

F. A. Hayek's views on Liberty

F. A. Hayek is known as the philosopher of freedom. Hayek's explanation was offered in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944). According to him, individual liberty is the main basis of the progress, development and welfare of a society. Every human being is rational in nature and hence everyone should have the liberty to take decision of their own life. He offered an interpretation of how and why a civilized and advanced nation such as Germany could surrender to Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) Movement. Hayek's warning was that there was nothing culturally or politically unique in the German people that made them inclined to it. In his book "The Constitution of Liberty" Hayek inquired into the nature and aspects of individual freedom, the meaning of the rule of law and the role of constitutions, and the rationales and limits to the welfare state in a free society. Here he gives the definition of liberty as a state which implies a "condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as possible in society".

Friedrich A. Hayek represents a revenge of the old British liberalism from the collectivist wings. It is correct to label him as a "libertarian", and since he rejects any compromise between justice and liberalism, he is a right-liberal. And, his attacks towards the social democratic consensus within welfare state make him a new-right theorist. He likes a gradual and spontaneous change. Evolutionary process does not need any creators and finds its way through success and failure. Liberty of the individual is the operational feature of the evolution. Otherwise, liberty is replaced by coercion and the evolutionary forces are given place to the rational designs of collective wills.

According to Hayek, new content of the liberty meant an absence of external necessities and true freedom of human beings required a freedom from the pressures of physical needs and of the economic system. By doing so, socialism identifies the liberty with power and richness. For this, material wealth would be increased to a certain level and distribution would be made according to a new diagram. In Hayek's view, the central role of the state should be to maintain the rule of law, with as little arbitrary intervention as possible. Hayek demonstrates how liberty takes sustenance from the rule of law, the concept of due process and the constitutional form of government. He identifies serious but subtle threats to individual freedom. Hayek claims that economic dictatorship is an inevitable phase of planning wave and although "proletariat dictatorship" is a democracy in the form, it becomes not but an absolute regime by destroying individual liberty. According to him planning, individual rights and liberty are

not compatible. He said that while planned economy of the collectivism attempts to set humans free from the “so-called” pressures of the economic mechanisms, it creates a totalitarian system. This implies that controlling of the economic system leads into a total control of the life. Economic freedom is the prerequisite and the foundation of other liberties. The so-called “inner”, “metaphysical”, or “subjective” freedom is related with the “freedom of will”. It is not the opposite of coercion or an arbitrary will of another but to be free from the “temporary emotions, or moral or intellectual weakness”.