

POLITICS

What is politics?

My definition of politics is: the work of looking after the lives and matters of a population whatever that may be. Politics is a branch of every ideology. This is because every ideology seeks to control and put in place what it believes to be right and true.

Politics is among the highest of actions because true and sincere politics seeks to elevate and solve the problems of others, not simply to focus on your own problems. Every way of life recommends involvement in politics since it is in essence selfless.

Politics has been around since time immemorial. But modern politics has been around since the ancient Greeks who gave us the modern process of democracy and the concept of the Assembly.

One can discern that politics is a very old practise, by the way human beings are made up. Human beings have needs and wants that can only be satisfied adequately under a system of government. And as far as recorded history goes, human beings have been living under a system of government (I am using the term 'government' in very general terms) for a long time. We have also lived as hunter gatherers and life as nomads. And through the discovery of artefacts of previous nations and peoples we can safely come to the conclusion that for as long as we as human beings have existed we have lived as hunter gatherers, nomads and under some government rule.

What are the negatives of having a government?

- A feeling that government restricts the freedoms of people

What are the positives of having a government?

- Government secures your needs and rights. Remember, this is what government is supposed to do in an ideal world. As we see now and in the past, governments do not always do what they are supposed to do and do not always have the interests of the masses at heart.

This is all the more clear if we study present-day human beings. If we do so, we can see that human beings need food, shelter and clothing. It is also clear that if we do not have these basic needs met, we could die as we would be exposed to the elements.

In meeting these needs many businesses have formed and their power and influence has increased. So much so that their influence has reached much of the world. And through this influence they have gained the power of globalisation. Many speak of the negative things which globalisation brings – a loss of cultural values, greed and a loss of the higher values.

Globalisation can take three distinct forms:

- a) economic globalisation - where a nation's economy becomes intertwined with a foreign or world economy. The result of this is that foreign economies can, at times, adversely affect the nation's economy. Most economies these days are joined to some extent with

other national economies. In fact economies such as the USA are so largely entangled with other economies it is said that when the USA sneezes with whole world catches a cold;

- b) cultural globalisation - where a country's cultural and traditional values are replaced or at least challenged by a foreign culture;
- c) political globalisation – where a state becomes politically connected with international and block states such as the European Union.

The world is a smaller place due to globalisation. The world is a closer and nearer place to your loved ones. The mobile phone has brought everyone nearer to each other. Text messaging and emailing has replaced writing letters to each other.

Through globalisation the economies of the East are slowly being eaten up by the Western economic model, leaving the vast majority of the Eastern economies open to abuse and mistreatment.

The products that big business comes with have changed life forever. We now have a greater and wider choice of products at a more affordable price. From cars to children's clothes, are results of economic globalisation. All of this is a concern and within the scope of politics. The other thing politics works with is democracy, but we need to understand both politics and democracy to get to the heart of the matter.

However, politics is a wider view of reality than simply studying democracies. Democracies have a scope, but politics is the deeper understanding. Anything which affects society can be said to be political. Politics encompasses democracy and not the other way round. Just to give you an overview of areas covered by politics within society, it typically affects:

- Education
- Welfare and health
- Environment
- Economy
- Employment
- Culture
- Law and order
- Transport
- Defence
- Taxes

All these areas come under the umbrella of politics because they are the affairs of the people.

Politics should be about solving people's daily problems, not about sleaze, underhand tactics, corruption or the lining of politicians' pockets. Sadly in many countries this is exactly what it is about.

Politics involves a number of things:

- People and political groups
- Ideas
- Ideologies
- Public opinion
- Laws and statutes

- Problems and solutions
- Government
- Representatives
- Discussion of ideas (sometimes clash of ideas)
- Creativity in solutions
- Enforcement of laws
- Revolutions

Supporting a cause whether you are a public member of society or a full time politician should be based on your opinions and convictions on the political matter. In today's political grounds, the politicians are not interested in their own convictions, views or opinions. They are concerned about which view will bring them the most votes; which side of the argument is more popular, better organised and which can deliver them into government. This corruption of the political system is open and widespread but the public simply accepts this as the norm.

What is also widespread is election funding by private donors to political parties in return for favourable policies for a business or a private cause. This is so widespread people do not see a problem with it.

Private funding or donations come about because elections in the 21st century are so expensive. Millions upon millions are spent on election campaigns and although some money can come from party funds, there still exists huge amounts of money that come from private donors.

