



## **Democratising Political Powers through Locke's Doctrine of Prerogative**

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### **Abstract**

This essay is an attempt at democratizing, if not completely eliminating, contemporary abuses of 'political powers' by adopting Locke's teachings on 'prerogative powers' for this purpose. While drawing supportive arguments from other academic sources, the essay discusses Locke's 'doctrine of prerogative' specifically paying attention to some of the primitive (animalistic) expressions of political power, as they are found in the political doctrines of immunity, extra-constitutionality, executive veto, extra-legality and the 'sacred cow syndrome', as pliable tools and ready-made excuses, whenever leaders misuse power. The essay contends that whenever there is high-handedness of leaders in a democratic setting, such a state is either a 'despotic family monarchy', which has been disguised as a 'democracy', or under normal circumstances, there is an abusive use of most, if not all of the primitive (untamed) elements of political power. The essay is not only an attempt to mentor political leaders after Locke's teachings as they are encapsulated in his 'doctrine of prerogative'; It further suggests that whatever goes round comes round; hence, if leaders must rule and escape endless attacks and upheavals from their subjects, then, the task is for leaders to re-model their views on political powers, including their 'prerogative powers'; no longer by seeing them as prerogatives and privileges of leaders, but as 'federative powers' of the people, aware that after all, legitimate sovereignty belongs to the people.

**Key Words:** Doctrine of Prerogative, Prerogative Powers, John Locke, Political Powers, Despotic Monarchies, Civil Democracies

## Introduction

The doctrine of 'prerogative powers', is a medieval doctrine in political philosophy, whose existence in society portends both good and evil, depending on approaches adopted for its implementation. As a doctrine in legal and political philosophy, stability of a nation, has continued to generate heated debates, even to this day. The debates have not only been existing because prerogative powers have been labeled in some quarters as a kind of despotic doctrine of medieval origin, which seeks to find true meaning in contemporary democracies; Most important among other things is that, despite holding many noble intentions for society, most people still believe against all odds that there is still something that requires clarification concerning the very essence of it as a political doctrine and its fate as a doctrine in legal and political philosophy.

There is, therefore, the striking question of why Locke still teaches and preaches, even to this day, this ancient and medieval doctrine of 'prerogative powers', if not that this is one of Locke's numerous attempts to 'reform' and 'defend' modern and contemporary democracies against the ancient and medieval application of the doctrine, aware that its medieval and ancient patterns of application, are a major reason why there still exists among contemporary democracies, despotic and abusive uses of the doctrine. The specific question of how Locke intends to achieve such a height of political transformation is one question which has been the concern of most people including David Jenkins, who, while questioning thus, still retain complete awareness that the doctrine is only difficult but actually possible through the good will of political leaders. In the words of David Jenkins:

Locke's idea of prerogative powers clearly presents a problem of "how to understand how the executive in any state may be so constitutionally and legally constrained, and yet, also be truly able to retain, at the same time, the latitude to so responsibly act outside or against the law, whenever he is meant to do so in pursuit of the publick good" (559).

Against this backdrop of the difficulty but possibility of democratising all forms of political powers through the good will of leaders, the task of the current essay is to make, among other things, a philosophical and literary analysis of Locke's doctrine of prerogative powers while

pointing out the strengths and weakness of the doctrine, specifically, in Locke's own teachings; and to also point out in the process that, while critics' argument that Locke's doctrine is archaic and difficult to implement in democratic states, has been adjudged by Locke as possible to implement given the good will of political leaders; the current essay has pointed out also that by reconstituting, re-defining and re-naming 'prerogative powers' as 'federative powers', Locke has not only made a possible way for a possible application among 21<sup>st</sup> century democracies; Locke, by re-constituting, re-defining and re-naming 'prerogative powers' as 'federative powers', has tended to have doctrinally destroyed every of its despotic import as a political doctrine; therefore, he has re-configured it in this new light as a democratic tool for good governance, especially, among contemporary states and nations of the world, which make up their minds to adhere to the over-all principles of constitutional democracy.

