Chapter - 1

DEMOCRACY IN THE WEST
Democracy is created when public opinion, ceasing to be tolerant of the tenure of political power (Actual legal sovereignty) by one man or by a few, passes to an active resolution that this power should be possessed by the people and therefore divided among the people,1 Thus MacIver observes that ‘All the characteristic systems of democracy that the world has seen have evolved through processes in which the instruments of government have gradually been brought under the control of the body of citizens as a whole.’2 Democracy, thus, suggests a form of self-government of the people and a government aiming at the good of all in society. The power held by the people will only be used rightly if it is borne in mind that democracy is not an end in itself, but a means to the good life. And the good life aimed at by democracy is not to be lived by a majority but by all the members of the society.3

Democracy demands an ‘equal division of power and distribution of rights’.4 Democracy in order to be genuine must be based on the doctrine of equality. The more the amount of equality in a state, the more the people can make use of liberty. Where liberty is to move to its appointed end, it is important that there should be equality.5 The only practical method of dividing power and sovereignty among the people in a democracy is on the basis of equality. In the opinion of Hobhouse, liberty without equality is a name “of noble sound and squalid result”6 because equality supplies the basis out of which liberty comes to have a positive meaning. A modern democracy, thus, aims at liberty, equality, justice and social equity. Democracy is perhaps the only concept of politics which has arisen from condemnation to glorification. The concept has taken a long time to come to the present height of popularity.

There is a reference to a mythical story in the third book of Herodotus’ History, of a debate between 3 Persians—Otanes, Megabyzus and Darius. “They had killed a Magian usurper to the throne, and are represented as discussing what government should be set up. They argue respectively for democracy, oligarchy and monarchy. Otanes, the defender of democracy, has much to say of the arbitrary behaviour of kings. He then defends democracy in these words:
'As for the rule of the multitude, first its very name is so beautiful—equality before the law: then it settles offices by lot, it makes officials responsible to scrutiny, it brings all deliberation to the community.'

The historian Thucydides has stated in a passage the meaning of democracy to the thoughtful Athenians. This is the famous Funeral Oration of Pericles, who was the leader of the then democracy. In his speeches to the Athenians, he spoke of democracy with pride and was applauded by his listeners. The pride with which he cherished his share in her civic life and the moral significance of democracy are written in every line of the passage. The Funeral Oration is the greatest example of the love for one's country and the moral significance of Athenian democracy. 'Our constitution', said Pericles, 'is named a democracy because it is in the hands not of the few but of the many.'

Thucydides makes some personal comments in the eighth and last book of his History. He says that oligarchy replacing democracy is particularly unstable because of personal rivalries. 'For all [the new rulers] instantly refuse to consider each other as equals and each asserts his claim to be first. But under a democratic constitution, when a choice of leaders is made, he who is passed over accepts the result the more contentedly because he knows that he has been beaten by better men.' But Thucydides, towards the end of his unfinished History, says that the best piece of constitutional reform which the Athenians had undertaken within his lifetime was the proposal to replace the oligarchy of the four Hundred by a modified democracy. The Athenians had prospered under a moderate democracy.

Democracy involves the co-operation of large number of citizens in the active work of government. The Athenians were the first to achieve, a completely democratic regime, under which the governing assembly or Ecclesia effectively exercised sovereignty. The active participation or co-operation of all citizens in the government of the state was the principle of democracy. The Greeks knew that 'government does not consist of rights, irrespective of their exercise, but of something a great deal more practical.' The democracy of ancient Greece is unique because it not only guaranteed popular control over officials but also
ensured active participation of a greater proportion of citizens in the executive and judicial branches of government than has been achieved even by many modern democracies. The Greek democracy differs from modern democracies “in enlisting not all but merely a far larger proportion of its representatives in active public work.”14 In modern democracies “the few do the work for the many, in Greece the many did it themselves.”15 Zimmern identifies two essential features of Athenian government—Firstly, the people were sovereign and the people’s will were supreme and responsible to none. Secondly, the people’s work must be ‘done by representatives, as many as can be conveniently secured, subject, at stated intervals, to its own approval and correction.’16 The ideal was complete self government. The interesting thing about Athenian government is not the Assembly of the whole people but the political means by which the magistrates and officials were made responsible to the citizen-body and answerable to its control. Almost all forms of Greek government, whether aristocratic or democratic, included some sort of assembly of the people, even though its share in government might actually be small. This was, it may be recalled, akin to ancient Indian monarchical governments working with some kind of consent from the people.

