U3A

THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL POWER

Political Ideologies

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POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Of the many factors which have gone to shape the modern political world, ideologies are amongst the most crucial and least understood. To some extent, the political attitudes and activities of groups and individuals may be predicted by referring to their ideologies. The course will examine the meaning of the word “ideology’ and the central notions that make for conflict between the major ideologies: liberalism, socialism, conservatism, democracy, and marxism.

Background Reading

The study of ideology is a sub-discipline of political theory, and is sometimes used in universities as an introduction to political philosophy, with which it is connected. Ideology is not a currently fashionable area of enquiry in this era of "pragmatic" politics, largely because people generally, and especially some political scientists and politicians, have become very uncomfortable with the notion that their own attitudes are ideologically-based. Also, popular usage has debased the use and focus of many ideological terms. For these reasons, public-library holdings on "ideology" itself, and the various "isms", are these days rather scanty. Therefore, in a break with my usual practice, I recommend that students refer to encyclopædia articles on the various ideologies and the thinkers who promulgated them.

General:

Dictionary entries and encyclopædia articles under "ideology".

Liberalism:

Mill, J.S., *On Liberty*.
Hobhouse, L.T., *Liberalism*.
(Encyclopædia entries on Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Smith, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tom Paine, and Jeremy Bentham will give some idea of the wide variation in Liberal thought.)

Conservatism:

Burke, E., Reflections on the Revolution in France.

(Encyclopædia entries on Joseph de Maistre, Louis De Bonald, and Johann Fichte should explain something of European conservatism.)

Socialism:

(Encyclopædia entries on socialism, Robert Owen, Count Claude de Saint-Simon, and Charles Fourier may give useful information on the variety of socialist thought.)

Democracy:

Mill, J.S., On Representative Government.

(Books on Classical Greece usually have a chapter on Athenian democracy, and encyclopædia articles on the government of Britain, France, the U.S.A., etc., describe various forms of Liberal Democracy.)

Marxism-Leninism (Communism):

Marx, K., and Engels, F., *The Communist Manifesto*.

Marx, K., *Capital*.

(Subsequent to World War Two there was something of an explosion of “communisms” around the world, with the result that various countries developed their own distinctive brands of communism. Lenin and Trotsky had previously made extensive revisions to Marx’s thought. Encyclopædia articles on Antonio Gramsci, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tsi-tung, and other well-known marxists will give some idea of the variety of marxist thought. This topic will concentrate on the ideas of Marx himself, with little reference to subsequent “marxisms”.)

INTRODUCTION

Humans are animals, primates. Human societies share a number of features with primates generally and upper primates in particular. One of these characteristics is “bonding”: humans bond together as individuals, and as groups. Females bond with males in breeding partnerships, parents bond with offspring (according to the respective gender differences), siblings bond with each other, individuals bond together to form friendships, females bond with females to form female groups, males bond with each other to form male groups, immature individuals bond together to form adolescent and sub-adolescent groups, and the groups bond together to form a community. One aspect of group-bonding is culture: a shared culture allows individuals to identify with each other even if they are not personally acquainted.

Culture is learned behaviour which is passed down from generation to generation. Culture is an adaptation to particular environments and differs between groups, or societies, of the same species. Humans have elaborated culture to a range of complexities far beyond any that exist in other animals. Cultural commonalities assist in bonding individuals together to form groups, in bonding groups together to form communities, in bonding communities together to form societies, and also in bonding societies together in larger organizations. A feature of a culture is a shared value-belief system. Often, human groups move from their original homeland to a different environment, taking their cultural adaptations and belief systems with them. A large-scale society can comprise a number of different cultures and sub-cultures. Different cultures possess different value-belief systems which are often in contradiction with each other. However, once value-belief systems are formed, they can be adopted (with varying degrees of modification) by a variety of cultures and/or societies, and thus become “internationalized”.

Ideologies are formed to justify a group’s value-belief systems and also the group’s attitude towards other value-belief systems and/or cultures: they form a part of the bonding mechanism which enables individuals and groups to identify themselves as similar and to identify the “other” as different. Political ideologies focus particular value-belief systems within particular forms of political organization. Political ideologies also define if and how individuals should be able to compete for socio-economic status.

Any given ideology may be divided into three parts: the general cultural bias on which believers base their socio-political policies; particular viewpoints held by peculiar interest or extremist

groups which often disagree with each other and the general ideology on matters of emphasis; and the individual belief systems of the mass of the people who support the ideology without a great deal of conscious thought. Since the emphases of the different aspects of an ideology are so often divergent, the ideology can change to meet various conditions.

The three parts of an ideology have quite different social functions. The broad base of an ideology is a set of ideals (such as free trade, equal access to political decision-making, community ownership of the means of production, or racial purity) which is given more or less coherence by the establishment of a formal body of thought. Its emotive appeal must be broad enough to gain support from a substantial number of people. Such a set of socio-political values, embodying ideas about the relationship between the individual and the state, and the economy and the polity, polarizes the community for or against it; the ideology forces a definition of community values. If an ideology can gain sufficient support for its programme of politically accelerated social change its opponents may be forced to modify their position, if they can do so without compromising their own ideological values. Policies derived from the ideology of a government may have a radical effect on the lifestyle of the governed, as with the "Strength Through Joy" campaign in Nazi Germany.

The peculiar ideological emphases of special interest groups can have important effects on the policies of governments which are broadly sympathetic to their views or which depend on such special interest groups for electoral support. In Australia, prior to 1972, the R.S.L. and the D.L.P. restricted the Federal Liberal/Country Party Government's initiatives towards the People's Republic of China. Also in Australia, the Women's Liberation Movement made important gains during the period in office of the Whitlam Federal Labor Government.

Individuals' ideologies enable them to identify their place, or their desired place, in the socio-economic and political hierarchy and assess the major ideologies.

Ideologies arise in reaction to, and as attempts to explain, social change; if they grow sufficiently in power and influence, they modify or create further social change, and other ideologies emerge in reaction to them. Changes in the nature of society may leave some individuals feeling peripheral, status-less, and without the means to effectively determine the course of their lives. When such individuals, through close personal communication, come together to form a social grouping, they also discover and create a common value-belief system; without a common value-belief system

there can be no group, merely a random aggregation of individuals. When a value-belief system is analyzed and the resultant assumptions are taken to be truths from which a body of socio-economic and political thought, a political philosophy, is derived, and the conclusions reached by that political philosophy are widely accepted as valid truths, an ideology has arisen. That is, an ideology is a *belief in* a political philosophy which is widely accepted by persons who do not necessarily know - or care - about the historical circumstances, the reasoned arguments, and the political-social-moral assumptions which gave rise to it: a political ideology is a *belief* that the results of a particular philosophical enquiry are correct.

Ideology is a product of a world of large polities, where significantly large groups with often conflicting aspirations exist within communities, and communities, also with often conflicting aspirations, exist within larger political units such as states. Ideologies have an important place in the political system. Ideologies permit individuals to readily identify their place in the socio-political system by defining, codifying and assessing community socio-political values, beliefs, and actions. Although the practicalities of a situation may not permit an individual or group to act within their ideological framework, such a framework makes it possible to broadly predict the actions, and especially the attitudes, of individuals and groups.

LIBERALISM (I)

Liberalism arose from the breakdown of feudal society in Europe. Under the feudal system each person had a fixed status within the community; each position within the hierarchy had its own recognized rights, privileges, and obligations. A little more social fluidity existed in England than on the Continent. The spread of Protestant religious beliefs, with their stress on direct personal communication between man and God, together with the invention of the printing press and the increasing literacy of the expanding middle class, undermined the power-structure of the Catholic Church and left the individual personally responsible for his religion and morality. At the same time the growth of trade and industry created a significantly large class of manufacturers, traders, bankers, merchants and their employees, who were neither tied to the land nor compatible with the guild system; these persons were peripheral to the traditional social structure, with few definable and enforceable rights or obligations. As economic power became concentrated in the hands of bankers and manufacturers the strength of the aristocracy was eroded; with the internationalistic authority of both the Catholic Church and the nobility weakened, monarchs began to concentrate

political power in the emergent nation-states by appealing to "the people". Monarchs financed their ambitions through loans provided by the great financial houses, which therefore became dependent on the success of monarchical plans for the recovery of their investments, whilst, co-incidentally, as a result of middle-class financial support, the monarchs had less need for the support of the Church and the nobility. Despite its growing economic importance, the manufacturing, mercantile and financial sector was traditionally regarded as merely a cash-cow, and had no traditional rôle in the political process. The nation-state claimed legal jurisdiction over its citizens, thus threatening both the rights and privileges of the old order and the freedoms of the new. Manufacturers, bankers, and merchants, and their employees, meeting constantly in the way of business and often worshipping in the same churches, developed a common value-belief system which became the basis of liberalism.