The fact is, that if you want a corruption-free, or influence-free government, you must remove the influence money can have on elected candidates. But this is what does not happen under the capitalist system because it is ingrained within government and policy. Because there is a lack of awareness amongst the public and because people do not have any alternative, this corruption remains.

The sums of money we are talking about goes into the hundreds of millions of dollars and pounds. And I do not see public opinion going against this practise anytime soon.

The fact is that someone who wants to get elected but does not have any cash of their own or any big donors backing them to fund a political campaign, does not have a chance of getting elected.

In the UK political Labour gets much of its funding from the unions, which means they have to tow the unions' line and work towards more rights for workers and less for employers. The Conservatives on the other hand are funded by rich capitalist elites and big business. And so, they have to work in favour of big business. And when you really think about it deeply, there is no such thing as democracy in such states. It's only the will of certain groups that prevail. And it was once accurately stated:

“The best case against democracy is a five minute conversation with the electorate.”

One of the main things politics seeks to do is to change society. And as such those seeking to change society must have an understanding of what are the parts that make a society. So it is our view that society has a number of parts: there are the individuals, the dominant ideas or prevailing ideas amongst the individuals, the dominant emotions linked to the dominant ideas and then there is the state which sort of binds and governs them together. So in order to change

society you must target and seek to change each and every aspect of society otherwise there will be failure.

For example, most missionary movements seek only to change the individual, and to for a short while they may be 'successful' while the individual is separated from society as they are taken to religious boot camp, but they fail to realise that these individuals live within society, they are affected by the public or dominant opinions and emotions which affects them and they are affected by the state which rules over them and then they return to their longstanding ways and old habits. Then they have to go away with the religious group to 'recharge their batteries' and then they come back to mainstream society, they change again and the circle continues.

So, one must accept the fact that in order to change society you have to change the four parts of society. And it is my view that you start with the individuals (who can form a group) and this group then targets, the dominant ideas and emotions and finally the state.

The history of politics

Throughout history, political systems have been based either on rule by one person (monarchies and dictatorships for example) or by the rule of an elite group of people. The Christian clergy, for example, ruled through theocracies. They were seen as a group of people who had the divine right to rule as they were God's representatives on Earth.

Politics has been around since human beings have had the thinking mind and the beginning of philosophies and ideologies.

Human beings throughout their existence have had various systems of society and government. They had the feudal system, the tribal system, the system of theocracy, the communist system, the Islamic system and now they have the capitalist system.

The democratic system

Democracy means the rule of the people by the people and for the people. The ancient Athenians were responsible for democracy as we know it. They had something called the Assembly where citizens would meet to discuss matters and make rules and regulations.

Democracy is basically people power. But there exists differing opinions about what shape democracy should take. Should there be *direct democracy* where masses of people vote and express their opinions or should there be *representative democracy* where people choose a person to speak on their behalf?

Direct democracy is where people make the decisions about their lives, themselves. They are the government and they have no middle person such as MPs. They are the makers of policy and law. The problem I can see with this form of democracy is that it would cause chaos in a state, with differing opinions, views and laws. This simply would not work because it would be impossible to get everyone's view on all matters with any sort of good organization and any good outcome.

However, direct democracy is still in practise at times: referendums and general elections, for example. But many in the developing countries complain that the direct vote or direct democracy is not done fairly and that some who are chosen to speak on behalf of people are themselves dishonest and are simply in politics to become rich and powerful. Welcome to democracy!

The problem with referendums and elections is that it is impossible to have a referendum or an election on each and every issue that comes up. What is possible is to have a referendum or an election on major and broad issues where there is a clear yes or no answer. Much like the referendum held in the UK about whether to stay in the European Union or to leave.

Modern day democracy has chosen on the system where people choose someone to speak on their behalf. So they have opted for representative democracy. And so you have Members of Parliament (MPs) and you also have national representation such United Nations where each member state has someone who speaks on behalf of his or her state as well as lots of other democratic organisations.

In a representative democracy you have lots of different opinions and lots of different political parties that represent their views; you also have independents who stand up for election by themselves without a political party. Those who seek election make their case to the voters or general public who then make their choice. The winners (or those who get the most votes) form a government to carry out the things they promised to do before the election.

Whatever you call it ‘revolutions’, ‘class struggle’ or simply ‘war’, human history has been a turbulent one. Mankind has witnessed two world wars. And the journey of politics has been an accompaniment to this turbulent past and this remains with us to this very day. Nations are still at war with each other.

