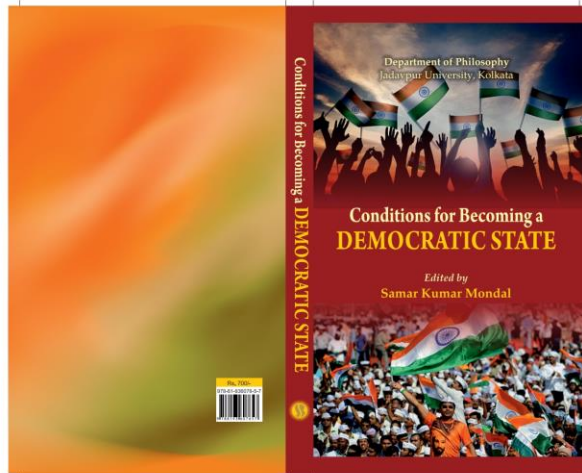




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The aim of this book is to achieve a proper theoretical understanding of democracy through philosophical explorations. By these explorations we want to reach some unitary decision on at least three things. The first one involves the concept of democracy. The next one is concerned with the purpose of democracy. The final one is concerned with what is necessary for ensuring and developing democracy in a state or society in the absence of which democracy gets threatened. We will explore and analyze the interconnections between these three dynamics.

University and Professor Sadhan Chakraborti, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol, for their valuable suggestions.

I am also grateful to Shri Rajendra Agarwal of Suryodaya Books for ~~timely~~ publication of this volume *in an attractive way.*

Jadavpur.  
March 2021

**Samar Kumar Mondal**

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1

## Decoding Democracy

*Jyotish Chandra Basak*

How the entity called state has come into being is an intriguing question. In ancient India we find one sort of explanation; in modern times Western thinkers gave a distinct hypothesis. In whatever way or for whatever reasons it has emerged, the next prime concern for philosophers was about its administration. It is in this context that the notion of good government and bad government has drawn the attention of thoughtful minds. Among the known form of political regimes, it is widely believed that democracy is the most popular one. One of the reasons for its acceptance and admiration is the ideology on which this political order is based upon.

Of the many tasks performed by the political philosophy, the foremost is to describe and evaluate political ideologies. One reason for our concern with political ideologies is that it affects everybody's life significantly as we live under one form of government or the other, following one particular ideology. The Italian painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti in his celebrated mural, drawn sometime between 1337-39, entitled the "Allegory of Good and Bad Government", depicted beautifully the qualities that good rulers should have and bad qualities that they should not have. Hence, it is no wonder that political philosophers from ancient time till

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today kept themselves engaged with the discussion of ideologies and made efforts to lay down conditions of good government.

Among the political ideologies or orders so far invented and practised, democracy is the most commended one in contemporary politics. Though it has been opined by some thinkers (e.g. Bertrand Russell) that it is the anarchism (advocated by Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, a nineteenth-century political writer, and Peter Kropotkin, a twentieth-century activist and writer who articulated this political order with great care) that is the ideal form of political order but many thinkers expressed their misgivings about the practice of this form in current time or in foreseeable future. Democracy as a political order has attracted much attention in current discussion for some reason or other. It is widely acknowledged that it is the best form of government and any deviation from the democratic procedure is greeted with a loud cry from a cross-section of people. Francis Fukuyama held that it is almost impossible to improve upon the current form of electoral parliamentary democracy. His coining it the "end of history" and the "end of ideological conflict" evoked a sharp response from critics and one such critic was Jacques Derrida, who stated

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