John Locke (1632-1704), in attempting to come to terms with the claim to universal sovereignty of the nation-state against the middle-class claim to live free from governmental interference, set down the principle that governments rule with the consent of the governed. He saw the purpose of government as guaranteeing the property and rights of the individual; "property" in the sense of including the individual's life, liberty, and estate. Traditional notions of liberty had been constructed around the question of who was to have the privilege of serving the state and in what capacity: this is a communal concept. The liberal notion of liberty was constructed around the notion of freedom from any moral obligation to serve the collective: this is an individualistic concept. The right to property of the individual, against the obligation to share one's property with the community, was based on a concept of "Natural Law", a theory of the situation of human society and individuals in a state of nature: the state of nature was perceived as a state of perfect freedom.

The freedom of the individual is, however, contingent on respect for the freedom of others. For Locke, the sole function of government is to protect the individual's natural rights, for which purpose it may use force to protect individual security and liberty. Government was seen as the result of two "contracts"; one between individuals to create a society which has an established legislature, and the other between the members of that society and its government. If a government proved bad, it had failed to fulfill the contract, and there was a moral obligation on the people to oppose it, by force if necessary. Government has sufficient authority to protect the common good *and no more*. John Locke did not extend his notion of liberty to include either political or

economic equality. He conceded individuals the right to amass as much moneyed wealth as they were capable of amassing, *and the right to hold that wealth for their personal use and disposition.* Full adult franchise was not yet a topic for legitimate political debate, and would have been seen as a violation of the natural order, a tyranny of the mob, and definitely not to the common good.

The economic life of the community was the focus of Adam Smith's (1723-1790) "political economy". Smith asserted that governmental action should be restricted to criminal law, justice, maintenance of standard weights, measures, and currency, and defense. Adam Smith advocated the "pure competition" economic model; individuals were held to have the power and capacity to define their own best interests; the sum of individual best-interests is the best interest of the community; individual self-interest would, through market forces, work to society's benefit. Necessary conditions were held to be free trade, free enterprise, and individual choice of occupation, residence, and investment. Smith allowed government activity and intervention to ensure that these necessary conditions were met, to an extent which would be considered most alarming by modern "economic rationalists" and advocates of "free trade".

The rise of political democracy in the industrial environment of nineteenth-century England was seen by John Stuart Mill as a danger to liberty. Mill was an active supporter of democracy, but was concerned that the "tyranny of the fifty-one percent" might threaten minority and individual freedoms with a hostility towards differences in attitudes, tastes, and feelings; he feared that political democracy would be accompanied by community-enforced social conformity: today, we call this "political correctness". For Mill, political democracy was a good, social democracy was an evil. The dignity of the individual was the focus of Mill's liberalism; he saw individuality as the degree to which each individual has the power to act autonomously. Negative liberty, the absence of constraint, was seen by Mill as a necessary condition for positive liberty, the power of self-determination and self-motivation.

The liberty of individuals, however, can be only guaranteed by restraining other individuals from interfering with their liberty. Rules of conduct must be imposed, by law or public opinion, which deny to individuals or groups the liberty to commit actions which harm others. The proper demarcation of the power of individuals, groups, or institutions to restrain speech or action was a central problem with which Mill attempted to come to terms. Mill defined actions as "self-regarding" and "other-regarding". Self-regarding actions are those which cannot be said to harm or

concern others, whatever effect they may be thought to have on the individual performing them. Other-regarding actions are those which do concern others; if such actions are demonstrably harmful, then coercion is permissible in order to prevent such harm. This principle of liberty may be difficult to apply in many deviations from socially-accepted norms where demonstrable harm can be both claimed and denied. The right of society to limit free speech is, in Mill’s view, only permissible if such speech can be shown to lead to immediately harmful consequences.

In practical political terms, the general acceptance of liberalism by Western-European-based cultures has led to tensions between the demands of the state and the demands of its citizens, between the demands of business management, the demands of employees, and the demands of consumers, between the demands of groups within the state against the state, against other groups, and individuals, and between the demands of individuals against other individuals, groups and the state. These tensions may be regarded as socially, economically, and politically destructive and wasteful or, on the other hand, they may be regarded as a productive dynamic in the progress of human society.

LIBERALISM (II)

Liberalism began as a set of biases, perceptions, values and beliefs held by the European urban middle classes, a tiny but potentially powerful proportion of the population. Philosophers such as John Locke, socialized in this intellectual climate, promulgated philosophical systems which built-in these assumptions to bodies of systematic thought. The conclusions of the liberal philosophers were accepted as “self-evident” truths by a wide public, and belief in these “truths” comprised liberal ideology. Because of the differing priorities and differing socio-historical contexts of the various thinkers who contributed to liberal thought, liberalism encompasses a wide range of emphases which makes it a palatable belief system for a broad spectrum of people.

The liberal ideology grew, especially in the 15 years prior to 1776, as the result of the efforts of a large number of minor writers and pamphleteers who were often not directly informed as to the opinions and arguments of the major liberal theorists. These writers were concerned with the spectre of growing aggressive political dominion over the individual; they feared the combination of religious with secular power and were centrally involved with the question of judicial independence. The results were theories of maximum fragmentation of government sovereignty.

The liberal position rests on a small number of fundamental points which, taken together, are a sufficient condition to define a liberal person. Liberals believe that humans can, given a liberal society, progress over a period of time: this faith in the improvement of mankind is central to liberal belief. Also basic to the liberal is belief in the dignity of the individual. The liberal has faith in the rationality of the individual, who is perceived to have both the right and the ability to make rational choices. Morally, the value of the individual is seen as supreme over the state or *any* organization or institution. All humans are seen as morally equal and should have equality of opportunity to exercise rights of political, religious, and economic action. Liberty is, however the main issue with which individuals are concerned. Negative liberty, the absence of restraint, the freedom to do as one pleases, is a primary value for all liberals. Many liberals, however, see negative liberty as merely a precondition for positive liberty, the right of self-determination and the power of self-motivation.

The first step towards civil liberty is a demand for law. A measure of universal constraint (applicable to rulers as well as ruled) is a necessary condition for liberty from coercion or aggression: the liberty of the community is only attainable by the rule of law. Implicit in this concept is equality under the law and the impartial applicability of the law by an independent judiciary. It is therefore necessary to abolish the need for money power to purchase skilled advocacy.

To apply fiscal liberty, taxes must be fixed according to the public need by an executive which is responsible to the people.

Freedom of thought is an implicit part of personal liberty, but freedom of communication can become indistinguishable from freedom of action, which may be taken as a right to create disorder. Religious freedom must be applied to worship which does not involve injury to others or a breach of public order. Religious liberty is not merely toleration, as full liberty implies full equality.

For the existence of social liberty, membership of any socio-political or economic organization must not depend on hereditary qualifications, and entry must be free to all regardless of class or sex.

Free trade is necessary for economic liberty, as tariffs transfer labour and capital from their most efficient use. Towards unions, industrial conditions, and the contract of employment, liberalism

must define the right in each case to maximize liberty: there is a need to control contract where the parties are not equal.

To ensure domestic liberty, both partners in a marriage must be seen to be fully responsible individuals; marriage must be purely contractual in a legal sense. The state has a rôle as an overparent, imposing responsibilities on parents and providing public health and education services to protect the rights and liberty of opportunity of the child.

Liberalism tends to favour local, ethnic, and national autonomy: the less-developed nations should be left alone, not have their political systems interfered with. In order to preserve international liberty, Liberalism must oppose the military spirit and the use of force.

The major difficulty of liberalism is in defining the limitations of authority; applications of restraints on injury awaken social consciousness: the concept of injury is widened and further restraints imposed, potentially leading to a bureaucratized and illiberal society. Implicit in this difficulty is the conflict between the principle of impartial and equal application of the law and the need to define the right in each case.

The major weakness of liberalism is its insistence on the value of the individual over that of the group, society, or state. Historically and morally, the validity of the concept is doubtful and the application of the concept is potentially disruptive and destructive. For example, liberal legal systems are ill-adapted to addressing the problems of groups, such as indigenous peoples, whose needs *as groups* must be met before individuals are able to function effectively within the groups.

