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IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS  
IDÉOLOGIE ET POLITIQUE



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## INTRODUCTION

The papers which are printed in this volume were presented at a colloquium held in Florence at the European University Institute. They form part of a series of three colloquia designed to explore the relationship between political thought and political experience. The theme of the present volume is 'politics and ideology'; forthcoming volumes will be concerned with 'politics and language' and with 'politics and culture'. The aim has been to bring together with professional political philosophers, specialists in such disciplines as history, sociology, linguistics and psychology from the different language-groups which compose European culture, not only for comparative research and analysis, but in the hope of enlarging understanding by means of an interdisciplinary dialogue.

In the pages which follow, a number of eminent scholars from different countries and different linguistic backgrounds address themselves to a cultural innovation which every European nation has experienced with varying degrees of intensity in modern times: the emergence of the ideological as a dominant mode of political thinking. As more than one contributor to these pages notes, the word 'ideology' – or, more precisely, the French word '*idéologie*' – was first used in 1796 by Destutt de Tracy as another name for his science of ideas. He intended the word to be a technical term for a system he had developed from Locke's philosophy. But however academic this intention, Destutt de Tracy and those who shared his beliefs had such a strong emotional attachment to the 'science of ideas', thinking it might save the nation and perhaps the whole human race, that the word '*idéologie*' promptly ceased in their mouths to be a mere descriptive term; it became a eulogism, rich in laudatory emotive content.



A few years later the word '*idéologue*' was spoken in a markedly different tone of voice by Napoleon. Napoleon had for a time been well disposed towards Destutt de Tracy and his friends, but after the setbacks of 1812, the Emperor decided that the *idéologues* were armchair intellectuals, doctrinaires trying to solve practical problems they did not understand in the light of pure theory; and he spoke of them with total scorn. Thus we find the word 'ideology' transformed from a eulogism into a dyslogism.

Throughout its history the word 'ideology' has been seldom used in a neutral colourless way: it has almost always been either a laudatory or a pejorative word, and this is one of the central problems which arises in any discussion of ideology. Political philosophers since the early nineteenth century have supplied competing interpretations of ideology, when they have not been frankly stipulating their own definitions of the word: and these different ways of speaking about ideology have permeated political talk in virtually all European languages where '*idéologie*', '*Ideologie*', '*ideologia*' and so forth, reappear with minimal orthographical variations.

And yet ideology is clearly more than a word, more than a concept; it is a reality which as much as anything else shapes political action in the twentieth century. The essays printed in this collection illustrate some of the different perspectives from which ideology has been and can be interpreted. If there is no clear agreement as to what an ideology is, there does seem to be some general consensus as to what an ideology is *not*. An ideology is not a religion, although there do appear to be points of resemblance. A religion is a system of faith, worship and conduct, centred on the unseen world, the sacred and the divine. Ideologies are directed towards an explanation of human history and the human predicament in categories considered to be essentially rational. Both, of course, look beyond theory to action. Both religion and ideology demand 'commitment' and yet if we think of the great days of medieval Christendom, one may doubt if 'commitment' was then a marked feature of religion. The church was part of everyone's environment and culture in Europe; baptism took place in infancy; no one ever 'joined' the church; everyone imbibed the Christian religion with his mother's milk. Here, of course, we are speaking of a past world. At the beginning of the modern world, religion began to take on a different form, to become closer to what we now call ideology.



Savonarola's Christianity in *quattrocento* Italy had distinctly ideological features; the stress on a political programme, the militant spirit, the appeal to the multitude, the attempt to establish a puritan utopia in the City of Florence. Calvinism in Geneva had similar characteristics, as had various forms of protestant sectarianism in the English-speaking world. Certain types of militant Counter-Reformation Catholicism became similarly 'ideological'. Thus the antithesis between religion and ideology is not as clear as everyone might wish it to be, especially in an age when ideology is so often regarded as a secular substitute for the old religions which have lost their hold.

Contributors to this volume all seem to be equally agreed that an ideology is not a philosophy. There are, however, various ways of positing that antithesis. For some theorists, such as Sartre, an ideology is an inferior or secondary system of thought that simply does not deserve the name of a philosophy. Others see ideology as a form of 'false consciousness', which is unable to achieve the philosopher's goal of truth precisely because it is subordinate to some more or less veiled interest, which sees the world as it wants to see it, and not as it is. When falsehood is built into the concept of ideology, the understanding of it becomes a matter of 'unmasking' it.

Although, as several essays printed here explain in detail, the connection between ideology and falseness has been asserted by a series of thinkers from Hegel through Marx and Lenin to Karl Mannheim, there is not even within this line of theorising an unambiguous concept of ideology. At least some of these writers come to the conclusion that all philosophy is to some degree ideological, and are so forced to consider the possibility of there being a true ideology, or if not to consider it, at least to allow that possibility to exist. And thus paradoxically, ideology is sometimes found to be overtly repudiated, and later covertly restored to a decent ontological status by one and the same theorist.

Ideological literature, on whatever definition of 'ideology' one chooses to depend, is vast and ever increasing; but the literature about ideology in any of the languages of Western Europe is surprisingly exiguous. There is a gap waiting to be filled, a felt need for clarification, explanation, analysis and criticism of ideology; it is hoped that this book will be recognized as contributing something useful towards answering that demand.