### **Meaning and Background Considerations**

In political philosophy, the 'doctrine of prerogative' has not only been conceived as being among the turbulent and contentious themes, both in politics and society; the doctrine was adopted into political philosophy as a kind of political and legal culture which had wide-spread application throughout Medieval Europe. Although there are several versions of the doctrine including those of Hobbes, Machiavelli and Robert Filmer, their primary aims of creation, being attempts at enhancing good governance, have been taught differently by Hobbes, Locke, Filmer and Machiavelli. Traditionally, prerogative powers have been divided into; - the prerogative utterances and the prerogative gestures of political leaders. In terms of origin and history, these powers have always existed in different forms among ancient societies. But as a political doctrine, 'the doctrine of prerogative' is a creation of medieval England into political philosophy.

Lucinda and Oonegh have been careful to explain that within their medieval and intellectual formulation between Hobbes, Filmer, Machiavelli and Locke into a political doctrine, 'prerogative power' takes its meaning as constitutive of a set of extraordinary powers of leaders, which grant them the political right to act in a supra-legal and extra-constitutional manner, whenever such leaders are determined to do so, but only in pursuit of things or ideas, which are perceived to be of supreme national interest.

The problem, however, has always been in the thinking of Lucinda and Oonegh that, what the political monarch perceives as being an action or an utterance in the pursuit of supreme national interest and what is universally true to be so done in the pursuit of the supreme national interest of the state are two different things (4).

These powers are traditionally conceived to be a body of political customs and norms, which permit a political leader to, from time to time, act in the capacity of a sole-administrator, whenever political exigencies warrant him to so act in this way, while doing so in the search for supreme national interests of the political state (Russell 601).

According to the online dictionary of English words, prerogative powers refer to a set of 'extra-ordinary powers' or 'extra-excessive powers', which either the customs or the constitution grants to political leaders and which allow political leaders, to from time to time, speak or act above the laws, as if the laws and the constitutions of the state do not, in the first place, exist; In line with this thinking, whether it be in a democracy or under a despotic government, nothing in the political state supersedes this basic ingredient of the powers being an 'extra-ordinary' grant by either the constitution or the customs ([thefreedictionary.org/prerogative](http://thefreedictionary.org/prerogative)).

The online dictionary of legal terms has added that, by the term a 'set of extra-ordinary powers' prerogative powers, the power is to be seen, not merely as a single kind of political power, but as a collection of several primitive powers, which specifically include among other things, immunity, extra-constitutionality, veto powers, extra-legality, and powers to sanction; It adds that in all of political and legal philosophy, authors and thinkers are - given the full implication of those ancient application of the doctrine as they have theoretically been captured in the writings of Hobbes, Machievelli, Filmer and other non-democratic defenders of 'divine rights of kings'- altogether, skeptical whether the term 'prerogative powers' would extend its true meaning to include actions and utterances of leaders, which are permissive of forms of unconstitutionality, gross illegality, and recklessness in their uses as political powers ([legal.dictionary.thefreedictionary.org/prerogative](http://legal.dictionary.thefreedictionary.org/prerogative)).

It is a fact that prerogative powers are granted to political leaders; to judge, to command, and to decide discretely as if the rulers in question were sole-administrators in an organization or a company, but only at such times when, the weakness, the corruption, and the ineptitude or nonexistence of parliament as well as the obvious confusion among citizens, would be fatal to the state, if the leader in an executive capacity, also fails to act in the event of such exigencies to protect the supreme national interests of the state (Jenkins 554-555).

Yet, it is not all actions or utterances of a leader, which are made in supreme national interests of the state, are prerogative actions of the ruler. What prerogative actions are not, are equally numerous and contrary to actions taken in supreme national interests. It is a general belief, for instance, in legal and political philosophy that, it can only be prerogative to blackmail or insult or attack or destroy a political opponent or a rival nation, if this can be justified to be in the ultimate or supreme national interest of the state. But this may just as well, be the fulfillment of personal ambition or a party's political objective.

Indeed, not all actions, which seek or satisfy the search for supreme national interests of the state and of the people, which can be said to be prerogative, as some actions of leaders which seek national interests are either, patriotic actions, duty-bound actions, normal actions or official actions of a sitting leader.