CONSERVATISM (I)

The growing power and influence of liberalism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries alarmed the traditional wielders of power and influence, the landed aristocracy, whose incomes were derived primarily from rents and the privileges of office-holding. Also upset were the general run of people (the majority of the population) who lived in agricultural communities, and who saw industrialization intruding into their way of life in ways which rapidly changed or even broke up, their societies and families. These people tended to regard profit-making as an inherently dishonest and underhand activity, and a life devoted to commercial activities as morally rehensible. The liberal assumption that moral rules could be arrived at by rational thought and logical debate, and

applied to society by legislative means was offensive to people to whom morality was a given, socially-derived mode of “proper” conduct, about which there could be no argument. The liberal agenda of improving society was risible to people who could not conceive of a “human nature” or “proper” social structure different from their traditionally-accepted knowledge and experience. From at least the beginnings of recorded history, humans had justified the manner in which their societies conducted their affairs with a claim to be following the traditions of their ancestors, and change, even radical change, had often been asserted to be a return to the old ways. Traditionalists reacted unfavourably to notions of social, economic and political reform. Although arguments against radical political and social change had been advanced by many thinkers over the centuries, Edmund Burke first cast these ideas and attitudes into a coherent system of political thought, primarily in order to counteract the liberal reforms of the French Revolution.

Liberals asserted that society was an artefact, a man-made structure akin to a machine, which could be invented, designed, and “improved” as appropriate knowledge and technology permitted. Burke, on the other hand, insisted that society was an organic growth, a complex of intricate and interdependent relationships which no simple analysis can comprehend by reason alone, and therefore no simple resolution to social and political problems can have predictable or necessarily beneficial results. Political change should be slow, gradual, and in keeping with existing ways and institutions. Against the liberals, Burke insisted that the general principles to guide political action should be derived from actual political events rather than abstract reason.

Burke opposed an extension of the very limited democracy of his day on the grounds that this would render public affairs to be too-subject to the whims of passing public opinion. Against the liberal concept of human society possessing the capacity for continual moral progress, conservatives view humanity as irrational, morally capricious, and basically imperfect. Where socialists and liberals see political problems as a product of the social and economic environment, conservatives see them as rooted in humanity’s “natural” greed, cruelty, and unreasonableness: therefore, the social and political projects of reformers and revolutionaries are dangerous illusions. Moral values and social traditions are asserted by conservatives to have evolved over long periods of time to fit the needs of particular societies, and therefore governments have the prime responsibility of safeguarding these traditions and maintaining peace and order.

For Burke, human institutions, including states and governments, are created by God for the moral and physical welfare of the people. Such institutions are the product of divine foresight over long periods of time, not of the fantasies of individual reformers or rulers, and must be protected against revolutionary meddling. Because the government of a state is properly a matter of the maintenance of an intricate and complex web of interdependent institutions, the skills of government cannot be learned from books or acquired on an ad hoc basis by persons newly-arrived in authority, but are the result of an upbringing within the circles of government which socializes persons to the habit of exercising authority. Conservatives therefore stress the need for an hereditary ruling upper class and a habit of respect for duly constituted authority and order, and are generally hostile to any notion of conditional obedience to government.

Because of the limits set by conservatives to the legitimate functions of government, they prefer to see most social regulation in the hands of families and voluntary associations such as village councils, churches, philanthropic associations, trade unions, clubs, and business organizations. Where activities such as economic regulation, moral suasion, and welfare are not in the hands of government, the undue concentration of power is limited. The first loyalty of the individual should be to the small group, and the independent existence of such groups both diffuses political power and protects the individual from the arbitrary activity of the state. Conservatism, in its British form, is largely a small-group ideology.

Whereas liberals see tradition as an obstacle to progress, conservatives see tradition as the current culmination of progress, the attainments on which present and future achievements must be based. Social problems, in the conservative view, cannot be overcome by reference to Natural Law, which is unknowable if it exists at all, but by reference to historical laws. Related to this principle is the conservative attack on the notion of "Natural Rights": for the conservative there are no "rights of man", only peculiar claims which are valid within a particular social order. For Burke, the principles asserted by natural rights ideologies have been illegitimately abstracted from actual political and social traditions and can have no real existence outside those particular traditions. Against notions of natural rights, Burke asserts the notion of "prescription": if a claim has long been known and recognized, then it fulfills a need and is valid.

This notion of prescription is connected to Burke's insistence that most people act in accordance with their "prejudices", rather than from pure reason. If we were to base our conduct on pure

reason, arguing the correct course of action in each case from first principles, we should rarely do anything at all. For Burke, our actions are motivated by prejudice, and carried out in ways which concur with our prejudices. Prejudices embody the accumulated moral wisdom of a society. Social stability and human happiness are dependent on the acceptance of inherited traditions.

CONSERVATISM (II)

Edmund Burke was highly critical of British rule in Ireland and India because of the ways in which it impinged on, or destroyed, the traditional institutions of the societies of those countries. Burke also supported the American revolutionaries of 1776 on the grounds that they were merely defending their traditional institutions and ways of life. He attacked the French Revolution on the grounds that it was set on destroying existing institutions.

> If the present project of a Republic would fail, all securities to a moderate freedom fail with it. All the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed; insomuch that, if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendancy, in France under this or any other dynasty, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous councils of the prince, the most complete and arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth.

Burke had correctly identified the tendency of changes which disrupt the traditional social and political fabric to lead towards irresponsible and autocratic power. He asserted that the loss of stable values and confidence in the face of hectic change and discontinuity destroy a person's social existence: bereft in a chaos without the expectation of anything enduring, society will dissolve into the dust of individuality.

Conservatism is based on a (fairly romantic) model of mediæval society, wherein an individual was possessed of a fixed status within the hierarchy, holding liberties, duties and obligations appropriate to that particular position. To be outside the established social structure was not liberty, but horror. Originally all liberties were privileges which appertained to a particular station in life within a particular geographical area and commonly carried with them complementary obligations. Many features of mediæval society and institutions survived well into the modern period, especially in England, and conservatism, which is more an attitude, or a set of prejudices, than it is a philosophy, is based on this historical experience.

For conservatives, politics is subordinate to the good life, and most aspects of living (religion, study, sex, friends, family, work, fun, duty) have a greater importance than politics. The individual who puts politics first is felt to be unfit to qualify as a decent human being. In the conservative view, human nature, in all its irrational corruptibility, is a given, and the improvement of mankind a fantasy. Therefore, in political life the combating of evil is at least as important as creating improvements. Human history quite adequately demonstrates what used to be called "original sin" and the first duty of the statesman is to repel its operation. Conservatives concede the existence of rights which are based, not on Natural Law, but on particular historical environments and traditions. And they insist that there are no rights without corresponding duties, requiring the basing of any legitimate claims to rights on traditional or constitutional grounds. A conservative looks on society as a living organism consisting of a system of relationships and groups which exist in an historical continuum, based in the traditions of the past and leading to a posterity. Society is not a random aggregation of individuals, but a body corporate. Law, for conservatives, is a means to reconcile liberty with authority, removing the anarchic tendencies from liberty and the capricious tendencies from authority. Law is not a legitimate tool with which to change society, but a means of legitimating changes which are an established and unalterable factor in the evolution of society. Laws are not primarily a means by which nations are ruled; nations are ruled by people, hopefully by people possessed of prudence, probity, and sound judgment, persons of an established reputation which is some guarantee of their fitness to govern.

Generally, conservative economic policy is based on non-interference. Governmental authority is based on force, and force is an inappropriate intrusion in economic affairs; the state is law backed by the sanction of compulsion, and has no legitimate place in most organized social action, including economic action. The institution of private property is fundamental to conservatism, as it is seen as a traditional right of the individual (usually perceived as the male head of a household: the conservative concept of an "individual" is a *group* concept, as it encompasses the family) and the safeguard of the individual's family, which is the basic unit and foundation of civilized society. The desire to obtain private property is a morally legitimate and material incentive to work, and work is, in itself a moral improver. And private property is a guarantor of liberty, as it ensures that all economic power is not in the hands of the state. The principles of non-interference and private property do not preclude the use of transfer payments for welfare purposes, compulsory acquisition in times of emergency, or the primacy of the public interest.

The conservative theory of political representation insists that, whilst the representative must pay due regard to the business, opinions, and wishes of the electorate, the representative is *not* the delegate of the electorate, bound to obey its wishes, but a member of a parliament, bound to serve the interests of the nation as a whole according to that representative's best judgment. In this sense, the representative also represents the interests of those who have no vote at all. Conservative democracy aims to protect traditional institutions whilst accepting responsibility for the welfare of the people as a whole and recognizing their right to take part in the processes of government.

On the European Continent, conservatism generally laid more emphasis on obedience to centralized authority, a factor which was to become important in the rise of fascist and Nazi power in the 1920's and 30's: British Conservatism is as opposed to such authoritarian ideologies as it is to Liberalism. Two world wars and the accompanying social and political changes have virtually obliterated conservatism from Europe. The political ideology which is called "conservatism" in the United States of America is, at bottom, the free-trade liberalism of John Locke and Adam Smith, a circumstance which has resulted in a good deal of confusion in political terminology. Authoritarian free-market liberals in Britain have tended to adhere to the Conservative Party, an infection which gave rise to the radical (and very unconservative) changes of the Thatcher years. Lacking a basis in the institutionalized political dominance of a landed gentry, conservatism has never been an important political force in Australia.