Direct democracy is a rare phenomenon. In ancient Greece there was not much direct democracy outside Athens. Genuine political democracy grew up only in Athens and in the few other democratic states in Greece, democracies came into being as a result of “outside and usually Athenian pressure.”17 It is for this reason that Pericles announced so proudly that his state has a constitution which “does not envy that of others but is a model for them.”18

As late as the middle of the thirteenth century the civil or Roman lawyers were unanimous in holding that the only source of political authority was the will of the whole community, the universitas or populus.19 Even in its early stages Rome was far less democratic than most Greek states. But Imperial Rome was also based on the principle that the Roman people as a whole were the only true source of law.20 Though Rome began her political career as a monarchic city-state, it achieved greatness as a Republic. Roman theory of law stated that laws
were not imposed upon the people by an outside authority. The legislative authority of the emperor could only be exercised with the counsel and consent of the Senate. His authority was always in some measure limited by the law. 'The authority to make laws belongs to the Roman people, and to the prince to whom the people have given this authority, for it is the duty of the people or the prince to care for the individuals, as those who are members and children of the State.'\(^{21}\) The officers were ultimately accountable to the people. "The will of the Emperor has the force of law, because by the passage of the \textit{lex regia} the people transfers to him and vests in him all its own power and authority."\(^{22}\) The effective body of law which grew up in Rome was named \textit{jus gentium}—— the law that is common to all people.\(^{23}\)

All unmixed forms of government, according to Polybius, are characterised by the tendency to degenerate and the strength of Rome lies in the fact that it has unconsciously adopted a mixed constitution where the elements are "accurately adjusted and in exact equilibrium." In the Roman government the consuls form a monarchical factor, the Senate constitutes the aristocratic factor, and the popular assemblies represent the democratic factor. These three factors in the government form a system of checks and balances and thus prevent the natural tendency to degenerate.\(^ {24}\)

The doctrine of the natural equality of mankind was first taught by the Stoics. They taught that every man had a spark of divine reason with the help of which he could apprehend the fundamental principles of the moral life and the principles of natural right. The doctrine of equality was given more depth and force by Christianity. The Roman law was influenced in all sorts of ways by the Christian doctrine of equality.

A more democratic spirit prevailed in Rome in the later days. Cicero rejected the doctrine of the inherent inequality of people or classes. Cicero was dissatisfied with the three forms of government, the Monarchy, the Aristocracy, the Democracy and was in favour of a mixed constitution compounded of the three simple ones.\(^ {25}\) And thus Cicero came closer to the Aristotelian concept of middle class polity,
although covertly. Seneca also followed Aristotle when he refuted the idea of natural slavery or slavery by birth. Although it is not the place to discuss Aristotle’s impact on Roman thinking, yet it may be pointed out that indirect Aristotelian legacy significantly contributed to the preparing of the intellectual foundations of democracy in the later days of Rome.

The political philosophers in general were hostile to democracy. Democracy was mockingly criticised by the Sophists. Thucydides spoke against democracy as being characterised by fickleness and unsteadiness and the failure of the Syracusan expedition was attributed to democracy. Aristophanes, the great comedian, ridiculed Euripides and Socrates for being democratic-minded and the people banished Euripides and put Socrates to death.