As populations grow, more political details are required. Questions such as ‘Who should be the leader?’, ‘What should he or she stand for?’, ‘Which political group should rule?’, ‘How should the leader be accountable?’ All these and much more need to be answered in order for society to run smoothly and without trouble.

However, there will always be differences on all questions related to political issues. This is why you have different political groups. They all differ on how to solve problems and they all have different values; this is why the ruler’s opinion settles the matters and so a leader should make decisive and conclusive decisions.

There must be a general agreement amongst society on how to solve life’s problems on a more basic level. If this can be achieved even dictatorships can progress.

In liberal democracies you will usually have parties from three viewpoints: from Leftist socialist, Conservative and far-Right. It is useful to know where political opinions can come from and these basic viewpoints cover the basic political field.

In liberal democracies people are supposed to be free. The freedoms are championed as the things to be proud of. But of course the reality is so much different than theory. The truth is that there is no such thing as freedom or complete freedom. There are rules and regulations for each and every society and each and every state. The freedoms are only ‘free’ when the government directs them to be.

Democratic states have some common features:

- They have elected leaders;
- They have multiple political groups;
- They have elections;

- They have a parliament or a representative house that represents the people's views. The UK, for example, remains a parliamentary democracy because all power rests with Parliament;
- People can choose which party to vote for;
- Members of parliament or house of representatives are held accountable.

This all looks good on paper, but the reality is that the system of democracy is used by the elite capitalists for their own gain and nobody else's.

And Parliament in the UK has been criticized for having an unelected chamber, and that is the chamber of the House of Lords. It has also been criticized for the abuse of pressure groups because the rich and powerful can exercise influence through their pressure groups, making Parliament work for the few and not the many. The result being that rich and powerful businesses, individuals and conglomerates influence Parliament to pass laws in favour of their interests.

The occurrence of concentration of power, (that is a few people hoarding power) is almost universal, whichever society you belong to. And to a large extent the concentration of power is unavoidable. However, you will notice that within most societies, once the ruler is voted in or takes power by force, he or she works towards securing their position. So, they will work towards a state of affairs where they cannot be deposed or at least it is very difficult to depose them. One notices this within monarchies for example. The monarch of the day will pass laws to state that not only is it impossible to remove them as head of state, but after they pass away, a member of their family will succeed them.

To avoid this situation from occurring, members of the society should speak out against such control and hunger for power. They should never accept the ruler who takes power by force or even an elected leader if they have used immoral and wrong ways of taking power. It really is an unfortunate state of affairs where the ruling elite help each other in illegally holding onto power.

There is no system on Earth which can guarantee a corruption-free existence. Even the system granted by God to people cannot be said that it is not open to abuse. But it can be said to be the best system for the population as it is from the One and Only Creator. Nevertheless, corruption can come into the implementation of the system because human beings are the ones who implement it and they are weak and feeble and can be easily tempted by money or power. And history testifies to this.

So what we are looking for is a political system that minimises corruption and conducts itself in an honest and honourable way.

Why does politics matter?

Well, politics matters because politics affects us all whether we like it or not. It encompasses every aspect of our lives. To what extent, it depends on the type of society you live in and the system of government. Some will be more intrusive than others.

For example, if you live under an Islamic State the state will govern everything you do from your dress in public to whether you pray five times a day or not if you are a Muslim. It will also manage and determine the limits for non-Muslims and define for them what is public and what is private.

Without politics you do not have a thriving and energetic society concerned about the masses and the individual. You do not have a flourishing society ready to hold to account their leaders and elected politicians. Politics is at the heart of a vibrant society. So, it is my view that we should all be involved in political work seeking to change and enhance the societies we live in.

Politics affect most things in our daily lives whether we participate in politics or not, it has an impact. From what time the lights come on in the street that we live, to which school accepts our children for education, politics has a say.

It is possible for people to make a difference in politics, even if you have the odds against you. You can fight for your rights.

Let's take the example of the Suffragettes. The Suffragettes were a movement whose major aim was to give women the right to vote in the UK. They were established in 1903 and were led by Emmeline Pankhurst. They demonstrated that with the right political moves and sacrifice it is possible to change societal values and standards. They took it upon themselves to achieve their aim through demonstrations and civil disobedience.

The Suffragettes achieved somewhat of their aim when in 1918 women over the age of thirty got the right to vote. And were also equal partners to men when in 1928 those over twenty-one years of age were legally allowed to vote.