SOCIALISM (I)

Socialism, like conservatism, arose in response to the political, social, and especially the economic, problems which were created by the increasing dominance over European culture of liberal capitalism. Whereas the basis of liberal ideology lies in the notion of individual liberty, and the basis of conservative ideology lies in notions of respect for existing institutions and traditions, socialism is based on notions of economic fairness and equity in the distribution of goods and services to the community. Like conservatives, socialists view society as an organic, corporate, entity; unlike conservatives, socialists are opposed to individualism, discounting the social and political importance of individuals, and are usually prepared to initiate quite radical changes in the existing social, political, and economic order. The social base for liberalism lies in the commercial

and professional sector of society; the social base for conservatism lies in the “landed gentry”; the social base for socialism lies in the urban wage-earner, most particularly, the skilled tradesmen.

Robert Owen (1771-1858) based his reformist policies on the notion of independent cooperative communities. Believing that human behaviour was solely the result of the environment (a belief which is also characteristic of liberalism), Owen did not feel that humans were, by nature, good (as liberals do), or bad (as conservatives do) but that humans were not *anything by nature*, that humans are infinitely malleable. Therefore, in order to produce people of good character, it was necessary to provide a good environment, which meant the reform of existing social conditions, with special emphasis on the factory system - which in Owen’s day had achieved rarely-paralleled enormities in imposing misery and degradation on the poor.

Robert Owen rose from draper’s apprentice to manager during the rapid growth of the cotton industry and, on marrying the daughter of the owner of the New Lanark cotton mills, proceeded to change what had been, even for the time, an unusually extreme example of the human degradations caused by unfettered liberal capitalism: depravity, child-labour, filth, crime, and drunkenness were the norm. Within 15 years Owen had developed a happy, well-paid, sober, clean, hard-working, and decently-housed community from these unpromising beginnings. A benevolent dictator, Owen made no allowance for worker self-determination. His attempt at founding a socialist community in the United States of America foundered on the rock of his paternalistic authoritarianism in opposition to the Americans’ democratic attitudes.

Owen asserted that it was ridiculous to maintain and service machinery without devoting similar care to its operators, and blamed the greed and selfishness inherent in free-trade capitalism for the ensuing social degradation. But, in Owen’s view, management was not to blame for social injustices which were really the result of ignorance in the society as a whole. The culprit was an economic system based on private property and unlimited competition that was supported by a church which wrongly preached that humans are responsible for their own actions.

The Co-operative Movement, developed by people influenced by Owen, made advances while Owen was in the United States and began to develop close links with the newly-legal trade union movement in concert with the spread of democratic ideals. Whilst Owen himself was increasingly sidelined by the democratic and worker-based nature of the movement, in which the non-conformist churches played an important rôle, Owenist ideas continued to have a powerful

influence on workers organizations, particularly the co-operative societies. The idea of these societies was that workers should find their own capital for their own manufacturing and commercial enterprises, partly through savings and partly through loans, and drive the capitalist employers out of business by competition whilst maintaining sound living and working conditions for the workers.

Owen insisted on the dominance of the social environment in determining the general happiness, on the central place of planning in order to improve the social environment, and on co-operation as a necessary condition for progress. Owen's thought was optimistic, in that he asserted the possibility of improvement in human social conditions, and rational, in that he believed that human reason was the appropriate tool for achieving positive change. Owen's socialism was to have an abiding influence, not only on British socialism, but on later liberal thought.

Although the Compte de Saint-Simon fought against the British in the American Revolution, he took no active part in the French Revolution, but instead made himself wealthy by speculating in confiscated Church lands. Having dissipated his riches by the extravagant entertainment of leading thinkers of the day, he lived a life of poverty during which he began to write his social theories.

Saint-Simon was motivated by compassion for the condition of the poor and a desire for good order in the community. He was no democrat, claiming that the natural rulers of society were the great industrialists and bankers. The evils of capitalism and capitalists, according to Saint-Simon, were due to the bad social environment, as humans are naturally virtuous: if society and its institutions are reformed, people will naturally begin to live the good life to which they are naturally inclined.

Society should be planned by an élite of industrialists (the nobility and military were to be specifically excluded from government) towards ends which were to be decided by savants - presumably he meant social scientists. Society was under an obligation to provide work for all; all were under an obligation to work for society; the exploitation of the rich by the poor was specifically denounced; and centralized planning and control of society was to be in the hands of a technocratic élite. Saint-Simon's ideas were developed, in one direction to become effectively a religion, and in another, as elaborated by more able and rational philosophic thinkers, into a strand in European socialist thought and as an influence on later liberalism.

Charles Fourier was born to a family which had lost its money in the French Revolution and worked as a traveling salesman. The influence of his ideas was to be far-reaching in European socialism and anarchism. For Fourier, God is good, therefore everything God makes is good, therefore man is good and possessed of only good desires: therefore, the ills of humanity must be the result of faulty social organization and the good life is achievable by proper, that is, Fourierist, social organization. A part of Fourier's commitment to communal social and economic organization was his obsession with waste. The duplication of cooking facilities in separate households, when a single canteen, staffed by a small number of people would suffice to feed quite a large population, was to be regarded as a conspicuous waste of society's resources.

Fourier proposed that society should be re-organized into self-supporting and self-contained communes, called phalanstères, of 500 acres and 1,700 workers [he also had a fascination with numbers] who would find fulfillment by working at whatever they chose. The living quarters were to be blocks of flats with communal dining rooms, libraries, and entertainment facilities. Free-love was a feature of Fourierist thought, and continued to be an important part of the socialist tradition, partly on the grounds that family ties attract loyalties which properly belong to the community.

Fourier's socialism thus embodied a number of threads common to socialism generally: the elimination of the wasteful duplication inherent in capitalist competition, improvement in the living standards of workers, and the abolition of social classes. Fourier's ideas were extremely influential, enjoyed a wide currency, and resulted in the establishment of a large number of communities inspired by his concepts. The familistère founded by Godin at Guise in 1877 was a fully co-operative society which included profit-sharing, health insurance, a pension scheme, a co-operative store, and profit sharing: it was a spectacular industrial success.

SOCIALISM (II)

In the aftermath of the English Civil War, a group of people known as the "Diggers" tried to take and cultivate some unenclosed common land, with the object of distributing the produce to the poor: the project was brought to an end by mob-violence incited by local landlords. The Diggers appear to have been amongst those who were to become the early Quakers, and drew on an old Christian tradition which held that common ownership was more "perfect" than private ownership. The Diggers asserted that private property was the root cause of all evil. As pacifists, the Diggers

took the Christian doctrine of brotherly love literally. There are hints that the Diggers asserted the equality of the sexes and practiced free love: these factors, along with the rejection of the economic, religious, and legal authority structure of existing society exemplified by the Diggers, as well as their pacifism, their concern for the poor, their belief that humans were naturally good, and their condemnation of private property, were to be continuing threads in socialist thought.

Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier all distrusted the established economic, religious, and political power structure, and asserted the need for the control of such matters to be in the hands of the producers. They all saw reform as being carried out at the local community level, within existing society, independently of existing institutions, without bothering about reforms to governmental forms or political systems.

These early socialists saw the socio-economic condition of the majority, the great mass of ordinary people, as the matter of most concern, and the primary task of the individual as that of promoting the greater good of the general community. They considered that liberal individualism was incompatible with the aim of promoting the general happiness. All viewed modern science and technology as crucial aids in the promotion of the general good, and the skilled tradesman and technological innovator as the agency and conduit of progress.

All of these three were internationalistic, and felt that their ideas should be applied on a world-wide basis. Despite Saint-Simon's belief in the necessity of large-scale national planning, none of the early socialists really took into account the state and the relationship of their ideal communities to it, let alone the relationships between states. They saw little further than a social organization based on a production unit, whether industrial or agricultural or both, and the state was irrelevant to their thinking.

Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier were hardly great thinkers (although the two latter were heavily influenced by the thought of Rousseau) and have been the butt of a good deal of ridicule from those who espouse other ideological positions: Marx referred to them as "utopian" socialists, conservatives considered their proposed social arrangements to be scandalous and unworkable, and liberals insisted that economic forces would prevent the fruition of any such schemes. Yet the projects of these early socialists had an enormous influence amongst the general populace. Many attempts to set up socialist communities have indeed failed in the short term, sometimes because of bad luck, commonly because of violent opposition from the wider community, frequently because

of lack of basic knowledge of the work processes by which they had hoped to live, and most often because of dissension within the communities. These failures have been held up to a great deal of scornful attention by detractors. But a great many of these communities succeeded for a considerable length of time before becoming absorbed into the wider liberal socio-economic system.