Plato was emphatically against democracy. He considered democracy as the worst form of government. It was inconceivable for Plato that the masses should ever have sufficient goodness and intelligence to rule. The basic principles of democracy like equal rights for all, freedom of speech and action were considered by Plato as positively evil. Liberty and equality, according to him, was harmful for the unity of the state. Democracy would lead to anarchy. Plato was of the opinion that liberty degenerates into lawlessness because with the extension of liberty the passion for equality also extends as a result of which all sorts of distinctions are removed and ‘they will have no master over them in anything... Extreme liberty seems to lead inevitably to extreme subjection.... Little wonder that always out of democracy springs despotism and the greater the extreme of liberty the more thorough-going and harsh the tyranny.’ To him, ‘democracy’ stands for the rule by the many and such a government by many can never attain unity and since the ‘many’ are mostly poor and ignorant, it seemed to him that such a rule would be quite unenlightened, at the same time oppressive for the rich.

But Sinclair holds that a close reading of Plato’s Republic brings out some features among which one is that, rule should be exercised for the benefit not of the ruler but the ruled. This reminds one of the ancient Indian benevolent
monarchy. This feature is very important in connection with democracy. In Laws Plato says that the new city must not be under personal rule absolutely, but under the rule of law. One of the important principles for the construction of a Law-state is that the only true laws are those which are promulgated for the common good.31

To Aristotle feelings were, as already pointed out, mixed, but, on the whole, they were not very favourable to democracy. He held democracy responsible for the defeat of Athens at the hands of Sparta and it was condemned in the subsequent period. The distinguishing features of democracy, according to him, are: the supremacy of the people who are poor leading to equality, freedom and majority rule. Aristotle seems to have been alarmed by the fact that the few may be exploited by the many. Among the classical thinkers, Aristotle investigated into the principles of classification of forms of government. He takes the obvious and already current threefold distinction expressed by the terms Monarchy, Aristocracy or Oligarchy and Democracy, which he combines with a principle derived from Socrates—"the true ruler is one who seeks to promote not his own interest, but the interest of the ruled."32 His classification is based on two criteria—(i) the number of persons actually possessing supreme power in a state, and (ii) the purpose for which supreme power is exercised. According to the first criterion, government may be classified into three forms; Monarchy or Kingship— the rule of an individual of pre-eminent merit; Aristocracy— the rule of the persons best qualified to rule; and Polity which he calls "Constitutional Government"33 in which supreme power is in the hands of the majority of citizens. According to Aristotle these three are the real forms because these forms seek to promote "common interest" and aims at the good of whole community. Contrarily, a government degenerates into a perverted form if it seeks to satisfy the selfish interests of the ruling class only. The degenerated form of the first is tyranny—the selfish rule of one, of the second is oligarchy—the selfish rule of a wealthy minority and the degenerated form of the third is democracy—the selfish rule of the comparatively unpropertied many.
But the six-fold classification of government are of little practical value—they give too much importance to the numerical principle. Sinclair draws our attention to four kinds of royal rule during the time of Aristotle— the Spartan kingship, the non-Greek or oriental kingship, the non-hereditary, sometimes temporary rule of an elected dictator and the heroic kingship of Homeric poems. In all these forms of rule, the absolute power of the monarch is limited to some extent. Democracy as a political association is based on political liberty and majority rule. According to the democrats, all persons being equally free have an equal claim in the distribution of rights, benefits and privileges.

Aristotle, however, favoured the rule by many. His argument was that the mass of ordinary citizens, if properly trained, may have greater moral and intellectual virtue and may be collectively wiser than one or few individuals. Accordingly, in constructing his ideal state, he decided that all the citizens are to share in government. Even in a predominantly agrarian society where the mass of citizens are not able to exercise direct control, some important features of democratic government like the right of electing officials and calling them to account and the right to sit as judges or jurors may be found.

On the basis of the same argument, Aristotle recommended, as already pointed out, the polity as the best form of government as it avoids the extremes and treads the middle course between oligarchy and democracy—but inclining to democracy—which he called Constitutional Government. What he called Constitutional Government was conceived by him as a kind of judicious mixture of the qualities of both democracy and oligarchy and its rulers are composed of the middle class, neither too rich nor too poor. Aristotle was of the opinion that a strong middle class is more likely to emerge in democracies. Aristotle may thus be said to have indicated to modern elitist democracy.