Many people ridicule democracy in the UK for not allowing women the vote earlier since ways of life such as Islam gave women the vote, over a thousand years ago.

Yet, to this very day women in the UK are paid less than men as an example of sexual discrimination. Democracy still has not learned the lesson of its past.

Politics is power. Without politics one does not get group organisations such as Nato and the European Union working for the safety, security and protection of nation states. Some nations within the European Union strive for a European super state to rival the United States and Russia. But this is quite difficult to achieve with the concept of nation state ingrained within the European Union. With many holding onto nationalistic opinions it's hard to think of a super state representing only Europeans. A divided European Union is weak and unworkable. A weak and unworkable Europe is what the United States wants because a strong and unified European Union is a threat to US power and financial influence. Europe is the richest continent in the world and it could be so much more only if the politicians got rid of this idea of nation states from their mind.

Nationalism serves little more than a feeling of togetherness with a specific group of people, a sense of belonging and a shared likenesses – language, ethnicity and regional connection. Those who are nationalists gather themselves around these values and see themselves as superior to others.

In the UK, you have political representatives:

- Local politics – your local councillors
- Regional politics – your Members of Parliament (MP)
- National politics – the Cabinet and government
- International politics – your MEPs and foreign secretaries. Representatives to the United Nations

Each type of politician and politics is slightly different but all equally important. On each level you have a representative who is in a position of understanding and representing at least the majority views of the electorate.

Voter apathy (the lack of political concern, especially from the youth) is a sign that a society is politically deteriorating. This apathy is plain in Western societies and is a sign that Capitalism is not working. We are spoon fed by authorities about how Capitalism is the ideology of the day and pointed out that people are wealthier than before. But ask yourself – people may be wealthier, but are they really happier? Or has Capitalism encouraged greed and selfishness where people only think about themselves and the size of their wallets? Are people really wealthier or have the rich got richer at the expense of everyone else?

Voting and political apathy is reflected in party membership in the UK:

Labour Party membership has fallen from roughly 800,000 in the mid-1950s to around 200,000 in 2007;

Conservative Party membership has fallen from an estimated 2.8 million in the mid-1950s to around 250,000 in 2007.

These figures are certainly worrying for these two parties. However, one thing should be understood – whether it is the Conservatives or Labour (the two main political parties in the UK) who is in power, they will all be fighting the capitalists' corner. This story is repeated in all Western nation states. And this is the main capitalist state model exported to other less 'capitalist' states.

So who or what is to blame for the political apathy. Well some blame the public for this decline across the board. It could be said people are lazy and individualistic, caring only about themselves, not concerned about society in general. Many would say that this uncaring view is a direct result of following and implementing the Capitalist ideology which encourages greed and individualism; the 'I'm okay Jack' mentality.

Others blame the media for putting out outrageous articles and information. They combine and magnify news stories only with the view of increasing their newspaper sales and audience. They in no way follow or adhere to responsible journalism, instead there exists a culture of 'If it sells, we'll run it.'

And yet others blame politicians. Politics has become a dirty word. When one thinks of Western politics thoughts such as lies, deception, arrogance, misinformation come to mind when in actual fact politics can be dirty or it can be healthy and clean.

I think there is a bit of truth in all of these accusations, but personally I blame this greedy ideology that the world is faced with and lay the blame squarely at its door. And that is the ideology of Capitalism. The moral fibre is breaking up as more and more people question and only do actions which are only materially beneficial. And so, since there is no apparent material benefit in political involvement, people give it a miss.

It has to be said, Capitalism is a very expensive ideology. It takes millions of pounds to police a state such as the UK. The police for example are now looking at becoming less strict on people who are in possession of cannabis simply because they are losing the battle on this. It takes a huge amount of resources and strategies to bring about 'justice'. My feeling is that the police and the judicial system simply cannot cope with the increase in crime in general and so

ineffective policies are quietly being given the boot. And who pays for all these ineffective strategies and resources – the masses, the tax payers, you and me.

And one of these expensive strategies is the prison system. I think most people would agree that the prison system does not work. Criminals frequently return to their criminal behaviour once out of prison and re-offend.

I would argue that we live at a time where greed is widespread and concern for your values takes a back seat. Wealth distribution is at a low and the gap between the rich and poor is wider than ever. This is especially so amongst the Third World countries but even the so-called First World countries are experiencing this gap between rich and poor.