The spread of democratic ideas during the nineteenth century greatly influenced the evolution of socialist thought. Owen's ideas had been democratized, and the trade union movement, with some support from conservative opinion, achieved some legislative reforms in workplace conditions. The co-operative movement was also quite successful. The ideas of Karl Marx did not arouse much interest amongst British trade unionists, who were more concerned with improving the position of their fellow union members than the (to them, rather abstract) interests of the international working class, and who were repelled by Marx's atheism. Also, the Liberal-Labour movement in Britain developed coincidently with Marxism and began to deliver immediate positive results. The emphasis of the socialist movement shifted to a transformation of the state and its political and governmental institutions.

The Fabian Society was a group of middle-class intellectuals who worked closely with the Labour Party and the trade unions to solve practical problems. Their socialism was derived partly from the Owenite tradition and partly from the developed liberalism of John Stuart Mill. Full adult male suffrage meant that the political means existed for achieving social reform by the democratic process when discussion and persuasion had garnered support and votes. The Fabians insisted on gradual reform, in order to avoid unacceptable political, social, and economic disruption, and consequent opposition to further reforms, and also on careful research into social problems before reform-policy goals were set.

The Fabians aimed, in the very long term, for the eventual extinction of private property in land and the transfer of ownership to the community of such industry as can be conveniently managed by the community, rather than by private ownership. Rather than supporting the appropriation of land and industry to the workers or any other class, the Fabians seek to benefit society as a whole within the nation-state.

Guild socialism had considerable currency in the first half of the 20th century, and still has some supporters. The basic notion, crudely put, would see the trade unions expanded and altered so that

an industry (for example, the steel industry) would see everyone associated with the industry - whether labourer, tradesman, accountant or physicist - as members of one enormous guild. Democratic control of the industry by the workers would parallel political democracy in the state, although some thinkers, the “syndicalists”, saw the state as irrelevant to a developed guild system.

In Germany, Marx’s writings gained wide acceptance in the working-class movement. However, many German socialists, notably Edward Bernstein, whilst accepting the main thrust of Marx’s theories, rejected the notion of a collapse of capitalism and the necessity for a workers revolution, substituting instead the idea of workers’ political parties gaining control of the state by democratic means in order to achieve social reforms. This form of socialism has achieved considerable political success in the post-World War II era, and has influenced the attitudes of political parties which purport to represent the interests of workers in the Western liberal democracies.

DEMOCRACY (I)

“Democracy” means “government by ‘the people’”. It involves the presupposition that power and sovereignty should, or does, reside in “the people”, rather than in the crown, or the church, or some other institution, group of people, or person. Since the early 19th century, democracy has been increasingly regarded by Western Europeans as a “good thing”, as a legitimatizing of a governmental system, as the very basis of good government, regardless of the structural systems of the political and legal institutions of the state. Democracy is, in itself, an ideology. Liberalism, socialism, conservatism, and Marxism are not necessarily democratic idea-systems in their political application. The claim to represent the people has led to various authoritarian regimes justifying their authority by alleging that authority to have a popular basis, by asserting their administration to be “democratic”. Governments routinely interfere with the operation of structurally democratic systems so that they function to reinforce the established authority-structure, rather than to reflect the aspirations of “the people”. The perception of who constitutes “the people”, who are the citizens, defines who can act politically within a democratic system, which is a governmental form where citizens are permitted to act politically.

In archaic Greece, political decision-making had been increasingly usurped over the centuries by a landed aristocracy. Social and economic change, fueled by rapid population-growth, created hardship amongst the generality of ordinary people and the consequent political disruption resulted, in the various independent Greek *poleis*, in a number of different forms of government. This factor

is of great importance in the history of politics: rather than accept the traditional mode of government which had evolved over the centuries, people now began to make rational choices between forms of government and about the nature and character of the forms. Before this time, changes in government were usually merely changes in the personnel who ran the traditional power structures. Governments were now invented which were aristocracies, monarchies, oligarchies, tyrannies, and democracies; each of these differed from others of its kind according to local usage and notions of propriety. We know most about the democracy at Athens, due to the peculiar Athenian penchant for the use of the written word.

Briefly, political rule in the ancient world was divided between magistrates, what we would call public servants, under the instructions of the government, be it a monarch, council of aristocrats, or some other person or institution. Each magistrate, normally an aristocrat, had a more or less clearly-defined sphere of responsibility. In Greece, ex-magistrates became members of a council which was usually the governing body of the community. The decisions of the council, the choice of magistrates, and the approval of the magistrates' conduct-in-office were usually ratified by the assembly of the entire citizen body. The assembly would not usually initiate items of business, but gave or withheld approval of matters put before it by the (socially dominant) council or magistrates.

The citizens who composed the assembly, "the people", were adult males, usually heads of families, who could afford the basic weaponry which enabled them to serve in the community's fighting force. Birth to citizen parents was a prerequisite for citizenship. With rare aristocratic exceptions, women took no part in the assembly. Men who could not afford the gear necessary to perform effective military functions had no voice in the assembly. Residents of foreign birth, including slaves, were not citizens - being citizens of their own birthplace - and had no part in the assembly. In the Greek, notably the Athenian, democracies, the essential change from the traditional form of government was the shift of policy initiation and decision-making from the council to the assembly: the council was stripped of most of its powers. In the developed democracy at Athens, the community's reliance on its fleet made it dependent on the services of the poorer citizens as rowers, so that these, too, gained a voice in the assembly. For the first time, a large, urban-based society had included all its fully-adult male citizen-members in political decision-making. Partly because internal taxation was largely a matter of wealthy people providing public goods - a ship for the fleet, payment of rowers, providing the infrastructure for religious festivals - conspicuous personal consumption by the wealthy was, in general, an occasion for

intense social disapproval in Greece and was sometimes legally restrained. The institution of democracy put private expenditure further into the public arena, to the disgust of the leaders of non-democratic communities. It must be stressed in this connection that the majority of aristocratic and wealthy citizens at Athens were firmly in support of the Athenian democracy over its long and efficient duration.

Magistracies in the ancient world were commonly held for periods of *only one year or less,* in order to minimize corruption and the illegitimate concentration of power. Under the Athenian democracy, as well as restrictions on the length of service, consecutively repeated holding of the same office was generally disallowed, the performance of duties whilst in office was closely scrutinized, and most magistrates were chosen by lot. Although a large political unit by ancient standards, at around 10,000 adult male citizens Athens was still a fairly small, close-knit community. Because of these factors, most citizens would have held important office several times during their lives, and were therefore experienced in the proper conduct of affairs. Political decision-making was in the hands of the democratic assembly, and magistrates acted on the instructions of the assembly within the law. The democracy, jealous of its political privileges, carefully scrutinized the citizenship rolls, and the sexual conduct of women was severely restricted. The major weakness in this form of government was the possibility of the assembly itself acting illegally. It is important to note that the notion of political freedom within the corporate, or organic, societies of the ancient world was not individualistic. What was at issue was the freedom to serve the community in conformity with the ideas and practices of that particular society; freedom from the restrictions of the community, the rights of the individual, was not an issue. Direct democracy has had an historical tendency to motivate citizens to enforce social conformity.

Although some self-governing communities evolved democratic-tending political forms during the European mediæval period, and the notion of representation developed during the Middle Ages, democracy was generally out of favour in political theory and practice until the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau’s thought tended to follow themes which ignored conclusions which he had reached elsewhere, so that his democratic theory can be used to support widely-differing conclusions. Having been born in Switzerland, Rousseau’s political ideas were strongly influenced by the direct democratic practices which that state had implemented since its mediæval inception, as well as his perceptions of classical Greek democracy.

Most of the leaders of the American Revolution of 1776 were very far from being democratic. Democracy was generally regarded at that time as “mob rule”, and was viewed very unfavourably. The model for the new polity was not ancient Athens, but Republican Rome. However, local government in much of what was to become the United States of America was conducted by “the town meeting”, by direct democracy. Many of the rank and file American revolutionaries were strongly influenced by Rousseau. Thomas Jefferson possessed a Rousseauean faith in the ability of the people to make wise decisions. And the American property qualification for the franchise was set so low that the United States was a defacto democracy (in the sense of admitting adult male suffrage) from the beginning.