The basic ingredients which connect a 'prerogative action' with a 'patriotic action' and with an action which a leader undertakes in fulfillment of a 'national duty' or any of his 'other actions', have in political philosophy, been seen to be the basic ingredients of 'political exigency' or those of 'political necessity' (Jenkins 555). Almost every political theorist believes that prerogative powers cannot be prerogative powers, if the actions or utterances themselves, which have been called 'prerogative', are not borne out of a 'political necessity' or a need to address a 'political exigency'. It is always the case that a 'political necessity' would compel a leader to either be patriotic, 'duty-bound' to his nation or behave in a 'prerogative capacity'. But this does not sufficiently describe the prerogative act of a leader.

Thus, it appears that in legal and political philosophy, the

distinguishing features of 'prerogative powers' have always been taken to include those of the following; extra-constitutionality, immunity, veto powers, discretionary decisions and extra-legality. This is because unlike a 'prerogative action', a 'duty-bound action' or a 'patriotic action' or an 'ordinary action' or an 'official action' of a leaders, is not likely to include those primitive elements of extra - constitutionality, constitutional immunity, veto powers of leadership, discretionary decisions and privileged utterances.

Lucinda and Oonegh have argued strongly that most societies in medieval era, out of which this political doctrine - prerogative powers - emerged into political philosophy, were in themselves both constitutional and monarchical. Hence, the creation of prerogative powers was justified as a tool for checks and balances and as a means of preventing, not only the executive arm from abuse of powers but also as a tool for preventing the legislature or the kings' advisers and the judiciary arm from abuse of office. In particular, it has been customary to speak of a despotic king or a ruler as a political dictator, without noticing also the dictatorship of the legislature or that of an incapacitated body of kings' advisers. accordingly, the doctrine came up to show that, in such matters of political exigencies in the state, in which the ineptitude of a dysfunctional parliament or an incapacitated body of king's advisers, could greatly harm or destroy an entire state by their disfunctionality; it became, henceforth, a political necessity to so empower the head of the government with such executive powers of an extraordinary and sometime extra-constitutional nature as 'prerogative powers', to from time to time, act as if such an executive was a sole administrator, doing so whenever the situation called for him to do so in the supreme national interests. Therefore, what was lacking in this doctrine for which Locke serves as an improvement, was the recognition of prerogative powers as a set of 'federative powers'; powers whose exercise still need the people's consent at such a time when the legislature and the judiciary is unable to advise him that is bestowed with executive powers (4).

### **Synopsis of Locke's Teachings on Prerogative Powers**

Locke's teaching on prerogative powers and his introduction of the 'federative dimension' of all 'political powers', is not simply an extension of Locke's teachings on the doctrine of checks and balances; For the most part, it consists of a set of four separate but

interconnected teachings, each of which is a progression of one idea upon another. Interestingly, Locke begins this set of four teachings, by proceeding to view the powers of rulers here being called 'prerogative powers', as "nothing but the powers in the hands of a prince to provide for (to ensure) the publick good" (T II 158). Locke gives four different teachings of which this first of the four, highlights the pursuit of the "publick good" as the only reason for permitting the political leader to act or comment in a prerogative capacity. But what does Locke actually mean by the term, "publick good?". Locke himself defines "publick good" as the "preservation" rather than the "destruction" of the state. On this, Locke argues thus; "for what else is the publick good but the "preservation of the state" (T II 144). Locke gives his progressively second teaching by proceeding to hold that prerogative power is the power of "doing publick good without a rule" (T II 166).

By the term, "without a rule", Locke tended to have created room for an adoption into prerogative powers as a doctrine in political and legal philosophy, of a diversity of some of these primitive (animalistic and brutal) elements, such as; veto powers, political immunity, extra-constitutionality, extra-legality and unconventionality of leaders' privileges - which leaders are, from time to time, expected to exercise without a rule. Although, prerogative powers, even in Locke's second set of teachings here being examined, is a composite of some primitive and animalistic elements, David Jenkins notices that in all of Locke's political teaching as a whole, there is no mention of anything which extends the definition and meaning of prerogative powers to include; recklessness, unconstitutionality, abusiveness and despotism, as components of these political powers here called prerogative (Jenkins 554-555).