But looked at from the point of the forms of government, Aristotle's classification suggests a general condemnation of democracy. Inspite of that, the Athenian democracy is recorded as the most brilliant example of Greek democracy which worked as the source of Western democracy. In this connection we may
But the existence of aristocratic element within a democracy appears to be a fundamental necessity then. Even in Athens, the whole body of citizens could hardly be said to have determined the details of policy. Democracy, at the most, amounted to the right of the masses to shape the ends of policy, and to criticise and punish for breach of duty, or unpopular use of power. For the next two thousand years or so 'democracy' evoked similar unfavourable reactions.

It was since the Middle Ages in Europe that the people were started being considered as the source of political authority. The people, in course of time, began to assert their rights over the government. The beginnings of this political development achieved by England can be traced back to the Magna Carta in 1215. This political development of England continued for nearly seven centuries and has produced a remarkable system of democratic institutions, the most important of which is the Commons, which was the matrix of modern democracy. There had also been many experiments of representation in Church Councils, in local councils, in the conduct of the business of the guilds, and in trials by jury in the Middle Ages.

In the sixteenth century North-Western Europe and later America, religion started to be organized by small independent groups of equals for themselves. In the opinion of Burns, this Protestantism in religion taught men the possibility of a sort of Protestantism in politics, which is democracy. Christians believed that in some sense power is derived from God and that in some sense power comes also from the people. The principle that authority proceeds from the people gradually achieved universal acceptance and it became a common political idea in the Middle Ages.

Machiavelli held that government is more stable where it is shared by the many and he preferred election to heredity as a mode of choosing rulers. He was in favour of the freedom to propose measures for the public good and for liberty of discussion.
Some new experiments in "popular government" were made by certain religious groups, for example, in Switzerland and in England. Democracy received favourable reactions in seventeenth century England, for example, by the Levellers. The Levellers tried to substitute Parliament for a king. For a very short time this group formed something like a real political party and planned to restructure the constitution on liberal lines. The principal leader of the Levellers, John Lilburns, was a symbol of popular liberty. "Where others argued about the respective right of king and parliament, he spoke always of the rights of the people." The Levellers desired the independence of parliament as it was the representative of the people. They also demanded the equality of representation in parliament and they were of the view that unless the law is made with the people's consent and unless a man has been represented in the body which made it, he cannot be justly obliged to obey it. The Levellers were thus an early instance of a radical middle-class democracy with political aims.

But the seventeenth century English philosopher Hobbes, in his Leviathan, was against democracy for he thought that it was against the sovereignty of the state. A state would be best governed when ruled by a single person though he accepts that there can be three kinds of government or Common-wealth—Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy depending on the number of persons ruling. Though Hobbes was not in favour of democracy, he believed that government is for the welfare of the people. "The office of the Soveraign, (be it a Monarch, or an Assembly), consisteth in the end, for which he was trusted with the soveraign Power, namely the procuration of the safety of the people; to which he is obliged by the law of Nature, and to render an account thereof to God, the Author of that law, and to none but him."

John Locke, who belonged to the same seventeenth century of Hobbes, and then Montesquieu, however, contradicted Hobbes' view that a state is best governed when it has a single ruler. Locke follows the Aristotelian tradition of division of types of government into three. Locke's society is a society of equals and his government is founded on consent. The legislative and executive power
used by government to protect property is nothing but the natural power of each man resigned "into the hands of the community" or "resigned to the public." It is a better way of protecting natural rights. This is "the original compact" — an agreement by which men unite into one political society or make up a commonwealth. The consent by which each person agrees with others to form a body politic is, for Locke, consent to abide by the decision of the majority and when the majority forms a government the whole power of the community rests in the majority. Civil society, thus, involves the rule of the majority. It was John Locke who laid the theoretical foundation of constitutional monarchy that exists in England today. He was in favour of kingship dependent upon popular consent and insisted on the separation of powers.

