CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
Social philosophy is, indeed, always the outcome of history. The growth and development of socio-political thought remains unintelligible if not understood against the backdrop of events and conditions out of which it took its rise. It is for this reason alone that we are giving specific attention to the study of the socio-political conditions and the entire intellectual tradition which shaped John Stuart Mill's liberalistic and utilitarian position. In the context of history of political thought, liberalism in its main stream was considered to be a product of the Reformation. Liberalism has been defined, broadly speaking, as an attitude which assesses the validity of behaviour and of institutions in terms of the rational consent of men. Whereas Reformation had given birth to the absolute state, the poison of its autocracy provided its successor with an effective antidote. The absolute state was born of war and persecution. Therefore the consequent meditation upon the heavy price paid for its establishment forced men to entertain the possibility of alternative philosophies.

The seventeenth century has been in an emphatic sense an age of critical transition. Due to its manifold uncertainties it became the birth era of the liberal
temper. It give rise to questioning minds which, while entertaining the older dogmas, sought to examine them anew and in certain cases challenged their very character. It was the age in which men began to test, even though painfully, the religious claims from the standpoint of social perspective and social values, thereby replacing the theological foundations of political authority by principles which are more capable of rational interpretation.

The rational temper of the sixteenth century is the root of liberalism. Perhaps without the passionate, intellectual ferment of the sixteenth century the liberalism of seventeenth century would not have been so widespread or creative. Liberalism developed in a soil which was well prepared for its reception. The philosophy which first freed itself completely from the ancient moorings is Cartesianism. Without a grasp of its impact, a comprehensive intelligibility of the rise of liberalism would not be possible. The significance of Descartes lies in the claims he made for a new methodology. Descartes, by his insistence on the supremacy of reason, challenged the whole pale of faith and tradition. Europe in the seventeenth century emerged from the heaps of the medieval ideal of a single and unified Christian commonwealth into a system of independent and sovereign states. It naturally amounted to rejection of the temporary supremacy of Rome and with it the rejection of moral outlook in
politics. It involved a growth in the secular temper—a replacement of values conceived in terms of eternal spirit by values understood in terms of earthly power.

Bacon also contributed heavily to the development of the idea of progress which simultaneously implied the necessity of a tacit condemnation of the whole theological structure. Even if his theory is ultimately absolutistic in temper, its whole basis is essentially utilitarian and if he finds therein a place for the Church, it is no more than an effective instrument for the development of a state power conceived in purely secular terms. Power was dependent upon the discovery of new truths, and new truth was conceived in terms of the application of reason to the analysis of phenomena. This amounted to shaking the claims of tradition and antiquity in their innermost citadel. The new scientific certitude which came into existence as a result of the overthrow of tradition through reason gave way in part to scepticism and in part to a belief that new methods would reveal to the mind, secrets which had thus far defied their scrutiny.

With the Churches having practically abandoned their obligation to formulate a social doctrine, the way was directly open to the idea of a free contract as the basis of society and with it there came into
being a purely secular standard of social values. It is obvious that with this, the basis of socio-political and economic arrangements ceased to be theological and became utilitarian. The abolition of the idea of Providence was to throw man back upon himself. To throw him back was to assert that reason must know no bounds to the empire it investigates. With this argument the way clearly opened for the emergence of a truly liberal spirit which inevitably led to consideration of matters of social significance from the rational liberalist point of view.

Yet another feature of the seventeenth century is the emergence of the middle class and its growing political significance. The rise of the middle class is important because its economic needs required a kind of liberty, of which constitutionalism was, by all standards, the best expression. The middle class needed exactly the central principles of liberal doctrines if it was to prosper and grow. It required religious toleration because the establishment of this principle was inextricably intertwined with the rights of property. It imposed limitation upon the monarchical prerogative lest it be ruined by arbitrary taxation. It required a controlled aristocracy because the establishment of internal peace was the essential condition of commercial prosperity.
The new economic order in a word required a secular state which in its turn required a liberalizing doctrine if at all politics was to be more than a branch of theology. A state was built which corresponded to the wants of new men to whom the power had flowed. As such any attempt seeking to explain the rise of liberalistic philosophy must indicate its connection with new institutions in the world of practical life which kept emerging from time to time.

