveness in all spheres, in particular, of property. He writes,

Socialism returns social production to its true mission that of serving the interests of human beings, of the society as a whole, and not of privileged individuals or group.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> L. Abalkin and L. Dzarasov (et al.), *Political Economy: A Short Course*, Moscow: Progress Publication, 1983, p. 281.

The socialist claims that, under his collectivism, all the properties are 'socialized'; that everybody has 'to eat out of a common bowl, to sleep under one blanket', to use a figurative expression. This obviously demands the giving up of the right of inheritance, too, which is indissolubly linked with private property. Although, under socialism also, earned income was the basis and the main source of personal properties, the socialist insisted that no one is entitled to increase his personal properties. The surplus product of everyone's work is to benefit the collectivity rather than be appropriated as personal property. However, in actual practice, socialist countries had to conclude that its ennobled principles could not be followed in its pristine purity. They had to make continual re-adjustments for increasing the productivity, if for nothing else. Nevertheless, they showed a measure of success, under socialism, in the government confiscation of the means of large production, land and many such amenities. But the serious defect in the socialist system is that, what is owned by the society as such is maintained by no one in earnest, so much so that the system can have a crippling impact on the productive factors of the socialist economy, as was increasingly experienced by most socialistic countries. Socialistic theory of property, then, propounded by Marx, is not any better theory vis-a-vis the liberalist theory.



## B. INFLUENCE OF THE THEORIES ON COUNTRIES

Both the theories of properties, propounded by Locke and Marx respectively, have had great impact on the economy of various countries in many ways. It has been already observed that the countries, where democratic form of government is practiced, mainly followed Locke's theories of property, whereas Marx's theory of property was mainly applied, where the socialistic or the communist form of government is followed. Thus, the liberal, capitalistic approach to political economy has been more firmly established in the United States of America than in any other country, more than even in England, where liberalism as a philosophy originated. To be, sure it has passed through the phases of mercantile utilitarianism, pragmatism and, in our times, of liberalization and globalization in the U.S.A. Locke's doctrine of political government has influenced the American ideas and institutions more strongly than those of any other British philosopher. His economic philosophy has impinged upon the American life with great force, and his theory of property is at the root of the kind of economic philosophy practiced. Locke, in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), developed a theory of property, which has with little modification permeated the economic and political foundations of the western world, in general, and of the American system, in particular.

Western economic and political systems are then deeply indebted to the key features of Locke's theory of property. When Locke speaks of property, he includes economic property, but property by no means

is identical with it. Economic property is probably considered by him to important, and the western society with its associated value of liberty, in particular, made it near sacrosanct. Ever since Locke's advocacy of private property is interpreted by the west as liberating, rather than enslaving human beings.

On the above assumptions, it is generally believed that a country, which followed the democratic form of government, especially United States of America or England, guarantees the individual freedom and liberty more than any other country. The state is supposed to honour, protect the private life of the individual person, and liberalize the economy of the state. Individual person is said to possess complete freedom to acquire property as his own, and as much as he can. The statue of liberty has served as a great American symbol of liberty. In the fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States of America, it was expressly the Lockean thesis that was embodied: 'The state shall not deprive my personal life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.'<sup>3</sup>

In contradistinction, Marx's socialism, in its economy and politics, has firmly entrenched in the erstwhile USSR, China and Cuba, though vastly modified to suit the local compulsions. In these countries, the government has full authority and controlled ownership and possession of property, in particular, the land and the natural resources. The government is both the owner and the guardian of all

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<sup>3</sup> W. Ebenstein in his book's, *Modern Political Thought*, New Delhi: Gulab-Primalraj, Oxford & IBH, 1974, p. 489

properties. Quite a few countries, which acquired independence from the former colonial ruler, have preferred to follow a mixed economy. India is one such country, which has, in some measure, followed a socialistic economic agenda. India, in its *Preamble to the Constitution*, has had recourse to a sort of socialist idea in some respect, but not in its communistic version:


We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic republic, and to secure to all its citizens:- Justice, *Social, Economic and Political...*<sup>4</sup>

Further, in Part III of the Indian constitution, under the article on Fundamental Rights, was listed the *Right to Property* but, under the impact of the mixed economy that the country followed, it was later, by way of amendment, deleted. This is a clear indication of the commitment of the government to establish socialism in some measure in India.