Our elders say that things were much better generations ago where people cared for each other and there was not this ‘dog eats dog’ mentality which encompasses societies these days. It seems that our elders are right. They have noticed the change in societal values, not really knowing the source of all this corruption and dishonesty. Not knowing that these are indeed the results of the implementation of Capitalism on a global level.

Politicians have a very bad name and they have only themselves to blame. They are seen as sleazy, corrupt, immoral, crooked...I could go on. They are seen as those who promise you all before elections but go back on their promises once they are elected. It is my view that this is one of the main reasons why there is little or no interest in politics amongst the youth in Western countries.

I think that the media is in a much more powerful position than most people realize. The media can make a person or they can break a person. If the media is against you, you have a problem. The media can turn black into white and white into black. Many accuse the media of being full of liars and bias cheats. The media is supposed to be neutral (believe it or not), reporting events and views as they are with a well-balanced factual mission which is in the public interest. Some accuse them of being dishonest and only interested in selling stories with attention-grabbing headlines.

But thankfully the science of politics has not been and will not be harmed. People will be affected and interested in upright politics. It has to be said that there are some sincere politicians out there who are working for the betterment of society and the world in general. It is these people whom we have to seek out and work with to change our societies wherever in the world we are.

There is hope because the dishonesty of Capitalism is becoming clear for everyone to see and people are becoming fed up of corrupt politics. This is an opportune time for those with the solution to present an alternative ideology as clearly and effectively as possible. We live in important times, times where we will hopefully see the demise of Capitalism.

It is a sad fact that those in the Third World take up arms if there is disagreement on a matter. What happens when people disagree? They should sit with their opponents and come to a suitable agreement. This is more obvious when opposing factions go to war with each other (sometimes for years) only for them to realise that only a political solution is lasting and capable of bringing about peace and stability.

This reaction of going to war happens more so in the Islamic lands because they are easily supported by foreign powers that provide them with resources and arms to fight with. This is

the case with almost every civil war which is happening in the Islamic lands. This is because the foreign powers want the Muslims to be divided and weak so that it is more possible for them to control the Muslims, who, if they were united, would form the most powerful nation on Earth.

But civil wars or wars of independence, wars against foreign powers are all useless unless they have a political settlement which solves the reasons for the wars in the first place. So, the solution to all conflicts is political settlements. Without political settlements there is no peace. So, it is my view that to have leaders or representatives who are skilled in political matters and political manoeuvres is an absolute must. Political solutions avoid war and conflict and save the lives of many. There has not been a single war or conflict which eventually was not settled through political discussion and agreements.

What are the boundaries of politics?

Boundaries have to be set because without boundaries there will be chaos and confusion. Society will not be able to progress if boundaries are not clearly laid down by the state and ideology. Essentially when we talk about political boundaries we are really asking what the limits between private life and public life are.

However, the only thing which governs politics is the ideology from which it emanates. Ultimately, the ideology which governs our lives has grounds to state what public life is and what private life is.

Generally, the public life will come under what is political and the private life is to be structured also by the ideology one follows. In Capitalism, we are told that we are free to do as we wish, but this is a pipedream and is misleading at best. This is because there is no such thing as complete freedom. Everything has a limit and a law governing it and the law is implemented firmly and without fail by the executive authorities.

Who sets the boundaries? This is determined by the government of the day, but generally, laws are made by the ruling elite. But it can also be made by local politicians when it comes to local issues. And societies are governed by the laws inherited by previous generations and generations before them. And generally, societies are governed by the constitutions which were adopted at the time of the formation of the nation. The USA, for example, follows the all-encompassing Constitution agreed after their civil war.

Should politics be left alone to deal with the masses and leave individual freedoms alone or should politics encompass each and every matter concerning the citizens of a state? The answer to this question has tried to be answered by the greatest minds in politics, with each and every 'solution' being met with fierce debate. There is no easy answer for this question. But my view is that where the question or matter affects the masses, let the state deal with and come up with a solution; but where it concerns the individual, let him/her decide for themselves.

Do people need to be saved from themselves or is it a Nanny State that tries to correct its citizens on personal matters? I would argue yes, the state needs to correct and guide their citizens to the right course so that its citizens do not harm others or themselves. So, in issues of health, for example, - smoking, drinking, and obesity the state needs to encourage members of society to reject these harmful practises. People of the Capitalist states argue that this is the state overreaching its mark on guiding their members of society and that guidance on smoking, drinking and weight control, impinges on the freedom of the individual. Members of this

opinion would be well advised to know that there is no such thing as freedom and that there never will be.