DEMOCRACY (II)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was concerned to resolve the contradiction between the pursuit of liberty and the need for the security of government. Like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke before him, Rousseau began with a hypothetical individual, man-in-a-state-of-nature, but Rousseau’ life of “natural man” is much more romantically benign than Locke’s conception, and quite opposed to the pessimistic view of Hobbes. Rousseau reconciled liberty with government by means of democracy: if a free person is one who rules themself, then a community is free when people also rule themselves. Individuals must give up all their rights to the community; but in so doing they give themselves to no one. This elimination of individual rights against the community is correlated with the notion of the General Will. The General Will is that will which exists in every individual which is identical with the best interest of the community. Each individual also has a Particular Will, which is what they perceive to be their apparent interest. The sum of these particular wills, where these aim only at their own welfare, is the Will of All. When people are living at their best moral potential, the Will of All and the General Will coincide. Further, a person’s actual will is what they think they want, but a person’s real will is the General Will. Those enlightened individuals who are able to perceive the General Will are morally entitled to coerce those who are not so gifted: the latter can be “forced to be free”. The totalitarian implications of this are fairly obvious, and are heightened by Rousseau’s introduction of a “law-giver” from outside the community to initiate the rules of conduct for his model democracy.

Despite this, Rousseau’s notion of equality is fundamental to democracy. Political equality means that everyone possesses an equal ability to make political choices which affect their community and

therefore themselves. Therefore decisions should be made by a free and equal majority vote of the citizens at a group meeting. The more important the issue, the closer to a unanimous vote is required; the more the matter calls for a quick resolution, the smaller is the required majority for enactment. This principle is today frequently, if not generally, applied in liberal democracies: matters perceived to be of fundamental importance are put to referendum. Democracy is majority rule. Rousseau strongly disapproved of representation, which he saw as the abdication of freedom.

Referendum, citizens' initiative, and recall are methods which are in use in many liberal states in order to further democratize a representative system of government. In a representative system the majority do not rule: the majority is ruled by a small minority of persons who are claimed to represent the interest of the majority. However, certain issues which are considered to be of unusual importance are commonly referred directly to the people for decision by referendum, where a large majority vote, often two-thirds, is required for resolution. Some states have a provision for the exercise of direct legislative power by citizen's initiative, which requires a legislature to consider a law outlined in a petition signed by a certain percentage of electors; should the legislature refuse to pass the law the matter must be submitted to referendum. Another device which can democratize a representative system is the recall of a public official whose performance-in-office is the target of a petition of a sufficient percentage of electors: the official must then stand for re-election.

These provisions imply that the holders of public office are the delegates, in some sense, of their electorates, and therefore bound to obey the wishes of the electors. For Edmund Burke, however, the office-holder is the representative of the community as a whole, including those who have no vote, and cannot be limited by the electorate during the period of incumbency.

The Compte de Tocqueville (1805-1859) had visited the United States and, whilst admiring the fledgling democracy, feared that it showed an unhealthy tendency towards politically-enforced social conformity, a "tyranny of the majority". John Stuart Mill was alarmed by this threat but committed to representative democracy for sound philosophical reasons:

(1)No ruling class can be trusted to govern in the interest of the community.
(2)People's actions are always determined by their private, worldly, personal interests, and each individual is the best judge of their own interest.
(3)Modern society is too large to be effectively governed by direct democracy.
(4)The only rulers who will rule in the interest of the governed are those whose interests are in accordance with the governed.

(5)Only if the rulers are accountable to the governed will the rulers identify with the interests of the governed.
(6)Fear of loss of power will force the rulers to govern in the interest of the community.

It is important to remember that political parties, in the sense of the modern organized and disciplined political organizations that we know today, did not exist until the late nineteenth century. What were called “parties” were loose aggregations of individuals who might not necessarily vote together on any particular issue. Most of the thinkers discussed in this course would probably have been horrified at the distortion of the political systems that they knew or envisaged which could, or have been, caused by organized parties in the legislature. Our own Australian Constitution makes no mention of political parties.

Mill was committed to “the improvement of mankind”, and he argued that mass public education was a prerequisite for this end, and that political participation was one of the best forms of education, forcing people to learn general principles and argue from them. He also argued that the ability of unusual individuals such as Sokrates, Jesus, and Bentham was essential for human progress, and feared that social democracy would suppress such eccentrics.

When Mill discovered Hare’s book, *Treatise on the Election of Representatives* (1859), he thought that Hare had discovered a practical means to prevent, or curtail, the tyranny of the majority. Hare’s scheme was for proportional representation, which can result in multi-member electorates, and any elector would be at liberty to vote for any candidate regardless of where that candidate was standing. This provision was to ensure the presence of minority voices, including the best minds of the nation, in the parliament. Mill added provisions designed to ensure that every section of the community was represented according to its numerical strength. Mill dismisses direct democracy because it may minimize the influence of the better-educated section of the community, but asserts the value of participation as a protection against “sinister interests”: the more people involved in politics, the less likely it is that any special interest group will be able to get its own way at community expense. The weakness of these proposals lies in the assumption that citizens will always vote for the “best” candidates: it did not occur to the 19th century democratic theorists that the workers might vote for other workers.

Mill viewed society as an institution for higher education, and its purpose is to promote the development of its individual citizens to the fullest extent of their powers, to “improve” them, and he concluded that a representative democracy was the best form of government to achieve that end.

But mere equal suffrage is not enough. Participation of the citizens in public functions is the best moral and civic education, calling upon the need to weigh interests other than one's own, to apply rules other than one's own prejudices to the resolution of conflicting claims, and to be guided by principles which are founded in the common good. So Mill supported trade unions, worker's co-operatives, workplace democracy, and participation in local council affairs, and other clubs and societies, viewing such activities as a prerequisite education for deciding which candidates to choose as a Representative for parliament and other wider political bodies.

The rise of modern organized and disciplined political parties and their bureaucracies has subverted Mill's ideal of mass citizen political participation by imposing a party platform on the representatives and largely substituting this party platform for open discussion of many issues. Contemporary "élitist" democrats claim that such high levels of participation are dangerous for democracy, and that average citizens in a modern society have no time for consistent interest in public affairs. Basically, however, this position reflects the self-interest of the power-êlites in our political, economic, and social organizations, persons who would prefer the masses to remain ignorant and uninvolved, and is to be viewed with grave suspicion.

MARXISM (I)

Karl Marx was born in 1818, studied at the universities of Bonn and Berlin, with special attention to the philosophy of Hegel, and became involved in political and economic criticism of the Berlin and other governments. Unlike Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon, Marx was a trained, disciplined academic thinker, whose education had depth as well as breadth. After some years of moving about the continent, actively involved in socialist organizations, he ended up in London in 1849, where he lived for the rest of his life. Marx distinguished between a number of different types of socialism, calling his own thought "scientific socialism", and tending to lump the others under the rubric of "utopian socialism", although he especially applied this term to the thought of Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier. Marx's own thought is largely based on the ideas of Hegel and Rousseau, although neither Marx nor most Marxists would admit this.

Marx insisted that there were descriptive laws of society which were just as inviolable as the laws of nature, such as the law of gravity, and that much of the energy of the earlier socialists had been wasted because, being ignorant of the laws of society, they attempted to attempted to introduce

reforms which were impossible of achievement, especially in the longer term. For Marx, the earlier socialists had placed too much faith in human rationality, believing erroneously that social evolution is random, and that they could therefore change society into whatever social form they considered to be desirable. Marx insisted that political and social revolution can only succeed when the economic basis of the society had evolved to a point where the proposed new order was its natural expression. Social change is the result of economic evolution and the reverse cannot apply.

That is, society is a natural phenomenon and is therefore, like other natural phenomena, subject to descriptive laws. As society changes, these laws of society determine the emergence of particular social phenomena at particular stages of development. Society is an organic whole, so that no part can be changed without affecting the whole: therefore piecemeal social reform is impossible; therefore the improvement of the standard of living of the great mass of ordinary people can only be achieved by a revolutionary reconstruction of the whole of society. The earlier socialists had wanted to improve society without changing its basic form, to have both a ready supply of cheap labour and a happy and prosperous workforce, in Marx's view a logical contradiction.

Karl Marx adapted Hegel's notion of the dialectic to explain the relationships between the economic structure, the way in which goods are produced or obtained, of a society and the social, intellectual, and political forms which characterize that society. He insisted that the economic structure determines the forms and nature of the other aspects of human society at that particular historical moment. Changes in the mode of production create conflicts with the existing social order, which is a product of an earlier mode of production: the existing social order is then not an expression of the mode of production, but a hindrance on it. Revolution ensues, until the social order is once more an expression of the productive forces of society. All morality, social hierarchy, religion, political forms, art, science, and philosophy are a superstructure which is always determined by the nature of the economic substructure. Elements of the superstructure cannot alter the economic substructure. Therefore, art, religion, science, morality, social structure, philosophy, and politics can be explained by examining the economic system, but the reverse does not apply.