It is, therefore, erroneous to smuggle into a non-existing space, the reckless, abusive and unconstitutional actions and utterances of political monarchs, where Locke and other democratic apologists of the doctrine only allow for the existence in the doctrine, only such primitive elements as; extra-legality, extra-constitutionality, and privileged nature of actions and utterances. Yet, the controversies concerning whether Locke clearly permitted or merely overlooked, the inclusion of recklessness and unconstitutionality as implications of his second teaching on the doctrine, have been critical to an understanding of his teaching on prerogative powers. These controversies over whether Locke permitted or did not permit the

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extension of political powers to include the reckless and unconstitutional acts and utterances of political leaders is a controversy which Locke himself clearly spelt out in his third teaching on the ancient doctrine of prerogative powers.

Locke, in his third teaching, clearly spelt out this stark controversy in his second teaching concerning whether his definition of prerogative powers in his second teaching, extends the meaning of political powers to include abusive and unconstitutional uses of power. Locke magnifies these fears among critics where he mentions that prerogative power refers to that which permits the ruler to sometimes "act against the Direct Letters of the Law" (T II 164).

Locke is not an advocate of political despotism to have allowed such, even as a form of error. Therefore, he settles these controversies arising from his second and third teachings in his fourth teachings. He does this in a manner which is only possible to understand from the point of view of the limited nature of the power of drafting. In particular, every drafter in Locke's own shoe would understand that political rules are always formulated in abstract; hence, it is not a surprise that Locke's second and third teachings, having also been formulated in abstract, have been subject to different interpretations including outright forms of misinterpretation. In order to clarify his true position in both his second and third teachings, Locke quickly corrects all false impressions and proceeded to submit against all forms of misconceptions of his doctrine that, "prerogative" is nothing but "Arbitrary powers" in the hands of a Prince to "do good" and "not to do harm" to the state (T II 210). Locke believes that this exceptional power of leaders to sometimes speak or act in an extra-legal and an extra-constitutional manner, while in the leaders' pursuit of the "publick good", is necessary as;

The law-making power is not always in being, and is usually too numerous, and so too slow for dispatch request to execution, and because also it is impossible to foresee and by laws to provide for all the accidents and necessities that may concern the publick (T II 160).

Unfortunately for leaders in a democratic government, any



discretionary grant and power of leadership of any kind, is not an open-ended discretion for rulers without limit. Accordingly, whenever it comes to a democratic setting, even the so-called discretionary decision of the king in ancient and medieval monarchies to; declare and abrogate war, make and broker peace, enter alliance with friendly nations and to terminate and create foreign missions, are to be subjected to the 'federative powers of the state' (T II 140144).

Locke's whole point of synopsis is to consistently defend his position that leaders of democratic nations are under a political obligation to re-define and appreciate 'prerogative powers' no longer as 'exclusive powers' but as 'federative powers'; and in doing so, maintain an awareness that the continuous application of the guise of 'prerogative powers' as an avenue for reckless and unconstitutional behaviour, renders the very existence of such powers in them, unconstitutional and untenable.

### **Characteristics of Prerogative Powers (Federative Powers) in Democratic and Despotic Regimes**

To re-assess and re-appraise 'political power' as 'prerogative powers' is a theme which runs throughout Locke's teaching on the 'doctrine of prerogative'. But to what extent is the 'applicability' of the then 'prerogative powers' now turned into 'federative powers' applicable in a political democracy? The following are Locke's suggestions;

1) First, Locke contends that for an exercise of power to be called prerogative, particularly under a democratic state, it must be done in actual pursuit of the public good, being an act which, if it must be of any harm to society, its preservative element must outweigh its destructive content (T II 158, 209, 210). This is the case which Locke takes to be an acceptable one in a democratic society because as Locke sees it, the very nature of prerogative powers, being in itself, a tool for national service, forbids abuses of any kind, whether in deeds or utterances, and whether maliciously or innocently committed in the pursuit of the public good.