This is a very big discussion of where does the state steps in and when should it leave its citizens alone to make their own decisions.

The West boasts that we live in multi-cultural societies where everybody's culture and values are respected. But this is a fallacy since it is not multi-cultural societies that we live in, but one cultural society and that is the **secular cultural society**. This means that everyone living within a secular society has to live and abide by secular values. The minute one steps out of line or crosses the secular boundary, the secular state and public gives you a tickings-off.

This is evident when the church and religious people speak out about a political and societal issue. The media and politicians politely tell the church to keep its mouth shut as the church and religious people have no say in political matters as we live within a secular society.

So the boundaries are clear, and so it should be clear to all, that there is no such thing as a multi-cultural society. What we do live in is a multi-ethnic society with a variety of ethnic groups living together. But I think a distinction should be made between a so called 'multicultural society' and a multi-ethnic society.

How are rules made and what are the best ways of making rules?

The difference between ideologies arises when it comes to making laws about new issues. Laws about stem cell research, space exploration, and workers' rights in the 21st century are all examples of new issues which need to be examined and rules and regulations set down. And each political government will come up with different rules because they see the world in a different and unique way.

In the UK, rules are made using the democratic process. People vote for a Member of Parliament (MP) in a general election. He or she represents their constituents. The MPs vote for or against a particular Bill or law which has been initiated in the House of Commons. Parliament and House of Commons in particular are involved in the process of making law. If the Bill has enough backing from MPs, it will pass and become law.

In some countries, the state is everything (it makes and breaks the laws that the masses have to abide by) and there is only one party to represent everyone in the society. Under such systems there is no democratic process where people vote for different representatives. This is known as authoritarian and totalitarian states. Under these forms of government the masses do not really have a choice; they simply have to live by what the state dictates since the saying goes 'the state knows better'.

Some people say that we should adopt the law of God since human beings do not have the wisdom and knowledge that God imparts in governing human lives. These are from the religious parties. They point to the fact that human beings change with time and so does the laws that they make. So, for example, homosexuality was once forbidden in democracies but now it is legal and acceptable. Democratic states once held racism to be a sign of progression (look to South Africa and the United States) but now racism is illegal. Furthermore, the UK did not allow women the vote until early in the twentieth century, but now females count as legitimate voters.

They also point to the fact that democracies are trying to influence the church and religious groups to conform to 'modern' standards, so for example, there is great pressure on the church to do away with ancient commandments and allow female clergy within some churches.

All these and many more arguments are made against democratic rule since human beings can't make up their minds, or alter laws over the course of time. Whereas the law of God does not change and is resolute so people know where they stand: what is allowed and what is forbidden.

What is government?

Government is the entity which makes and changes laws, rules and regulations since they have the authority from the masses to do so. So, they should be a reflection of the views and opinions of those who voted for them. Governments have the power to enforce laws through bodies such as the police and armed forces by force if necessary.

Governments in democracies are made of three broad parts:

- a) Making laws – legislation
- b) Carrying out laws – execution
- c) Interpreting laws – the legal system

Governments can be extremely powerful and overbearing when they are pushed to the limit. But the fallacies of democracies really are visible for all to see.

Let's just take one issue facing Capitalism today and its coming demise - criminality. Under Capitalism crime has soured. And the response of democracies has been to send criminals to prison. However, prison is not a deterrent for criminals and most people who engage with criminals know this. And frequently people are set free from prison as it takes tens of thousands of pounds a year to keep one person locked up in prison. Also, the prisons are overflowing.

So, what is the difference between politics and government? Well, my view is that without politics you can't have government. Government is one of the results of political work. You can have politics without government but you can't have government without politics.

That said, governments are representative of the society they govern. So in Western nations people believe in secularism, the separation of religion from state affairs. And popular public opinion does not allow the church to have a say in anything political.

In the West, there exists checks and balances (at least, there is supposed to be) to stop abuses of power. One of the supposed ways of making sure that there is no abuse of power is to have constitutions which are the absolute law in countries. The problem that exists and will always exist is on the interpretations of articles of constitutions. Where does 'freedom' start and where does it end? These are problems for the legal system to solve.

In the Islamic countries, people believe in Islam and they wish that Sharia law be implemented. This is at least a section of Muslim opinion. But the rulers in the Muslim societies do not want Sharia law, simply because they do not see any benefit in implementing Sharia law. Many of the rulers have been educated and groomed in the west and so hold secular beliefs which they implement on the Muslim population. And so the secular state is not in alignment with the Muslim belief. This is why the Muslim countries are not progressive, there is no unity in ruling or in which direction the society should progress.