Political philosophy in the seventeenth century was predominantly English because the entire continent of Europe had no other names to set alongside those of Hobbes and Locke. The occurrence of civil wars had ruined the continent and had left men no space to do more than sigh for peace and when finally peace dawned the relief at its coming was very great, indeed. Consequently, the intellectual debate centered around the fundamental problems of politics.

Hobbes was just the product of such times. Hobbes represents the first systematic attempt in English philosophy to erect a theory of state upon foundations altogether independent of theological principles. Whatever be the nature of his conclusions, the climate and the temper under which he worked was essentially the one required for the new liberal outlook. He was consistently
rational, fundamentally a materialist and therefore in essence utterly hostile to supernatural hypothesis in the realm of social thought. He developed his thought structure from a basis which was entirely secular in character. His political philosophy is the most powerful plea for autocracy that has ever been made. It is a plea derived from the assumption and the presupposition that every State is a completely self-sufficient organism which does not need to go outside itself to receive the sanctions for its conduct. The new order was drastically in need of such a thesis. The question he raised to himself was: How to make common life for men more pleasurable and worthy of human existence particularly when their actions were invariably born of fear and self-interest? He postulates a state of anarchy in which every man's hand is against his neighbour and in which lust for power destroys all security.

Hobbes, therefore, advocates for a state in which the preservation of peace a sovereign has been instituted with unlimited authority to impose his commands. Hobbes not only insists that a monarchical system is the best form of state but also that in truth all others are mere perversions of it. Further, he also tries to identify the interest of the monarch with the public interest. The object of state is to secure
normality and tranquility. The state was for him concerned not with social good but with the conditions upon which all human welfare depends. However, Hobbes' theory of autocracy did not suit a generation which wanted order, but an order compatible with individual freedom.

Hobbes, the exponent of egoistic hedonism, though not directly a utilitarian, gave an impetus to a utilitarian account of morality. He asserted that man is selfish by his very nature and seeks his own pleasure. Appetite and aversion are two motives of all voluntary actions. Man desires his own pleasure and whatever he desires he calls good. Even society is merely a means to his end. State and law are justified only in so far as they serve the interests of the individual human beings.

The egoism of Hobbes was refuted by the eighteenth century philosophers, namely Butler, Shaftesbury, Richard Cumberland and Hutcheson. Richard Cumberland, e.g., argues that the ultimate end is not the preservation of life as supposed by Hobbes, but general happiness. Like self interest, benevolence is also a part of human nature. Right action, he asserts, is conducive to general good.

The moral sense theories of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson
assume the identity of virtue and benevolence. They lay emphasis on the social nature of human beings, which is the main source of all benevolent actions. Hutcheson was the first one to formulate the exact principle of utility i.e. "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" which became the criterion of all right actions. Later the utilitarians who were interested in the welfare of mankind, adopted this principle as the basis of state action.

Locke's ethical doctrines seem to have anticipated the viewpoint of Bentham. He seems to have maintained that every body must always be moved in action solely by desire of his own happiness or pleasure and that things are good or evil only in relation to pleasure or pain. For him, happiness in its fullest extent is the utmost pleasure we are capable of having and further that the necessity of pursuing true happiness is the foundation of true liberty. Locke also had a great belief in the harmony between private and public interests which was incidentally so characteristic of literalism. According to Locke, political power can be justified on the basis of the public interest. Even though law as a body of rules governs at all times and at all places the conduct of men, but its arbiter is reason and in the natural state reason shows us that men are equal.
From this equality are born men's natural rights which Locke identifies with life, liberty and property. By liberty Locke means the right of the individual to follow his inclination within the framework of the law of nature. The concept of property Locke seems to derive from the primitive communism which becomes transmuted into individual ownership, whenever man has mixed his labour with some object. This labour theory of value lived to become one day the origin of modern socialism. Unlike Hobbes' Lockes state of nature is preeminently social. There is violence or war only when men abandon the rule of reason inherent in their character. The social contract of Locke represents the triumph of reason itself. He was with unsurpassed common sense that the main problem of his time was such a theory of state as would justify the maintenance of freedom in terms of individual good. He sought a theory of state which would justify the principle of revolution and this he could show only by pointing out that there were limits beyond which the sovereign power could not be permitted to go. He also deliberated on the problem of how a state could be built in which the consent of the people would be there.