2) Second, Locke contends that the acts and utterances of leaders which have been described as discretionary decisions, for them to be called 'prerogative', are not only an admission that additionally the acts are democratic, it amounts to saying that the leaders in question went extra-constitutional and extra-legal at such a time when the law

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was absent, silent or incapacitated at the time. Where the leader overrides an existing law, he exceeds the limits of 'political powers' and becomes illegal, reckless and irresponsible as a leader, hence, he is no longer regarded as acting in accordance with his prerogative powers (T II 164, 165).

3) Third, Locke teaches that an exercise of political power is prerogative and permissible as a democratic expression of power, where the extra-constitutional and extra-legal act or comment of the leader is but an 'activist pursuit' of an 'extra-constitutional' or extra-legal' matter not foreseen either by the law or the constitution. Locke takes the term 'activists' pursuit to mean the pursuit of the publick good, which is borne out of a 'political passion' to achieve the publick good against obstructions by an existing law; 'activist having been acting "apart from the law" (T II 166).

4) Fourth, Locke regards only those acts and utterances as prerogative, where it can be established in a democratic government that, citizens themselves permitted or are likely to permit such an action through their free and willing decisions (T II 164). To every rule, there is always an opposite rule. Therefore, when looked from the opposite end, this fourth characteristics by Locke would imply that, it will not also amount to a positive expression of political power, if the leader as an actor of the act, was acting under duress from citizens or under such conditions which would disqualify his actions from being free and willing decisions of a leader.

5) Fifth, Locke argues that any expression of political power which would amount to a prerogative act in a democratic leader, is one which can be described as 'fiduciary action' carrying the weight of the 'people's trust' synonymous with a kind of 'family trust' reposed by members upon the 'family head' (T II 146).

Decisions in Locke's teachings, are generally said to be of a 'federative nature' and of a 'fiduciary nature', where they either have the people's consent by way of a memoranda (T II 141-142); Or where an act done is conceived as an act of parliament (T II 156-157). Other instances in Locke's teachings where political leader is of a 'prerogative and fiduciary exhibition' include situations; a) where his actions or utterances in question are not harmful to the society and are not recklessly carried out by the leader (T II 160). b) Where actions are responsibly carried out in consultation with the people through their representatives in parliament (T II 140).

### **Principle of Necessity, Political Exigency, Argument for Urgency and the Harm Principle**

Locke reasoned that it is the failure to identify the circumstances in the polity, when the exercise of political powers would be or not be in the interest of the public good, which has often led to a diversity of abuses of this doctrine of extra-legality of political powers. In Locke's thinking, to say that political prerogatives have been abused, is to imply that the leader in question has wrongly used his 'prerogatives' in a way and manner, which harms rather than preserve society. When this is the case in a democratic society, Locke's teachings call for a political redress by invoking the 'harm principle' of the doctrine for which 'prerogative' is seen, not as a permission to harm society, but the Arbitrary power of the prince to do good and avoid harm' (T II 210).

Other things to invoke, in the conception of Locke, are questions of whether the expression of political powers in question is borne out of political necessities, urgency of the matter, political exigencies or personal self-interests?

In democratizing political powers, Locke emerges his 'principle of necessity', that of 'political exigencies', his 'harm principle' 'urgency of political decisions', and 'needfulness of actions'; as critical elements, which must be taken into consideration to avoid abusive and harmful application of political powers under the guise of prerogative expressions. Locke strongly suggests strict adherence to 'situations of extreme necessity', while exercising political powers as the prerogatives of the leader. Locke was apt to suggest that if the doctrine must be far from being a tool for harming society, then, the exercise of political powers as prerogative powers must be limited only to circumstances of 'extreme necessity', 'needfulness of political decisions', 'political exigencies', 'urgency of the matter' and 'unavoidability of actions taken' (T II 146).