In an authoritarian or totalitarian state, such as many Muslim states, the leader or the ruling elite's opinions is final and there is no public consultation, accountability or discussion. There are no public representatives to discuss differing opinions. Basically the masses do not have any right to have a say in its affairs.

Much of the Muslim world still relies on tribal structure. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and a whole host of countries still place a lot of importance on the tribal structure, culture and rules. This is one of the reasons why it has been so difficult to bring about peace and harmony to these regions as the different tribes and factions continue to be at odds with each other and go to war on tribal leadership. Tribal leaders know very well that victory is won politically and not through the barrel of a gun. They have the responsibility of taking their people to war and as far as they attack each other, they will never achieve unity and success. Muslims fighting each other suits many in this world. They (the Muslims) remain a weakened and destabilised state as long as they are at each other, while their wealth and power is usurped by the traitors and Western powers.

Another injustice that people see in societies as a whole is the society made up of different classes. This is something that many generations of governments have promised to tackle, but have failed. This is where there exist different divisions and ranks based on traditional positions which are passed down from generation to generation. This set up gives the middle and upper classes unfair access to jobs, business, wealth and power. This is very much noticeable in the UK where you have the monarchy, aristocrats and the ruling elite. All this in a so-called liberal democracy!

The idea that there should exist a classless society, a society where everyone is equal and have the same opportunities in life as well as the equal distribution of wealth is what makes Communism so attractive. Much equality was achieved under Communist Soviet Union, but I am afraid they lost the battle, but have not been completely defeated. Communism still exists as an ideology but cannot really represented itself on a state level, which it really needs if it is going to have any chance of succeeding again.

The question is – are we always going to have different classes within societies? Should we just accept that there will always be different groups within societies? My answer to this yes and no. Yes there will always exist different groups (some richer than others, some more educated than others). But there is that situation where the government supports and backs the privileged groups. I believe that there must be a neutral force (or the state) that removes all that is clearly unfair and unjust with strength and vigour in society. They must eradicate the 'I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine' practises which go on in today's governments.

The problem with democracies is that it cannot make its mind up. Laws are sometimes changed to reflect public opinion. Homosexuals are now campaigning for equal rights in the eyes of the law. What next, are you going to legalise incest if public opinion changes?

Religion and politics

There has been conflict over the past centuries on whether religions have a say on political matters. The Western nations have discussed this and have adopted the secular belief – the belief that religions are to be kept out of politics. The Muslims are still having this debate and are discussing whether they should go the way of the West. This is because they see the progression of the Western nations and think that secularism is the way of progress.

However, there are strong voices within the Muslims who are warning the Muslims not to take the path of the West, that it is un-Islamic to have secularism; that Islam is an all-encompassing way of life which has a say on personal matters as well as societal matters.

Does religion have space to coexist with politics? Is there such thing as a political religion or are all religions simply reformers of the individual?

Some religions only deal with the self. Seeking to reform or change the personal matters such as worship, morals, and principles of the individual. They have no say outside of these spheres of activity. For such ways of life it is easy to say that their religion has no say in political matters. Buddhism, Hinduism, Paganism, Christianity can all say that religion has got nothing to do with politics and that they are two separate entities.

But in Islam there is no conflict between religion and politics. This is because Islam sees politics as looking after the concerns and affairs of people, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. Politics comes under the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil and immoral actions. The Prophet Mohammed (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered Muslims not to just sit back and see corruption and vice but to work against it. This working against evil encompasses, for example, accounting the rulers on how they are dealing with society - are they corrupt? Are they agents of foreign powers? Are they working against the Muslim nation? Are they squandering the wealth of the Muslims? All of these components of accounting the ruler are political in nature and it is the duty of each mature Muslim to engage in it in the present day situation

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) said if you see something which is wrong you should change it physically, if you are not able to do that, then speak against it, if you are not able to speak against it then to at least hate it within your heart and that is the weakest of faith.

So Islam is a very political way of life. The reason why the Muslims are debating whether politics is a part of religion is because there has been a movement from the disbelieving states to change and alter the essence of Islam so that they are able to fully colonise the Islamic lands. They want to break political Islam and take it to the wastebasket of history and sever the links of the Muslims' attachment to political Islam. This is why there exists a strong political movement from within the Muslims to make them aware of this plan of the disbelieving states. We live in interesting times as this debate is going on and we can make a contribution to this debate of whether politics is a part of Islam.