Locke seems to be fascinated by the idea of democracy when he says that democracy alone offers adequate safeguards for an enduring good rule. Democracy which consists in being controlled by delegates who have
come through popular election alone is befitting. However, he was also content to have kingship divested of legislative power so long as hereditary succession and the making of laws were deemed to be dependent upon popular consent. If the conditions of social contract are violated, society is still left with revolution as the ultimate reserve power to rectify the wrongs done.

The philosophy of J.J. Rousseau provided a necessary inspiration to the different nations of Europe. He preached that all men are born equal and free and can maintain freedom if ruled by a self-chosen government that expresses the 'popular will'. The ideas propounded by Rousseau were revolutionary. He attacked and criticized the whole fabric of existing order and preached that government should be for the benefit of people and should act as an instrument for the social good.

One of reason's greatest services according to Rousseau is to protect man against the tyranny of his fellows by discovering the universal truths and separating the same from the predominantly irrational opinions imposed upon by human authority. In this context Rousseau says:

"I have endeavoured to trace the origin and progress of inequality and the institution and abuse of political societies, as far as these are capable of being deduced from the nature of man merely by the light of reason"
and independently of those sacred dogmas which give the sanctions of divine rights to sovereign authority."

Rousseau maintains that there is hardly an inequality in the state of nature but all the inequality which prevails owes its strength and growth to the development of our faculties and advance of the human mind. And finally it becomes permanent and legitimate by the establishment of property and laws.

Rousseau speaks of the natural freedom of man and defines him as a self-determining being. If he wishes to retain his humanity then he must possess freedom. According to him a rational man can subject himself or his natural freedom to the authority of the community alone. It is illogical to conceive of a rational man submitting to the direction of some particular individual or group within the community.

The state is regarded by Rousseau as founded upon the voluntary association of free and equal persons. These persons by constituting a political society form an authoritative organization to which each becomes a subject while at the same time remaining free, but free in the sense that he has subordinated himself only to an authority in the exercise of which he has a share equal to that of every other member of the community.
Rousseau claims that general will is always right, for it always aims at the common good. General will is not an abstraction but a real will. It emanates from the community as a whole and therefore the sovereignty must reside in the whole community. The general will is the same for all and if individuals differ in their views that is because of the expression of their selfish interests or particular will which is private and wills particular objects. He contends that particular wills can be united with the general will only by willing laws. It is in relation to the general will that particular wills become part of the sovereign. He writes in this context:

"Each of us places in common his person and all his powers under the supreme direction of the general will; and as one body we all receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole."  

People should act keeping in view the general will and not the particular will. Only then there can be a union of both the wills. Government aims at common good for all individuals and thus it manifests the real, rational will of the people as a whole.

The seventeenth century is a symbol of the increasing permeation of the rationalist temper from the standpoint of science, philosophy and theology. In fact utilitarianism itself can be looked at from the
standpoint of Newtonian science and its impact, about which H. Levy writes:

"What is known as utilitarianism, ... can be defined as nothing but an attempt to apply the principles of Newton to the affairs of politics and morals."