The types or species of government, according to Montesquieu, are fixed and they are merely modified by the influence of their environment. Governments are of three kinds — republican (a conflation of democracy and aristocracy), monarchical and despotic. Despotism is arbitrary and capricious whereas monarchy is a constitutional government 'according to forms of law and requires the continuance of "intermediate powers", such as the nobility or communes, between the monarch and the people.' Popular government depends on the civil virtue or public spirit of the people. In his *Spirit of the Laws*, he ascribed liberty in England to the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers, and to the balancing of these powers against each other but was not in favour of an absolute separation of the three powers.

The French philosopher Rousseau accepted the tripartite division of the forms of government. After the crumbling of the ancien régime in France, Rousseau was the 'first great prophet of the new democracy.' According to him the true form of democracy is where the people directly govern themselves, that is, direct democracy. Though the importance of direct democracy has been pointed out by Rousseau, it is a somewhat rare phenomenon and even in ancient Greece there was not much direct democracy outside Athens. In his view, no genuine democracy has even existed or even will, since 'it is contrary to the natural order that a large
number should govern and a few be governed,' and 'a government so perfect is
unsuited, or not appropriate, to men.' According to him, only if people were
Gods they could govern themselves democratically. It was for this reason he
attributed sovereignty to 'General Will' which constitutes the best in the will of
all. The general will, according to Rousseau, is always right because the "general
will stands for the social good, which is itself the standard of right. What is not
right is not the general will."54 Absolute power is to be vested not in a person or
body of persons, but in the general will. To Rousseau the people as a corporate
body compose the whole society. The organic unity of all men as citizens is the
only true sovereign of the state while government is merely an agent having
delegated powers which can be withdrawn or modified at the will of the people.
Rousseau gives the name 'Republic' to 'every state that is governed by laws, no
matter what the form of its administration may be: for only in such a case does
the public interest govern.'55

Tocqueville thought democracy was inevitable, but he looked on its approach
with distrust and dread.56 But he could not deny that the passion for equality and
freedom is a natural instinctive demand of an individual.57

The opinion that democracy is irresistible would have appeared to be a
paradox only a few centuries ago. Democratic theory had its beginning in
America—in a comparatively simple agricultural society almost untouched by
the Industrial Revolution. The early democratic theories were mainly negative—
they deal with the 'limitations of state power, with checks and balances and the
separation of powers.'58 The fathers of the American Federal Republic were of
the opinion that the democratic form of government was of rare occurrence in
political history and was characterised by an extreme fragility.59 The Virginian
Declaration of Rights sets forth some principles in which are reflected the basic
principles of democracy. The Declaration states—

'That all power is vested in and consequently derived from the people; that
magistrates are their trustees and servants and at all times amenable to them.
That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation or community; of all the various forms of government that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of mal-administration; and that when a government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.60

The same position is reflected in the famous sentences at the beginning of the Declaration of Independence—‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.’61

Both these documents stress on a society of equals in which each man has certain fundamental rights. They emphasize that government cannot act on its own, it requires the support of the people.

At an early stage of the French Revolution in 1789, the National Assembly published a ‘Declaration of the Rights of Men and of Citizens’ almost on the same lines as the American Declaration. The Declaration points out among other points that the acts of the legislative and executive powers of government may always tend to the maintenance of the constitution, and the general happiness.62 The first Article says that men are born and continue to be free and equal in respect of their rights. After the success of the American Federation democracy came to stand for ‘the government of the commonwealth by the Many.’63
The modern democratic state is the result of the impact of two major forces of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—gradual strengthening of the democratic principles and the social changes produced by the Industrial Revolution. The democratic principles found their expression in the seventeenth century England, in America and in France. The view that democracy is irresistible is of French origin. As the French revolution gave world-wide prominence to the democratic principles, these principles are sometimes called the principles of the French Revolution or the principles of '89. It is the French Revolution of 1789 which gave a clarion call to democracy with its slogan of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'. It gave the fundamental doctrines of human equality and liberty a universality. French democracy had to revolutionize the society in which it appeared. The French Society had given to the 'body of the common people a self-respect, an enlargement of spirit, a consciousness of counting for something in their country's action, which has raised them in the scale of humanity.'