Even after the collapse of the USSR, the governments of socialist countries like China and Cuba have continued to emphasize the equal distribution of national wealths, at least, in principle. To achieve this end, in these countries, the right to huge individual ownership of properties is strictly prohibited. Every individual person is equal before the eye of the law of the state. Where the right to property selectively exists, strict rules and regulations in the method of

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<sup>4</sup> Subash C Kashyap, *Our Constitution*, (Preamble To Indian Constitution), New Delhi: National Book Trust of India, p 57 and cover page. (Emphasis is mine)

acquiring and possessing individual ownership of property are enforced. The state allows for a few select personal properties, on the basis of earned income, and, it is limited at any rate to the possessions of personal items. Even in the possession of individual property for personal use, it is stipulated that it should not adversely affect the rights of his fellow citizens. The state is empowered to protect the right and privileges of its citizens to own lawfully earned incomes, savings, houses, and other legally permitted properties. It will also  protect the rights of citizens to inheritance of properties. Thus, we see that even socialist countries have found the need to considerably relax their rigid laws in respect of the right to property, suggesting at once thereby that there are inherent problems in the socialist agenda. I may now turn to give certain concrete suggestions in the task of integration of the two theories. ^

### C. SUGGESTIONS

From the foregoing discussion throughout this thesis, it is clear that the two theories of property are presented in their opposition. In a sense, this opposition, or 'the divide', is justified as being close to the spirit of this thesis. This may have given an impression that they are mutually irreconcilable. But, it is time for us to highlight the areas where they do agree, and to cash on the common agreements. It is true that they differ on how an individual person can own and possess properties. But, it is equally true that there is a meeting point between the two theories: Both the theories are, after all, associated with some

semblance of a right to private property, however minimal the extent of the right to property. Again, they are associated with the duties of the state in preserving and protecting the ownership of properties, either private or public. Both are in agreement that the state will have to create rules and regulations on the possession, acquisition, retention, use, usufruct, inheritance, and above all, the disposal of properties. To say the least, the state will have to create certain social norms and conditions, facilitating the acquisition of the minimal private property needed for human life. Likewise, the individual and the state are to create properties with the right of propriety for themselves. Even so, the state is to ensure that no citizen is allowed to employ unfair means in acquiring properties, but to ensure that they follow closely the rules and regulations imposed by the state.

Our critical evaluation of both theories of properties reveal that both are, in themselves, insufficient and incomplete. Possibly due to the chronological order of the theories, it would appear to us that Marx has effectively countered Locke's theory. But this is far from the truth. Marxian theory of property has within itself as many *lucanae* as the ones that he highlights in his critique of Locke. More importantly, experience of socialist countries has made us painfully aware that the socialistic theory is, in its grain, somewhat 'unnatural' to man. It is this awareness that has made them open up their economy to private enterprise and a gradual relaxation in respect of the ownership rights. Thus, it would appear to me that, notwithstanding the Marxian

brilliant social analysis, Locke's liberalism scores a point over Marx's socialism. The modern world has become increasingly complex in its economic activity. The dependence of one individual on another, of one nation on another nation, is inevitable. In this complexity and interdependence, individual initiatives cannot but be acknowledged. But, if initiatives have to be fully and adequately exercised, one cannot but enjoy a measure of freedom and, along with it, a certain right to property. Both at the individual and collective level, the socio-economic development of the countries, following the liberalist agenda, has been, by and large, more impressive than of the socialist block countries.

But this does not mean that everything is fine with Locke's theory. His apprehensions, that the right to property has to take into account the truth that 'God gave the world to men in common',<sup>5</sup> is often forgotten, are on the mark. It is this forgetfulness that has contributed to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, richly meriting the Marxian criticism that the institution of private property engenders class-conflicts. For both theories, then, it is explicitly clear that properties are originally for common ownership. When Locke talks of property, he does not exclusively refer only to private ownership, but also to common ownership. It is regrettable that the liberalist political economy often focussed its attention on the former, more often, totally ignoring the later. As a matter of fact, when Locke

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<sup>5</sup> *Treatises*, 34

emphasizes the individual ownership of property, the common ownership of property also permeates his thinking. It is this vision of Locke that will have to be revived today to be incorporated with liberalism, so that liberalism will function with the Aristotelian golden mean, tempering the human acquisitive tendency with a concern for common good.

Unlike Locke, Marx emphatically advocated positively the collective ownership of properties for the development and for the welfare of the society, and negatively, the abolition of private property. But, it is salutary to remember that without development of each individual person, the development of the whole society is a mere phantasy. The primacy of the individual over the society, to be sure, over the government, is a basic tenet of the western culture. Both liberalism and socialism are the philosophies of the west. When Locke is sensitive to the tenet, Marx prefers to ignore it. In upholding the primacy of the society, he is 'putting the cart before the horse'. In order to ensure a quick and proper channelizing of the economic development, Locke advocates the development of every individual in his own right. For the development of society in its socio-economic,<sup>5</sup> the government must ensure the freedom to the individual citizens. Government should adopt a policy for the economic equality among the individuals. This economic equality does not exclude the right to propriety for the acquisition of properties. Government's function specially applies to the formulation of rules and regulations that make

possible the exercise of individual liberty without interfering with the liberty of the fellow citizens. To give but an example, an effective control of arms and ammunition in the U.S.A has suffered greatly under the umbrage of the individual freedom, posing a security threat to the life and limbs of the citizens.