Newton discovered the universality and constancy of the laws of nature and he showed us the possibility of conducting a study of man as an individual and as a social being in the same way in which a physicist conducts his investigations. He propounded a synthetic and a deductive method for the pursuit of such studies. But could it be possible to found a moral, social and a legal theory on the scientific disciplines? This was a question which posed a serious challenge to the mind of thinkers in Bentham's century.

The acceptance of the rationalistic temper of the Newtonian premises made it impossible to interpret Christian revelation intelligibly. Newtonian revolution led to a complete denial of the sanctions that theology proposed to exercise in political and social life. It destroyed the alliance between the Church and the State. By rendering dubious, the adequacy of beliefs, religion was left only as a personal matter devoid of any social and political necessity. Consequently, the state was left with only one legitimate ground i.e., the secular.
ethics for its direct concern. This was a victory of the utilitarian temper. The attack of David Hume can be described as its supreme intellectual expression.

Hume, sought to do for moral philosophy what Newton had done for natural philosophy. He tried to explain the morality of actions on the basis of observations regarding the springs of human action and behaviour. As such the primary object of human search in the realm of experience and ideas is only to discover the constant and universal principle of human nature.

Hume presents the case for a moral justification of a commercial and industrial society on the basis of utilitarian ethics. He considers the relation between economic growth and the happiness of the individual.

Hume's political and economic views are clearly dominated by the principle of utility. The principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of his political thinking. Actions, he says, are good only in so far as they promote the end of happiness and utility or are conducive to the general good. Like other utilitarians, he proclaims that happiness is the only desirable end. This is a clear pronouncement of universal hedonism.

Hume as a moralist contends that morality is founded not on reason but on sentiment. He believes that men are
endowed with a sentiment of humanity or a moral sense by which they desire not only their own happiness but also that of the society. Man's tendency to arouse general happiness through sympathy or through a natural instinct of benevolence enables him to approve moral actions which could not be explained purely on rational grounds. The basis for our approbation of moral actions are utility and pleasantness.

Hume uses the principle of utility and pleasantness to explain why we approve or disapprove actions, characters or objects the way we do. The concepts of utility and pleasantness are restricted to the agent who is judging but are extended to include the pleasure of all. As a philosopher of the principle of benevolence the sentiment of humanity he links the happiness of mankind with psychologically ingrained principle in the nature of man to approve only such actions or objects which are agreeable or useful not only to ourselves but others also and which afford pleasure or are the means to it for some one or the other. His utilitarian doctrine truly represents the enlightened humanism of the eighteenth century which was later on developed by Bentham and Mill.

Hume had taken a serious note of the influence of economic development on the intellectual, cultural and moral life of the society. He explained political
liberty by reference to economic decentralization and individualism which in fact were the product of commerce and industry and its gradual development.

However, he gave relatively little attention to the questions of value and distribution which absorbed much of Adam Smith's analysis and which became the dominant interest of the classical and neoclassical economists. In view of the rapidity of institutional changes it is not surprising that the very question of the desirability of alternative institutional systems and the consequent normative and historical analysis of institutions started receiving increasing attention.

The purpose of the *Wealth of Nations* was to demonstrate that the true economic welfare is to be achieved not by mercantilism but by freeing it completely from restriction and control. As the time went on, mercantilism came to be regarded more as a hindrance than as a help to economic progress. Wealthy manufacturers and merchants became less dependent on legal privileges and more impatient of legal restraints.

The creed of *leisure, faire* came to be an authoritative doctrine in most discussions of governmental activity. The essential feature of this doctrine was free competition. It was closely associated and integrated with the prevailing utilitarian ethics. However, this
principle of free trade and free competition could not be accepted as an absolute principle. It leaves ample room for state interference regarding legal limitations of the rate of interest, compulsory education, governmental administration and postal communication etc.

According to classical economists the natural economic man is egoistic, intelligent, well informed and self-seeking and pursues his own interest. He desires to buy goods in the cheapest and sell them in the dearest market. The relations among individuals in a natural economic order are controlled by laws. The policy of free trade was a practical consequence of the principle of natural identity of interests. Under a system of perfectly free competition each country devotes its capital and labour to employment most beneficial to it. The pursuit of individual advance is connected with the universal good of the whole.