But what would amount to a situation of 'extreme necessity?'. To address this question, Locke mentions the following situations; a) a situation where the law could by no way foresee b) a situation which require great subtleties in dealing with foreign powers; one example of which is the declaration and termination of war c) a situation where the legislature has to act extra-constitutionally to preserve secrecy and

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d) a situation where it is a discretionary decision on any other matter; a discretionary action undertaken to prevent harm being done to the state (T II 146-148). Locke was convinced that in the absence of strict adherence to 'extreme necessity', the extra-constitutionality, extra-legality and the privileged expression of powers would be despotic and inadmissible as a democratic action of a political leader.

### **Executive Veto, Convocation and Dissolution of Parliament in Exercise of Prerogative Powers**

We mentioned earlier that Locke's doctrine of prerogative is an extension of his teachings on separation of powers and his doctrine of checks and balances. This comes through in his treatment of those 'primitive elements of power, including those of immunity and executive veto. Locke does this by empowering an executive body with an extra-constitutional power called an executive veto as a way of balancing executive power against the oversight powers of both the legislature and the judiciary, who in turn, checkmate him as an executive body, through their oversight functions provided in the constitution. This is seen to the extent in which Locke proceeds to define a veto power, simply, as the power of convocation and dissolution of parliament by him who is bestowed with executive powers (T II 156).

By the powers of 'convocation', Locke is concerned about an extra constitutional power of an executive body to convene sessions, to gather an assembly, and to direct the legislature and the judiciary (parliament) in respect to their constitutional functions. Here, Locke is not talking about an executive lording it over parliament in the name of holding unto his veto power. He is careful not to overstretch the meaning of 'political veto'. Although Locke explains that the executive enjoys his veto as an unlimited power; what this means is the direct opposite of the literal meaning of unlimited; Locke explains that one who is bestowed with executive powers, is actually limited in respect to everything in the polity; His veto is unlimited, only when it comes to deciding discretionally as the last option upon those issues of national interests and for some reason or the other, both government as well as the people themselves, are all incapacitated (T II 156-157).

## **Prerogative Powers in the Declaration of War and Contemporary Tendency to Lobby the Joint Powers of Parliament**

In contemporary context, political powers of the leader to declare war as an expression of his leadership prerogative and to broker peace, is a major area of abuse among contemporary nations engaged in nuclear warfare. According to Lucinda and Oonegh, even in its medieval practices, leaders were held accountable when the exercise of their declarative veto in circumstances of war, was not an act in the preservation of the state (4). This makes the controversial post-9/11 American declaration of war against the Talibans, another invitation to re-visit John Locke's teaching on the powers of leaders (parliament) to declare war. By the term 'war' Locke meant a wide- range of armed conflict which would include in today's context, conventional war, guerilla warfare, and the war against terrorism (T II 46-47). In it, Locke condemns acts, including lobbying of parliament into subservience to arrive at a single agent or veto-directed declaration of war in a style which looks like actions undertaken through the 'federative pronouncement' of the people through the acts of parliament. According to Locke;

Of all the cores of government, the direction (declaration) of war, most particularly, demands those qualities which distinguish the exercise of power by a single hand (T II 146).

Locke was truly skeptical about all forms of reckless application of prerogative powers in the declaration of war, even under situations which would justify the call for war as a response to a national exigency. He summarily explains that any individualistic and single-handed but seemingly 'federated declaration of war', is a denial of the natural rights of citizens, adding that it always lies within the 'federative powers' of the three arms of government and the people whom they represent, to declare war (T II 146). Contrary to Locke's teachings, the United States of America went into war with a one-vote majority against Iraq in 2006; It is still in doubt, whether the one-vote majority which took America into war against Iraq, truly represented the genuine authority of the 'federative powers' of the people and their government in the first place (Jenkins 555).