France believes she has so organised herself as to facilitate for all members of her society full and free expansion and became the guiding principle of Continental Democracy. Because France was culturally the most advanced country in Europe, the impact of the French Revolution changed the Western world and two important forces began gaining strength—nationalism and democracy.

A discussion of the nature of Puritan democracy may be interesting in this connection. The Puritans began with the experience of working in the Puritan congregation which is a small and thoroughly democratic society. The self-governing congregation was for them the church and everyone equally contributed to the "common discussion about the purpose and actions of their small society." Their democracy was not political, but the 'democracy of a voluntary society—a society which did not use force in the putting into practice of its decisions, but was a fellowship of discussion'. The Puritans thus led a democratic life resting on consent and free discussion. The democracies of England and America both follow the puritan pattern as both of them believe in the importance of free associations.
The Industrial Revolution had far-reaching impact on democracy. It was England which became the focus of the Industrial Revolution and England was the first to achieve success in the field of democracy. Prof. Mannheim is of the opinion that the Industrial Revolution had changed a 'minority' democracy into a 'mass' democracy. Technical progress had made democratic government possible over a much wider area than before. As a result of the Industrial Revolution liberal democracy enlarged itself.

Both the American and French democracies owed their origin to the English democracy and the English writers, specially John Locke. They were also influenced by the system of parliamentary government of England. Though the American and French democracies were indebted to the English democracy, the English, the American and the French were together the founders of modern democracy. The French version of democracy has been most influential in other countries.

The principles of the Revolutionary Era, first clearly stated by Locke and embodied in the great political manifestoes like the American Declaration of Independence and the French and American bills of rights took the shape of progressive political ideals in the nineteenth century. These ideals included civil liberties like freedom of thought, of expression, of association, the security of property and the control of political institutions by public opinion and these ideals came to be realized everywhere by the adoption of constitutional government. Liberty, thus, became the distinguishing feature of the nineteenth century which came to be known as the age of liberalism.

The doctrine of the French revolutionary philosophers were brought to England by the philosophical radicals, the chief among whom was Bentham. English liberalism aimed at the general good of the whole national community. The common welfare was to be attained through the pursuit of each of his individual welfare. Democracy in England gradually came to be identified with economic liberalism. This doctrine of the classical economists was given a new turn by the Utilitarians, led by Bentham. Bentham after 1808 became a republican
and an uncompromising democrat. Jeremy Bentham claimed that the governments having the essential characteristics of democracy were much more free than other governments from what he called "Sinister" influences. He meant by a Sinister influence, a motive leading a government to prefer the interest of small portions of a community to the interest of the whole. It was due to his democratic feeling that Bentham adopted the principle of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

John Stuart Mill in his essays *On Liberty* says that in a democracy the majority rule may become majority tyranny and since the minority may sometimes be right, the minority should not be suppressed. He asserted that the only difficult questions in government deal with restraining the power which rulers must have. Mill was a champion of liberty and democracy and for him freedom of thought and investigation, freedom of discussion, and the freedom of self-controlled moral judgement and action were good in themselves. According to him, rights and interests of the individual are secure in democracy for which he suggested representative government to be formed on the basis of proportional representation. Mill recognized that behind a liberal government there must be a liberal society.

Green upholds liberal democracy. Political institutions, according to him, are to be judged according to their contributions to the development of the character of the citizens. The citizens should have certain freedom of action in attaining their aims which is possible when there is a common recognition by the members of society that such freedom is for common good. State action is legitimate to the extent that it promotes individual freedom. Green, however, gave a positive role to the state for he believed that the function of the government is to hinder the hindrances to individual development. A moral community, from Green's point of view, "is one in which the individual responsibly limits his claims to freedom in the light of general social interests and in which the community itself supports his claims because the general well-being can be realized only through his initiative and freedom." A liberal government is
impossible except in a society where legislation and public policy are continuously responsive to a public opinion. A liberal government aims at minimizing coercion.