In England the philosophical radicals were active reformers who demanded profound changes in the system of political representation, the economic policy of the government, the traditional laws and judicial procedures. However, to appreciate the nature of demands made by Philosophical Radicals to improve the prevailing conditions, it becomes essential to give a brief résumé of the conditions of England at the end of the eighteenth century.
In a period when people were talking more and more about equality, liberty and natural rights certain conditions prepared the ground for the emergence of nineteenth century liberalism. As a matter of fact the idea of liberalism grew up against the background of increasing importance of industry and growing strength of middle class. The effect of the industrial expansion on government's policy was to encourage economic liberalism which stimulated free trade.

The Industrial Revolution brought prosperity and increased national wealth. However it was not an unmixed blessing for it brought many evils in the society as well. It led to the creation of dehumanizing conditions for the industrial labour, including women and children who were more or less treated like slaves. The ownership of the means of production on one hand and the selling off of human labour on the other resulted in the stratification of classes with mutually exclusive interests. This period is also marked for the rise of voluntary organizations, such as labour unions, which raised their voices against the prevailing deplorable conditions like the long hours of work, low wages below the subsistence level, high prices, and inhuman conditions of work. However, the voice of trade unions grew in strength and gained more power when they were supported by the philosophical radicals in parliament.
The slogans of the French Revolution, i.e., Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, were propagated by various thinkers and revolutionaries. The ideal of liberty implied that people should be granted such freedoms as the freedom of conscience, worship, speech, and publication etc. The ideal of Equality signified the social principle that there should not be any special privileges for some members in the community. Everyone should be treated equally before the law and given equal recognition in society. The ideal of Fraternity is more general and is a "symbol of idealistic brotherhood".

Besides the revolt against the absolute power of the monarchs and the power of Church, liberals in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century also considered the question regarding liberty versus authority a question which had been tackled by Locke and other philosophers of the earlier centuries. However, this question became much more complicated with the rise of industries and the new set of conditions.

The utilitarians, concerned about the existing conditions of the labour class, adopted the principle of utility as a measuring rod for dealing with the evils and miseries of society and made the greatest happiness of the greatest number the ideal of their philosophy.
They made the principle of utility a guide not only for private morals but for public policies also. The utilitarians based their whole system with all its ramifications on one grand principle, i.e., the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

The founder of the utilitarian school of thought was Bentham who was mainly interested in legislative and penological measures as would remove the existing injustices. He found the required solution in utilitarianism. Like all other utilitarians the end which Bentham had in view was to found the morality and legislation on an objective science. According to him men are egoistic in nature and naturally desire pleasure and want to avoid pain. Therefore, pleasure and pain are the two main motivating forces of all human actions. The whole moral life is reduced to the quantification of the pleasure and pain principle. He says in this context:

"Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do."

(italics mine)

Therefore, man should choose only those actions which produce maximum happiness, for it is the end of all human actions.
Since Bentham was mainly interested in legal reforms, he believed that, to remove the evil conditions from society, it was necessary to reform the laws. He contends that laws necessarily restrict the liberty of the individual in proportion to the obligation it creates. Law imposes restraint on the individual so that it does not harm others. An obligation itself can be justified only if it is conducive to utility. And a bad law is one which imposes obligation without rendering any service. He further suggests that the knowledge of laws should be within the reach of the common people. Laws should be expressed in simple language. The legislator should use the principle of utility as the measuring rod for judging the value of a particular law. Bentham's aim was primarily to achieve the welfare of the community as a whole. Therefore, the only reason, he maintained, for obeying a law was its utility.