## **Constitutional Immunity of Leaders; Dishonesty and Recklessness, even among So-Called Democratic and Constitutional States**

Locke admits of the protection here called immunity, without which, too many litigations against the leaders, some of which will be unwarranted, may distract the leader from focusing, and hence, would harm the polity on the contrary. Accordingly, Locke speaks of immunity as a reality which does not amount to an 'unquestionable protection' against constitutional and judiciary prosecution. Immunity which leaders must enjoy as their 'prerogatives power', must in Locke's teaching, be subject to two criteria - first, recognition of the constitutional limits of the leader's political powers; and second, constitutional responsibilities to preserve rather than harm society by words or deeds (T II 111). Locke teaches that all forms of dishonest claims to immunity should be questioned through judicial and constitutional processes. According to Locke on this;

When ambition and luxury, in future age, would retain and increase powers without doing the business for which it was given, and aided by flattery, taught princes to have distinct and separate interests from the people...men must find out ways to restrain exorbitance and prevent abuses of powers which, they, having entrusted in another's hands...they found it was made use of to harm them (T II 111).

Immunity in Locke's teachings is democratic. Locke does not make provision anywhere for immunity in the sense in which it is being used today to harass the collective citizenry under successive democracies in the world. Its contemporary uses, it may be said, have merely been smuggled into contemporary practices from medieval politics, especially, those which have their academic representations in the teachings of Hobbes, Machiavelli and Sir Robert Filmer.

### **Critical Comments**

John Locke is an English philosophy and political theorist, who is best remembered for his contributions to constitutional democracy.

Perhaps, "the only other political theorist, like John Locke, who combined so many interests in his teachings, was Aristotle (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy 192). According to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy;

Prior to Locke, political theorists from Plato to Hobbes were confronted with the problem of scarcity. The discovery of America, symbolized (a new era of) human emancipation, which made it easy to conceive of a society of plenty, freedom and political order (190).

Sources have suggested that he both conceived and taught his doctrine of 'political prerogatives' within the wider context of his liberal philosophy, his principles of empiricism, his beliefs in democracy, his beliefs in constitutionalism, supremacy of the people and his aim of ensuring good governance, both in politics and society (Russell 609).

Politically, Locke came from a Puritan community and his parents were landowners; and during the English revolution he and his family was truly sympathetic to parliament and to the ordinary citizens who were directly victimized under the 'prerogative claims' of the king justified by 'divine right claims'. His feelings for the suffering citizens played a major role as one of the background influences which shaped his ideas in his teachings on prerogative powers.

One of the criticisms which have been made in some quarters is that Locke's *Second Treatise* in particular, which contains all of his teachings on the doctrine, was not written as a text in political philosophy, but as a party book, a work of propaganda, designed to promote the political ideas of Shaftsbury and those of his Whig party (Russell, 620).

However, the wider picture seems to be that to align any society with the teachings of Locke as a whole is to accept Locke's doctrine of prerogative together with its emphasis on the supremacy and sovereignty of citizens over that of their leadership. Locke himself was convinced that a society which is guided by reason, does not only expect its leaders to exercise political tolerance towards citizens in matters of governance; he was also convinced that such a society would have already created a smooth and safe landing platform for a viable nation, where people would enjoy individual liberty, political freedom, collective achievement, scholasticism and democratic

progress.

Accordingly, the publication of his *Two Treatises of Government* as it is often said, clearly marked the beginning of a constitutional monarchy and a system of parliamentary supremacy, hence, it prepared the way for an emergence of a kind of representative democracy which Locke's doctrine of prerogative largely exists to enhance (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy 190).

### **Conclusion**

It is to say for short that, Locke himself sees legitimate political authority, whether expressive in the form of prerogative power or in other forms of political power, as something which employs the force of the community, whether directly or through the representatives of political communities in parliament. But what according to Locke is legitimate political authority?;

The right of making laws with penalties of death and consequently all less penalties, for regulating and preventing of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the Execution of such Laws and in the defense of the commonwealth from foreign inquiry and all this only for the publick good (T II).

Locke never says it anywhere, but it is obvious in Locke's teachings that any insensitive use of political power amounts to a loss of all legitimate powers including those of a leader's prerogative as a head and leader; then, the leader in question no longer carries the integrity which should urge him to always promote the interest which has been called the common good; the leader, by this fact, would have no moral integrity as a representatives of the people. This, perhaps, is the core of Locke's assertion among other things.

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