Marx asserted that, because the economic system of a society does change, and that these changes are in conflict with the existing social superstructure, that each society carries within it its contradiction, the seeds of its own destruction. For example, in the society of mediæval Europe, people were essentially in control of the production which they undertook. The tradesman chose,

and often produced, the raw materials for his work; he chose, and frequently made, the tools which he would use; he chose his hours of work; he chose the form of his product; he decided on the disposal of his product. However, some merchants, the incipient capitalists, began to employ failed tradesmen by the hour: the capitalist provided the raw materials, the tools, defined the hours of work, established the work-practices, and disposed of the product; the tradesman had no control over these matters. Marx called this "alienation". Throughout the mediæval period this capitalist mode of production expanded, both within industries and to other industries. The mediæval mode of production, the "thesis", produced the capitalist mode of production, its "antithesis", and the two merged in the craft-based capitalist-dominated world of Renaissance and early-modern Europe, the "synthesis", and the nation-states of Europe were the political expression of this process. The mediæval mode of production was destroyed, and the social superstructure which was based upon it was destroyed with it. In this view of history, each historical period can be considered as the thesis beginning a sequence of events, the antithesis of the preceding period, or the synthesis of the two preceding periods. Marx felt that an understanding of this historical process would allow enlightened persons to guide events in a way that would benefit the great mass of people, the working class.

"Class", in the usage of Marx, has a precise meaning which is different from the general-language meaning which was current in his day. In general usage, "class" was any group of things which could be held, for the purposes of discussion, to have some characteristic in common. When applied to society, "class" meant a combination of birth and occupation, and was rarely clearly defined, but people tended to speak of, for example, the "working classes", or the "educated classes", not of the "working class" or the "educated class": income was not usually a factor in class distinction, but the "working classes" were usually taken be those who earned their livelihood from manual labour. "Class" was not immutable, but being partially determined by birth, was seldom transcended by an individual: social mobility took generations to achieve. Marx simplified this complex mixture of prejudices, observable social realities, and unclear distinctions, by asserting that there were only two classes, the "ruling class" and the "working class". He admitted the temporary existence of a "middle class", or "bourgeoisie", but insisted that this class would, in time, be absorbed into the other two classes. The "ruling class" owes its position to its ownership of the "means of production": land, raw materials, factories and machinery. The "working class" included all people who, lacking income derived from their ownership of resources, were forced to

derive their livelihoods from employment in the production of goods and services: since this definition included a large number of persons of quite high social and official standing, it gives a quite different picture of society from the traditional view of class. Marx's political programme essentially involves abolishing the "ruling class" by transferring the ownership of the "means of production" to the "working class".

In Marx's view of history, the evolution of capitalism would result in the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands, as competition deprived the weaker owners of their property and forced them into the working class. As the income of the working class continually declined, the workers would no longer be able to afford to buy the goods and services produced by capitalist producers, driving many capitalists out of business and into the working class. The competition-driven need to extract ever-increasing profits from the labour of the workers would exert a downward trend on real wages until, driven by desperation, the workers would revolt against the capitalist state. The great task was to capture the revolution and guide its progress, so that a workers' state, organized according to Marx's principles of scientific socialism, could be set up. When the machinery of the worker-owned-and-controlled society was running smoothly, the state would become redundant and "wither away". Alternatively, democratic political action through established parliaments and legislatures might achieve the same ends through peaceful means, but Marx was not optimistic about this.

MARXISM (II)

One major difference between Karl Marx's thought and that of earlier socialists lies in the superior intellectual quality of the thought in his philosophy. Another major difference between Karl Marx and earlier socialists was Marx's realization of the importance of the state. Earlier socialists had virtually ignored the state, and distrusted politics and politicians; they attempted to change society by example, persuasion, and other purely social means. In Marx's day most people viewed the state as an external coercive power set over its subjects, rather than as an agency representing the citizens and expressing their rights. If we view the "state" as the monarch, served by his or her ministers and their public service departments which administer the day-to-day machinery of government we should not be far wrong. For us, in contemporary Australia, the Federal Cabinet and public service, together with their state counterparts, is the nearest equivalent. Social reformers in the 19th century saw a parliament or some similar representative body as being

above the state, as an organ for transforming the state. For Marx, the essential task of the workers was to take over the machinery of the state, as distinct from the parliament. Against the proponents of economic and social action, and against the proponents of industrial action in the form of strikes, Marx advocated political or parliamentary action. This action was dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist state and its replacement, in the first instance, by a “communist” state operating on Marxist principles. With the workers in control of all the various work processes in the economy, Marx felt that the state, having become increasingly redundant, would “wither away”; Marx did not foreshadow a disappearance of government, but saw the political process of the post-state period as a matter of mass-meetings, rather along the lines of Rousseau’s model of democracy. Anarchists, in their desire to scrap the state, wish to achieve immediately what Marx saw as a long-term aim.

Marx’s view of history carried with it the notion of waiting for the opportune time. The triumph of capitalism must be accomplished before the masses revolt, driven by desperation because they could not, as a result of unemployment due to technological redundancy and “rationalization” of the workforce, afford to purchase the means of subsistence; the capitalist state will collapse because it has been weakened by the drying-up of income due to the masses being unable to afford to purchase its products. Revolution before this historical coincidence is reached would be premature, and doomed to failure. The waiting period was to be utilized in educating the more able workers in Marxist economics and political science, so that when the revolution occurred, these prepared leaders would have the ability and vision to assume its control and direction.

This insistence by Marx on the necessity of waiting for the crisis of capitalism created problems for many activists who otherwise accepted the validity of Marx’s analyses. Many Marxist socialists felt the need to confront current political problems, often in ways of which Marx did not approve, in order to build and maintain a viable party. The questions surrounding the requirement of obtaining voter support and whether to endorse immediate reforms, as well as a conflict between the advocates of violent revolution and those who looked to parliamentary means to achieve the victory of the proletariat, resulted in a variety of revisions of Marx’s thought. Changing political circumstances and the continual evolution of capitalism created difficulties in relating real-world circumstances to Marx’s theories, as did continuing historical research which cast doubt upon the accuracy of the data on which Marx’s view of history was based. Philosophical criticism of Marx’s thought was often damaging. Further revisions followed. In the 20th century, Marxists frequently found themselves in the position of having captured revolutions which were based in the agonies of

rural populations rather than the problems of an industrial proletariat. More revisions ensued. Liberal and conservative establishments, faced with mass demands for political equality and economic stability, sometimes reacted with repression rather than reform, creating revolutions which pushed Marxists to the fore. Still further revisions ensued.

But ideology is about belief, it is a particular perspective with which one views the world and, despite a multiplicity of revisions, there are some factors which are common to Marxists as a whole. The first is the notion that social justice is not served when a wealthy and powerful few control the resources of society to the detriment of the living standards of the many. It is as well to note here that liberals are not happy with the notion of “the resources of society”, believing that ownership should be vested in individuals. Both Marxists and liberals oppose the essentially conservative concept of family property, which tends over time to concentrate wealth in a few families and locks it away from competitive, or progressive and scientific, exploitation. In this connection, Marxists believe that the economic surplus, the wealth, which is possessed by the families or individuals which form social élites, has been illegitimately stolen from the working masses whose labour has been used to create that wealth, or surplus, against the liberal and conservative views that such wealth is the wholly legitimate reward of initiative and sound management.

Marxists believe that social development is an historical process which is determined by natural factors which are as discoverable and ultimately predictable as the factors, such as gravity and the speed of light, which govern the physical world. Conservatives, on the other hand, believe that history is a combination of random chances with the efforts of exceptional individuals acting on an unalterable “human nature”, whilst liberals see every event as unique and of little relevance to other events, individual difference as being more significant than broad similarities, and the notion of “human nature” as a nonsense.

The history of human society is believed by Marxists to be the history of the relations between those who produce economic wealth and those who exploit the labour of the producers in order to take most of that economic wealth for their own use. Different stages of human development are characterized by the different ways, or modes of production, by which the exploiters take advantage of the exploited. Slavery is the crudest form of exploitation, but Marxists do not view the capitalist relationship between worker and employer as any less exploitative or more legitimate. For the

Marxist, the state is the political expression of the mode of production, and the modern state is merely the method by which the capitalist minority politically dominates the working masses. However, the democratic forms, despite their perversion by the élite to exclude the true democratic expression of the aspirations of the masses, do provide a means for the capture of the political process, and therefore the state, by the Marxists.

The growth of notions of ethnicity in the second half of the 20th century has subverted the state and presents a major challenge to both Marxist and liberal notions of human equality. Apart from their anarchist variants, Marxism, conservatism, and liberalism are predicated on the idea of the nation-state as a given factor in political life. Now regional and ethnic demands for autonomy threaten the continuing existence of the nation-state as presently constituted. Ideology has become a subtext in the human struggle for identity and self-determination. The breakup of the Soviet Union and other "communist" states represents a failure of the state, rather than a demonstration of the inadequacy of Marxism, as the continuing struggle for self-determination by groups within non-Marxist-states demonstrates. As an intellectual tool for social and political analysis, Marxism and Marxist-based theories still have value. Marxist beliefs about the proper ordering of society are still current, but whether Marxism remains a viable blueprint for political action remains to be seen.