Bentham, as a law reformer, was anxious that justice should be accessible to all, especially to the downtrodden and consequently he criticized the judicial system then obtaining in England. Bentham criticized the practice of giving punishment as it was in no way either connected with or proportionate to the offence. Criminals were severely punished even for minor offences. Bentham pleaded that the chief object of punishment should
be to discourage crime and therefore the degree and extent of punishment should be in proportion to the offence committed. Further, he argued that while giving punishment various factors should be considered such as, the nature of the crime, the past behaviour of the offender, his family background, the motive of the criminal and the circumstances in which the crime was committed. The punishment should, under all circumstances be impartial, coercive, preventive and should discourage further crimes.

Putting forth empirical evidences in support of his pleadings Bentham described prisons as neglected badly almost like dreary dungeons. Prisoners too he says were treated like animals and given food unworthy of human consumption. Conditions were so miserable that once a person entered the prison, he came out only as a hardened criminal. Life in prison was more susceptible to vice and crime due to the deplorable conditions and harshness of attitude towards the inmates which had a perverse effect on the minds of the prisoners. This had a tremendous impact on the benign and benevolent heart of Bentham too and he, therefore, undertook the great task of prison reforms through judicial method by making a direct appeal to improve their lot — through education, practical training and employment opportunities after the release from prison. The utilitarian criterion...
was applied to the cruelties of English penology with excellent results. The influence which Bentham's views exerted on legislation in the nineteenth century has not lost its relevance and importance even today.

However, the philosophy of Bentham was not very popular till the end of the eighteenth century as it failed to influence the existing political parties. In 1808, he came in contact with James Mill, a utilitarian philosopher and a democrat who ardently demanded freedom of opinion and freedom of the press. Bentham received a powerful stimulus from James Mill and consequently started paying attention to political questions, especially to the question of freedom of the press. Both James Mill and Bentham asserted that government should act keeping in view the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Both were agreed that government should be truly representative of people and that state is necessary for promoting the general well-being of the people which however, must find its true meaning in the end of utility itself.

James Mill attempts to seek the conditions that a representative government ought to fulfil in order to be a good government. He says that checking body should possess on the one hand the amount of power necessary to fulfil this function, and on the other hand should
have identity of interests with the society; if it failed to satisfy this second condition, it would be more dangerous the more power it possessed. Now, if it is impossible to limit by means of a law the intensity of the power of the people's representatives, it is at least possible to limit the duration of this power. He says that a representative government would lose its advantages if the interests of the governors and the governed are not the same. In order to ensure that the interests of the representatives are the same as those of the society, the elected body should be representative of the whole people.

Lentham, like James Mill, asserts that the radical state should confer sovereignty on the people and the elected members should execute the will of the people effectively. Taking his stand on the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number he demands that an attempt should be made to create a harmony between the interests of all classes. The power of the governors should be under the control and check of the people.

With Bentham as the founder and the chief thinker of radicalism, a new party known as 'Philosophical Radicals' came into existence under his leadership. Philosophical Radicals — like Edwin Chadwick, James Mill, Bentham and J.S. Mill aimed at remodelling public
administration and the entire judicial system. Realizing the needs of people they became representatives of the middle classes. A number of eminent practising politicians joined hands with them and became the spokesmen of this party in parliament. The group had not only the great ability to plan and execute definite goals and policies but also had a deep concern for the genuine miseries of the common man. They correspondingly asserted the moral values of co-operation among men, the dignity and function of work and the need for a harmonious society to regenerate mankind. They criticized the legal and political system as it failed to give justice to everyone.

The Radicals accepted Hume's views regarding the origins and functions of social rules and thus refused to take established rules on trust. They were aware of the fact that rules could outlast their utility in the course of time and thus could be beneficial only for a part of the society. Radicals were intellectuals and they addressed their arguments to intellectuals who were well informed and did not seek the favour of masses on the issues which they were advocating. They wished to make social science have a rational basis by showing that all social phenomena can be reduced to laws and "that all laws of social world are in their turn explicable by the 'laws of human nature'."
The Radicals' chief concern was to overcome the forces of tradition, vested interest and to arouse public opinion from ignorance and evils of legal system. They suggested certain amendments in the British Constitution, such as the introduction of universal manhood suffrage, voting by ballot, annual parliament and democratic government. They raised their voice against absolute monarchy because it failed to serve the end of utility. In successfully promoting legislation to remove many of these burdens and discriminations — by liberalizing the suffrage, mitigating the harshness and ending the oppressive discrimination of the criminal laws and removing barriers to freedom of trade and association — they remained true to their doctrine of individualism.