It was in the nineteenth century that democracy overcame the unfavourable reactions and started consolidating its position. Social freedom, equality and democracy—these are the native impulses of human nature and had been gaining more and more strength. Though equality and liberty were the characteristics of ancient Greek democracy, Christianity produced a new conception of equality and a new conception of liberty which are the characteristic features of the modern democratic state.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, democracy was everywhere extended. The new kingdom of Italy and the third Republic in France adopted the principle of responsible government. In 1876 parliamentary institutions were introduced in Spain. From 1905 in Russia the Duma, an elected assembly, started enjoying the privilege of freedom of speech. The progress of the Industrial Revolution contributed to forward the democratic movement. Although the Parliament before the late nineteenth century expressed mainly the opinions of landowners and traders it later became the forum for the expression of a generally shared opinion. The English Parliament established the "rule of law" which is an expression of "civil liberty", which is one of the basic elements of democracy.

After the First World War, in the twentieth century, democracy received widespread popularity throughout the world. In was the century of the popular influence on government, of the self-determination of nations. Two large European countries—Germany and Italy at that time proclaimed their adherence to theories that were anti-democratic. Though it is true that Hitler once described his system as 'real' democracy and Mussolini described Fascism as 'an organized, centralised and authoritarian democracy', now it is a common knowledge that the Nazis and Fascists ignored the basic tenets of democracy. Though Hitler and Mussolini tried to brand their system as democratic, these were nothing but totalitarian governments. The environment was unfavourable for democracy during the
thirties, but democracy has regained its popularity today. The victory of the Second
World War marked the victory of democracy. In the view of H.B. Mayo, democracy
is also accepted within the Soviet Union but two or three kinds of democracy are
distinguished there: the bourgeois or 'sham democracy' of the capitalist world,
their own proletarian or 'real democracy' and the 'people's democracies' of the
East European countries and China.\textsuperscript{71} Soviet Communists have thus appropriated
the label 'democracy' but have cleverly given it quite different meanings.

As already stated, at the very early stages of the beginning of political study
democracy was condemned as the worst form of government. Later at a much
developed stage democracy was ridiculed by Carlyle as a government "of the
fool, by the fool and for the fool"; but in these days of ours when political studies
seem to have reached the most disciplined stage, democracy is considered not
only as the best form of government but also as the only social ideal envisaging
the progress of humankind.

There may be different forms of democracy— which is determined by the
nature of the relation between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign.
Democracy is direct when these two coincide; it is indirect or representative
when they differ. A perfect democracy could only be achieved when the aspirations
of the Ultimate General Sovereign were clearly formulated and accurately
executed by the Actual Legal Sovereign. The essence of democracy is the
combination in one body of the Ultimate General Sovereignty & the Actual Legal
Sovereignty.

In ancient Greece, democracy was direct, not representative. This enabled
the Greeks to achieve a more complete identification of the citizen with the state
than any later system has achieved. At the same time, the representative principle
was not entirely unknown. The representative system was, however, well-known
to the Romans.\textsuperscript{72}

Direct democracy postulates the existence of some conditions which are
non-existent in modern states. It postulates a small state with a small body of
citizens. "A pure democracy is practicable only in small relatively undeveloped communities where it is physically possible for the entire electorate to assemble in a given place and where the problems of government are few and simple."73 With the development of the city-states into modern nation-states and in the modern large and complex societies, direct democracy is not possible.

Some traces of direct democracy can be found in small cantons of Switzerland today where direct democratic checks such as referendum and initiative are found to be operative though representative democracy operates in those states. Thus the Swiss system is a mixture of direct and indirect democracy. However in the modern large societies representative democracy has become the dominant political culture. Representative democracy has its roots in the Middle Ages. In this kind of democracy, there is a distinction between the immediate and ultimate sovereign and the electorate is the ultimate sovereign while the legislature is the immediate sovereign. Another experiment which has been attempted in this direction is known as the Plébiscite.

