Political philosophy is the theory of state with reference to its origin and growth, its function and future and its relation to the members of the community. It stems from Philosophy, the view of universe, of truth or reality, in its evolution and change. Accordingly, different philosophies have given rise to different theories of state, different views as to its formation, function and future. Philosophy, and for the matter of that, political philosophy has a subjective element in it. Truth or reality as known is relative to the mental constitution of the knower. The horizon of the knower, i.e., the faculty and the sphere of knowledge are expanding continuously with the progress of time. Hence, there are no absolute boundaries of knowledge or philosophy, and hence political theories have to be perpetually revalued and reconstructed in terms of social dynamics.

Because of the subjective element in philosophy or ideology it may appear from a strictly academic point of view as a sort of thought-casting and propaganda. Pareto went so far as to deride it as a system of fictions designed to mask truth. But ideology may be more properly understood as a system of ideas built up on a definite outlook on life and directed to control behaviour. Political ideology or philosophy is that system of ideas which seeks to give a particular expression or direction to life through the means of state and government. It is essentially a matter of value and judgment. For instance, the liberal ideology stands for liberty and individualism. State control or totalitarianism attaches more value to regimented order and progress. Socialist philosophy gives primacy to economic and social justice. The German word weltanschauung correctly conveys the sense of 'ideology', i.e., a universal view of men and of things in relation to men, of change and progress, of operating forces and laws of their operation. Hegel and Marx had this wholeness of view, each his own, from which they derived their respective political philosophy.
The moot questions which all political philosophers have to answer and which preoccupied Hegel and Marx, are: why do we have political government? What are its best forms? Who control it? What is its relation with the individual? Hegel and Marx have answered these questions from their own metaphysical standpoints. According to Hegel, acts of transformation proceed through the dialectical method and the state comes into existence in the historical development of Reason which is the Spirit. It is the instrument of Spirit to attain its essence which is freedom. Marx, on the other hand, views the state as the outcome of the dialectic of production in society. It is the instrument of the class which controls the material forces of production.

The defect common to both Hegel and Marx is that they try to answer the question of social change with too simple statements of general truth. In Hegel's case, abstract speculation does not provide a practical creed. His whole work is pervaded with the abstract atmosphere of Reason. His idealist and absolutist conception of state, when it tries to descend on the hard soil of the earth, tends to be perverted into dangerous reaction. In the case of Marx whose materialist philosophy is very practical and pragmatic, it cannot for the same reason stand for long as a valid answer to social change. For, what is pragmatic has to shift its ground perpetually to meet new circumstances. Consequently, despite of its unique psychological appeal, Marxism has been faced with powerful challenge and has had to submit vital modifications. The latest challenge has been the democratic socialist experiment in England under the Fabian doctrine and the latest modification has been the New Democracy as propounded and executed in China by Mao Tse-tung.

Although Hegel's philosophy in its application has a conservative bias it has also the seeds of revolution in it. Marx himself began his apprenticeship as a Left Hegelian and accepted Hegelian dialectics as the law of change. There are also elements in it which became later justifications of socialism and neo-liberalism as much as there are elements which served to support fascism and totalitarian theories. Thus, Hegelism is not as dead as it seems.
to be, nor is Marxism as living as it is often made out to be.

Modern political thought is advancing with empirical method on experimental lines. Problems of unprecedentald magnitude face the states of the world and statesmen and philosophers are judged by the measure of success they show in solving these problems. Political philosophies are tested by their practical value. Modern political ideas are, therefore, more pragmatic than practical theoretical. Accordingly, the schools of the mid-twentieth century show a tendency to discard orthodoxies and fixed patterns, and to accept commendable elements from all ideologies even though occasionally paying homage to a myth or to prescribed texts to humour partisans or the people.

The present work is a review of modern political thoughts in the background of social and economic situations and in the process of their evolution. Hegel and Marx, the two outstanding philosophers of the last century, whose influence is imprinted in diverse ways on modern schools have been expounded first in the totality of their philosophy including their metaphysical doctrines, interpretations of history and theories of state. This, with a criticism of the doctrines from the philosophic and historical points of view forms the first part of the book. In second part, the main political systems and thoughts of the West and the USSR and China are described and analysed in the context of the circumstances prevailing in several countries. The subjects selected for review are (1) Imperialism (2) Fascism or National Socialism (3) Socialism in USSR (4) Democratic Socialism in UK. (5) Smaller Co-operative Democracies (6) Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles and New Democracy in China (7) People's Democracy in Eastern Europe. The third part consists of Indian ideologies which form a class by themselves. The political theories of Aurobindo, Tagore, Gandhi and Subhas Bose differ fundamentally from the Western trends of thought. They beat new track and open new horizons. Along with the presentation of the doctrines and systems estimates have been made of the influence of Hegel and Marx and of other old orthodoxies on them, points of difference have also been drawn set forth, a balance-sheet has been drawn in
terms of achievements and failures and points of doubt and criticism have been placed side by side with deserving appreciation. The writer does not deny her own ideological leaning. Nevertheless, conventional labels of judgment have been avoided and codes of objective and scientific treatment have been observed as far as possible.