Thus, Bentham and his followers attacked the existing political institutions in England and questioned the utility of the House of Lords. The House of Commons was representative of the land owning aristocracy. Consequently James Mill suggested that representatives should be sent from the whole community, especially from the industrial middle class. The population that had shifted from villages to cities had no voice in parliament till the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. There was a great demand for liberal reforms in parliament. The House of Commons was representative not of public but
of private interests. And it is for this reason that the growing middle class of citizens who wanted a government responsive to the needs of business, added their clamour to the outcries of liberals and radicals who were demanding democracy. Healthy merchants and manufacturers also agitated for representatives in parliament. Certain attempts were made by Pitt the younger to improve the parliamentary system. He brought forward a bill to disfranchise certain corrupt boroughs but it was opposed and rejected by the king and his followers.

The cry for parliamentary reform remained in the background due to the long Napoleonic War which was being fought by England at that time. After a long war of twenty years England won in the end and emerged as the strongest and richest nation of the world. But after the peace of 1815, they again directed themselves towards political reforms in the interest of the middle class. Consequently many individuals and groups fought for a realignment of political power. The new forces gathered briefly behind the Philosophical Radicals who, if not representatives of the whole nation, presented an organized program consistent with the aims of the middle classes. From 1820 onwards the question of parliamentary reforms was seriously considered by Sir Francis Burdett and Lord John
Russell and gradually it was realized that power in the hands of a few land owners could not solve the problem.

Although there was a gradual growth of democracy, the individual was still lost in society. The conditions in the society were still harmful for the development of the individual. There was a definite lack of originality and spontaneity and as such a great need for freedom because it was good and useful not only for the individual but also for the society. Government interference should be minimum; only then could individuals develop their personalities and society would become rich by a variety of characters in it.

J.S. Mill was one of the foremost champions of individual liberty and his views are indeed of crucial significance. In solving the problems of society, Mill carried forward the utilitarian tradition but with a little difference. He believed that the rigid utilitarian theory provided by Bentham could no longer help to stabilize society. Therefore he set to himself the task of formulating a theory which could bring about stability in society. He held that the fundamental determinants of social change and stability are men's beliefs, where a unified body of opinion exists and is widely accepted, there will be a stable society, and where it is lacking, society will be in a process of transition and perhaps of disintegration.
After a brief study of the intellectual tradition which shaped the mind of J.S. Mill, it should be the analysis of his utilitarianism which should constitute the next stage of our explorations in our search for the ethical foundations of J.S. Mill's socio-political thought. His formulations regarding Liberty, Democracy, Justice and Equality etc. are deeply rooted in his fundamental utilitarian position. Hence our attempt to discuss utilitarianism in the next chapter.

REFERENCES


12. It may be briefly mentioned that in the earlier stages of the Industrial Revolution an overall policy known as mercantilism was followed. Its aim was to build up reserves of gold and silver which was to be consequently the basis of wealth and prosperity.
15. As a consequence of their support the Factory Act was passed in 1832 restricting the working hours of children to twelve per day. In 1819 another act was passed which imposed a legal restriction
on the employment of children under the age of nine. The acts of 1831 and 1832 further improved the condition by forbidding young persons under the age of twenty one to work at night. The working hours on Saturday were limited to nine. In 1824 the trade unions were made legal provided their activities were useful.

Many large towns such as Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield had no right to send representatives, whereas, two persons were represented from the areas where there was a small population, i.e., ninety members were sent from forty-six places which had less than fifty electors each.