CONCLUSION: WHERE HAVE ALL THE IDEOLOGIES GONE?

Karl Marx said that "ideology" was a "false consciousness" which resulted when the intellectual superstructure of a society had become alienated from the productive practice of that society. Many people have implied that "ideology" is a body of political and social beliefs different from our own, with the further inference that such belief has taken the place of the realistic and rational thought which, of course, informs our *own* political ideas. I have advanced the rather more complex suggestion that ideology happens when the value-belief system of a significant group of persons becomes the assumptions upon which a philosophical system is erected and the widespread acceptance of the conclusions of that philosophical enterprise as self-evident "truths" is the manifestation of an ideology: this implies that all ideological positions, having a sound basis in both rational philosophical discourse and the social experience of their adherents, possess some functional basis in confronting social and political problems.

Political ideology is a phenomenon of the modern world. In previous periods, political debate was about who should wield political power within a particular established order, rather than about fundamentally different kinds of socio-political order. Ideology is a product of mass-society which allows people to position themselves together with other members of the wider community of whom they might have no personal knowledge; it also allows people to position themselves in opposition to other members of the wider community. Ideologies roughly correspond with sets of socio-political interests which cut across social, occupational, and economic classes and, often, political parties or even nationalities. The probable causes for the emergence of these various ideologies were massive population growth, large movements of populations both within the borders of nation-states and internationally (making it difficult for people to depend on local institutions and customs for moral and physical support), the increasing complexity of apparent economic life, and the ever-increasing speed of technological and economic change. Ideologies present a view of the world which is sufficiently simplified to allow even persons of limited intellectual attainments to see some coherence (whether true or false is irrelevant) in events and attitudes. Ideologies tend to be international in their appeal and application, a circumstance which often results in ludicrous conspiracy theories.

The possessors of hereditary wealth, especially landed wealth, tend to incline towards conservatism because conservatism justifies their social, economic, and political position and aspirations within society as well as their general view of society: large numbers of working-class people and a substantial proportion of the middle classes see their livelihoods, opportunities for upward social mobility, capacity to pass on the fruits of their lives' endeavours to their children, and their capacity for living a stable and comfortable existence, as bound up with the establishment, and the continuing social and political dominance, of conservatism. Taxation which serves to support and maintain existing institutions without becoming too complex or financially burdensome on the individual is acceptable. Conservatives will favour some level of democracy insofar as it serves to limit the overweening power of the state and the possessors of non-hereditary wealth, and puts conservative-leaning politicians in the legislature.

Persons engaged in finance, manufacture, or trade, and those who are able to identify with the larger economic enterprise of the firms, will tend to favour free-trade liberalism. Taxation is regarded as an unwarranted impost on business, a distortion of the free market, and a contributor to the growth of a powerful and obnoxious state apparatus. Democracy brings with it the threat of

politically-inspired interference with manufacturing, trade, and work practices, but is tolerated so long as it serves to keep opposing ideologies from achieving effective political power. Professional people tend to favour social liberalism which, in raising the incomes, education standards, and living standards of the masses by regulating wages and establishing transfer payments, generates a mass-market for professional services. Taxation which is used to fund the services which employ professionals is acceptable, so long as it does not become burdensome on what is currently perceived to be the middle-income sector of society. Social liberals perceive democracy as a basic and fundamental precondition for a good society, so long as the electoral system can be modified to ensure that the electorate votes for the "best" candidates or parties. The highly-publicized (albeit brief and limited) political success of Pauline Hanson and her political associates in late-20th century Australia caused a number of "liberals" to question the validity of the democratic process.

Persons, who see themselves as disenfranchised and disempowered by current social and political conditions, particularly if they cannot see their interests being served by the other ideologies, will tend to favour some form of socialism, as do many professional people who see an opportunity to raise their relative status in the community within a political system numerically-dominated by the less-educated. Taxation which serves to transfer wealth from the high-income and high-wealth sector of society to the benefit of the low-income and socially and politically marginalized sector of society is favoured. Socialism has a tendency to wish to impose norms of behaviour across populations without regard for local customs, traditions, or variations in individual needs or character. Socialists tend to perceive democracy, especially direct and participatory democracy, as a necessary condition for a good political system, so long as public opinion supports their aims and policies; there is some tendency towards favouring technocracy: that is, effectively, rule by "experts".

Generally, all the ideologies favour democracy but, given the opportunity, will tinker with the structure and form of the system, or even subvert it, in order to further their aims. Democracy is not a necessary condition for any of these ideologies. Political leaders, regardless of ideology, do not trust the masses to consistently support government policy, and therefore do what they can to subvert democratic systems in order to pursue their policy aims. To put it another way, democrats will favour a version of democratic processes, forms and institutions which they feel will deliver a society which is in line with their other ideological concerns.

All of the ideologies have made a valuable contribution to our understanding of human social and political needs. Conservatives have pointed out the need for stability in our social, moral, and economic lives, and have highlighted the place of the hierarchical group in human society. Conservatives are not against change as such, but assert that social change should evolve slowly, in the natural course of social development: social change should not be legislated as, in the complex web of social interrelationships; even a small apparent “reform” may create imbalances and further injustices throughout the social system.

Liberals have highlighted the needs of the individual against the stultifying restrictions placed on the ability of the individual to act by the claims of the group to control and channel individual action. Liberals claim that all human progress is the cumulative result of innovative action by individuals. Liberals see tradition as merely an anchor on human progress imposed by dead people. Injustices abound in the world and, according to liberals, we are morally bound to correct them, as well as any further injustices which are brought to light by the corrections. We do not have the right to blame the natural order for moral failures, and hence do nothing.

Socialists, like the conservatives, view the group as the basic human unit, but unlike the conservatives, socialists see little need for an economic hierarchy: leaders are parasites on the body politic and the state bureaucracy is a parasite on society. Socialists, like liberals, see tradition as the dead hand of forgotten generations, but unlike liberals, socialists see progress as a result of social activity and interaction and deny any major importance to individual action. Marxists agree with conservatives that legislation to effect specific reforms often causes worse problems than the individual abuse, due to their perception of society as an organic whole in which no part can be affected without repercussions for all the other parts. The Marxist answer to this problem is to reform all of society at once, using the power of the state. Socialists have highlighted the fact that the majority of people are not members of a landed gentry, captains of industry, or educated professionals, and that a political system which focuses on the needs of such people, or operates to the primary benefit of such people, can only be grossly inequitable. Socialists claim that the equitable economic well-being of the majority should be the chief aim of all political endeavours.

Democrats have highlighted the fact that politics is about choices, and assert that every individual has an equal ability to choose where his or her interests lie. They further argue that the choices

expressed by the majority of voters are necessarily the correct choices for a society, and that it is an impertinence to suggest that informed majority opinion can be wrong.

Anarchism is an ideology which has not been discussed so far in this course. Very generally, anarchists are anti-authoritarians who deny the usefulness, or the need for, the centralized nation-state and its repressive power. Anarchists may have the foundations of their thought in any of the major ideologies, so that their only common ground is contempt for governments and their works. However, today the most influential forms of anarchism are positioned on the radical left and are Marxist in their general orientation and in the specifics of their thought.

Ideology has had a major rôle to play in the politics of the 19th and 20th centuries. As the 20th century drew to a close, other aspects of human social and political life came to the fore as central and pressing problems: religion and ethnicity are currently burning issues around the world. But ideology is not dead. Religions are, as belief-systems, ideologies. Increasingly, in the late-20th and early 21st centuries religions have apparently manifested themselves as *political* ideologies. But if one looks under the surface of the revolutionary, sometimes terrorist, movements around the world which claim religious, rather than primarily political, justification for their actions, one can discern the political ideology which underpins their activities. By and large, religious fundamentalism is usually radical-conservative. Those who proclaim the "death of ideology" are usually free-market liberals who refuse see their own position as an ideological one. Ideology remains a sub-text in all political confrontation and dispute.

Underneath the ethnic conflict and violence which is currently endemic around the world lies the problem of groups which perceive themselves to have been marginalized either by more advantaged groups within their political communities or by more powerful forces controlled by external groups. The capture of the nation-state by privileged groups has led to the marginalization of groups which claim some sort of ethnic identity, so that ethnicity, religion, and culture can often be perceived to have superseded ideology as the mainsprings of political dissent and action. However, the claim to ethnic, or other group identity, is an ideological claim: ethnicity, like religion and feminism, is an ideology, and persons will assert their ethnic or other group political claims within the context of one of the major ideologies. Beneath the claims for ethnic recognition and autonomy lie the ideological values which inform those claims.