Austin holds that democracy 'signifies properly a form of government, that is, any government in which the governing body is a comparatively large fraction of the entire nation.'74

Democracy is thus an institutional arrangement ensuring free participation of the people in controlling the political power. Thus democracy implies rule by the majority. But by counting the number of heads the essence of democracy cannot be realized. In the words of Gladstone: "No people of a magnitude to be called a nation has ever, in strictness, governed itself; the utmost which appears to be attainable, under the conditions of human life, is that it should choose its governors."75

'Democracy is a force in which the concert of a great number of men makes up for the weakness of each man taken by himself; democracy accepts a certain relative rise in their condition, obtainable by this concert for a great number, as something desirable in itself.'76
Maurice Duverger in his *Political Parties* says that the phrases like 'Government of the people, by the people' and 'Government of the nation by its representatives' are "fine phrases with an empty ring." He writes that "No people has ever been known to govern itself and none ever will. All govt is oligarchic: it necessarily implies the domination of the many by a few."77

"Democracy", according to Maclver, "is not a way of governing, whether by majority or otherwise, but primarily a way of determining, who shall govern and broadly, to what ends... The people, let us repeat, do not and cannot govern; they control the government."78 Democracy is a form of government and in all governments acts of state are determined by an exertion of will."79 According to Maine exertion of will must mean that 'a great number of people, on a great number of questions, can come to an identical conclusion, and found an identical determination upon it."80

The idea of common good and will of the people is stressed in Schumpeter's definition of democracy: "The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will."81

The fundamental principle of democracy, according to Sidgwick, is—"that government should rest on the active consent of the governed".82 By active consent he means "the absence of any conscions desire to change the structure or modify the action of government..." and that "they exercise a distinct act of choice" in the government.83

The view of Aristotle that the collective judgement of the people is, on the whole, the most reliable guide is still the fundamental justification of democracy. Democracy has come to be considered as the condition without which there can be no complete self realisation for the individual.

Governmental structures are highly variable. In the course of evolution through the ages, certain structures have disappeared while certain others have
evolved. So different forms of government exist in the world. Democracy as a definite type of government can be found to have different forms depending on the different kinds of condition in different countries. But the necessary conditions on which democratic method of government depends are—

1. co-existence of ideas or of parties;
2. the right to free discussion;
3. universal adult suffrage and
4. periodical elections.

The basic features of democracy are social freedom, liberty, equality, social justice.

Democracy as an ideal refers not only to a democratic government but also to a democratic society. Democracy is thus not merely a form of government, but it is a social idea. 'It is only under representative democracy, and with the whole hearted co-operation of all citizens, that the task of reconstruction can be undertaken with confident grounds for success.'

Therefore, as the ideal of democracy is ever-expanding and having its form according to the nature and demand of different societies of the world it cannot be given a static definition. The only feature that will connect the past with the posterity is the increasing involvement and participation of the people in the administration of the society.

Notes and References

11. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
18. Ibid, p. 36 [Referred by Grene from Thucydidies ii. 37.1]
26. Quoted by Grene in Greek Political Theory, *op.cit.*, p. 41 from Thucydides iv. 65. 4.
27. Quoted by Grene in Greek Political Theory, *op.cit.*, p. 41 from Thucydides, viii. I and ii. 65. II.
35. Aristotle, Politics. III. Ch XI.
36. Politics IV (VII) Ch. XIV
39. Ar. Pol. 1320 b. 9, Quoted from Zimmern, *op.cit.*, p. 140.
40. The Development of European Polity *op.cit.*, p. 113.
52. Ibid.
60. The Modern Democratic State, op.cit., pp. 122 – 123.
63. Popular Government, op.cit., p. 73.
65. Ibid.
66. The Modern Democratic State, op.cit., p. 117.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid, p. 175.
69. Popular Government, op.cit., p. 82.
72. A Short History of Western Civilisation, op.cit., p. 34.


76. The *Works of Matthew Arnold, op. cit.*, p. 17.


84. A *Short History of Western Civilisation, op. cit.*, p. 205.