For the previous generations of Muslims, it was very clear that politics was a part and parcel of Islam because they understood that Islam is an all-encompassing and a complete way of life which left nothing out whether it was from beliefs or actions, Islam came with a complete solution.

However, things are changing now and changing quite rapidly as Muslims become aware that Islam is a complete way of life, this is why one sees the desperate onslaught of the disbelieving states on so called 'extremist' and 'terrorist' Muslims to the extent that if anybody vaguely mentions political Islam, they are labelled 'extremist' or a 'terrorist'. Don't get me wrong I am not defending the attacks on innocent people by misguided Muslims. I am talking about the general image being painted by the media and others of Muslims who want to live by political Islam.

This work of alienating Muslims who work for Islam as a complete way of life is most robust within the Islamic lands and they have the backing of the secular Muslim states who wish to copy the secular democracies of the West.

The Muslim ethnic minorities who live in non-Islamic lands are also under pressure to distance themselves from political Islam, with governments stating Muslims must engage and accept the societal values of Western secular states, whether they are Islamic or not.

With the removal of political Islam from the minds of the Muslims as their objective, there is an effort to achieve this through the education system in the Islamic lands. There is also a strong effort to tackle this issue politically with banning any political party whose basis is Islam. But this is proving to be difficult and counterproductive since banning parties usually brings them a political platform and publicity.

The disbelieving states get the so called 'liberal scholars' to do their work of changing Islam's image to one of a peaceful and non-political religion which has nothing to do with political affairs similar to the other Abrahamic religions of Judaism and Christianity.

And Western leaders criticize the Third World Muslim countries that they are not democratic, that they cannot be trusted with real democracy. If you really think about it and you know the history of Western imperialism, real democracy is the last thing Western leaders want in the Islamic lands. Real democracy would mean 'free' and 'fair elections' and would mean the voting in of Islam as a government.

Final advice

I would encourage everyone of adult age to participate in political activity and work with the sincere people to change society for a better future for our children. If we can leave this world a better place, then we will have achieved something with our lives.

So, what is required for you to get into politics? If there is one word which comes to mind about getting into politics and that is *passion*. If you feel strongly about a cause, your passion will be useful to motivate you to do something to bring about change in society. You may want to write to your MP, visit your local councillor, write to the prime minister, join a political group. Do whatever it takes to bring about change. Think about your technique and process before you embark on your pursuit for social change.

Let's say that you want a ban placed on a far-Right group because you feel their views and opinions are racist and downright offensive. What can you do? The first step is to realise why this group exists in the first place; how comes the capitalist ideology allows such groups to exist?

The capitalist ideology allows 'freedom of speech'. And these far-Right groups are allowed to exist because of the right to free speech. The existence of far-Right groups not only in the UK but other mainland European countries exist and their influence is growing. Personally, I think mainstream political groups and politicians have not done enough to make ethnic groups feel safe and restrict the activities of the far-Right groups in Europe. They have allowed such groups to exist by jumping on the bandwagon of the anti-immigration narrative, speaking of foreigners coming to Europe taking jobs away from natives, claiming benefits and making use of the rights that the European Union grants them by law. These last five to ten years have seen a noticeable attack on migrants from outside of the European Union.

But the mainstream political opinions should stand up against these, quite frankly, racist opinions and viewpoints held by even those who claim to be liberal in their views. The argument against this so called 'freedom of speech' is that your freedom stops where you impinge on the freedom of others. And freedom of speech does not allow you to hold racist views.

Coming back to how you would challenge the far-Right, you could go to your local councillor and ask him/her and ask them what their view is on this matter. If you are not satisfied with their response, you can write to our MP and ask for proper explanation as to how these groups are allowed to exist and operate. You could even write to the prime minister and ask for clarification on this matter.

You can write to your MP, not only on this matter but anything which affects your rights whether you are a Muslim or not.

The positive side in getting involved in politics is that you can make a difference. If you work within a political group you can make a great difference in how society solves its problems. So, we are looking for collective change and influence. And so, it is said that victory or success rests with working in a group. So you are a small piece in the whole mechanism of society and politics.

The downside of politics is not to be involved at all. This is not an option for a good member of society. Either plan to work with others or you become part of somebody else's plan. I suggest that you become an outspoken person who struggles for his/her vision of politics and society. Being silent is not an option. Speak out and have your voice heard!