Conversely, living in the society, which is our common social space, it is the duty of all citizens to obey and honour the government, to help it prevent crimes and preserve everyone's freedom, security, and properties. It is the obligation of the citizen to pay taxes and levy imposed on the citizens to ensure peace, liberty, security, safety and the welfare of all. It is the obligation of each and every individual person to work for the development and the welfare of whole society. Common goals of the society are as important as the private ones, because, despite the primacy of the individual, man is a social being. While individualism is a value, an atomized individualism is a disvalue that is detrimental to the common good of humanity.

The humane element of socialistic agenda, namely the distribution of the material resources, must be incorporated to the extent possible in the integration of the two theories. For example, the possession of the resources, to the extent that it deprives other's sustenance, ought to be curbed by the effective control of the government. For example, for the equal distribution of national wealths, there should be a certain limitation of the individual ownership by way of effective laws of land ceiling. Likewise, if an

individual tries to snatch away the share of his fellow citizens, it is the obligation of the government to give the speedy justice to the victim, and also to punish the perpetrators of the crime. Every infraction of rules, that threatens the peace and tranquility of the individual and society, must be punished. Protection of liberty of the individual does not make for licentiousness of any individual. My liberty ends where other's liberty begins. This is especially true of the right to property. Property is both private and public.

From the viewpoint of political economy, the perspective adopted by Locke and Marx, we have today, to take into account two competing forces, namely, the rights to private property and the necessity of public property. It is possible to argue that the success of the political economy of the liberalist countries is due to the protection of private property. It has provided incentives to individuals and corporate bodies to develop technologies to harness natural resources and contribute to the creation of wealth. This implies the legislations to protect property rights to stimulate economic growth and prosperity of all. Property right here refers to such personal effects as a house, food, clothing, car etc. Through the ownership right, the owner enjoys their use and usufruct. The modern legislations to protect the rights to ordinary property were enacted mostly in the context of the industrial revolution, which allowed for the growth of capitalism and free market economy.

But, we have to acknowledge equally that the right to private property does not obliterate the necessity for 'public right'. The public

right refer to 'things' that are radically different from ordinary property. This has become today imperative, faced as we are with a global ecological crisis. Vital resources like land, air, water and seas are essential for the survival of all. These cannot be the monopoly of any individual, or any nation, for that matter. The public have the right of use, enjoyment and protection of these vital resources without any formal deed of entitlement. These are public trust property. They have the same status and dignity of right as private property ownership. This is an aspect that neither Locke nor Marx considered during their times in their theories of property. That every individual has a fundamental right of access to vital resources is something formally acknowledged as far back as the code of Roman law of sixth century AD. While the western jurisprudence owes its origin to the Grecko-Roman philosophy, this concern for public right was forced to the back burner due to narrow concerns of both liberalism and socialism. The one tended to be narrowly individualistic and, the other, equally narrowly nationalistic.

When we speak today, of property rights, we should be careful to consider the implications of both the rights, private and public. A democratic society is committed to the welfare of the citizens. Individual rights to property have here a legitimate place, but it has to be placed in juxtaposition with the rights of the community as whole. This is more easily said than done, I am aware. Maintaining a fine balance between the two is a task of the policies of the government. Vital natural resources cannot be the monopoly of the individuals and

even nations; they, on the contrary, fall within the purview of public right. Laws here are yet to evolve. Public rights emanate from the bond that we have with nature, whereas the rights to private property surge from the human aspirations for the liberty and freedom. We have to strike a balance between the two.

Locke and Marx could not envisage our contemporary problems. They were preoccupied with capital and labour. Capital, in the wake of industrial revolution, became global, in the process, sidelining labour. Marx thought that he should reinstate labour to its pristine glory, and make it global, and reinstate it to its primacy over capital. Unfortunately, labour did not become global. Here, too, we need a delicate balance established between the two. Ultimately it is the problem of the dichotomy between nature's laws and human laws, both of which have tremendous implications to science, technology, education and philosophy, — in short, human culture and civilization. It is the task of philosophy to work for the coming together of science and humanities. The divide between Locke and Marx, then, would not be unbridgeable.

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