*Maurice Cranston*







*Robert Derathé*

## LE MOT ET LE CONCEPT D'IDEOLOGIE

La plupart des études consacrées au concept d'idéologie – je pense, en particulier, à celles de Wladimir Weidlé<sup>1</sup>, d'Adam Schaff<sup>2</sup> et d'Edward Shils<sup>3</sup> – se ressemblent, car elles traitent des mêmes questions ou posent les mêmes problèmes: la signification ou les significations du mot, la fonction de l'idéologie, ses rapports avec la science, la conscience ou encore la vérité, et, pour terminer, la question à la mode vers les années 1950, la fin du siècle des idéologies.

### I. LA DÉFINITION DE L'IDÉOLOGIE

Selon Adam Schaff<sup>4</sup>, il y aurait trois sortes de définitions de l'idéologie:

'La définition génétique de l'idéologie part des conditions qui l'ont engendrée ou qui ont accompagné sa naissance. Sous l'angle de la structure, on définit l'idéologie en partant de ce qui distingue – du point de vue logique ou de la connaissance – les phrases composant l'idéologie de celles qui composent la science, par exemple. Les définitions fonctionnelles enfin, soulignent les fonctions remplies par l'idéologie à l'égard de la société, de groupes sociaux ou d'individus'.

On ne saurait, à mon avis, faire des distinctions aussi tranchées et il me paraît indispensable qu'une définition de l'idéologie tienne compte de l'emploi du mot par ceux qui en ont assuré la diffusion ou la popularité. Il est donc difficile d'exclure les éléments génétiques qui sont essentiels à la compréhension du mot et de son usage.



Il y a eu, en gros, trois emplois ou trois sens du mot 'idéologie': 1) Selon celui qui a créé le mot, Destutt de Tracy, l'idéologie est la science des idées et, dans son esprit, ce mot nouveau était destiné à remplacer celui de métaphysique, car, à son époque, la métaphysique était discréditée. 2) On peut, en outre, employer le mot *idéologie* pour désigner l'art de manier et de peser les idées. C'est ce que fait, par exemple, Maurice Barrès, dans *L'Ennemi des lois* où, parlant des israélites, il dit: 'Non point qu'ils ne goûtent et ne comprennent l'idéologie, mais elle ne les échauffe pas' <sup>5</sup>. 3) Reste le sens qui fait l'objet de notre colloque, l'idéologie en tant qu'idéologie politique.

Cela dit, je suis d'accord avec Adam Schaff: il faut éviter d'adopter d'emblée une définition – qu'on l'appelle structurale ou autrement – qui préjuge des réponses à apporter aux diverses questions soulevées par le concept même; nous devons, au contraire, prendre comme base de départ une définition *neutre*, donc sans doute provisoire, mais sur laquelle l'accord puisse se faire.

Voici, à titre d'exemples, deux définitions *neutres*:

1) Celle d'Adam Schaff: 'L'idéologie est un système d'opinions qui, en se fondant sur un système de valeurs admis, détermine les attitudes et les comportements des hommes à l'égard des objectifs souhaités du développement de la société, du groupe social ou de l'individu' <sup>6</sup>.

2) Celle de Louis Althusser, qui me paraît meilleure: 'Il suffit de savoir très schématiquement qu'une idéologie est un système (possédant sa logique et sa rigueur propres) de représentations (images, mythes, idées ou concepts selon les cas) doué d'une existence et d'un rôle historique au sein d'une société donnée. Sans entrer dans le problème des rapports d'une science à son passé (idéologique), disons que l'idéologie comme système de représentations se distingue de la science en ce que la fonction pratico-sociale l'emporte en elle sur la fonction théorique (ou fonction de connaissance)' <sup>7</sup>.

Cette définition neutre et schématique parce qu'elle est neutre, permet d'indiquer les caractères généraux de l'idéologie.

1. Tout d'abord, l'idéologie est un système de représentations qui, comme le souligne Althusser, peuvent être de nature très différente. Cette définition ne préjuge pas de la valeur de ces représentations. Aussi me semble-t-il préférable à celle de Geertz <sup>8</sup>: 'une image schématique de l'ordre social' ou à celle de Harry M. Johnson:



'L'idéologie se compose d'idées choisies ou déformées relatives à un système social ou à une classe d'un système social, quand ces idées tendent à devenir réelles et comportent une évaluation plus ou moins explicite des faits' <sup>9</sup>. Harry M. Johnson précise sa pensée en ajoutant:

'Cette définition est plus étroite que d'autres en ceci que l'idéologie se compose uniquement de ces aspects ou de ces parties d'un système d'idées sociales qui sont déformées ou arbitrairement choisies si l'on se réfère à un point de vue scientifique. Une idéologie est un système plus ou moins cohérent d'idées dans lequel la déformation idéologique est importante. (A vrai dire, l'expression "déformation idéologique" est pléonastique; je m'en servirai néanmoins, puisque le sens technique du mot *idéologie* n'est pas universellement établi)' <sup>10</sup>.

On le voit, une telle définition se situe à l'opposé d'une définition *neutre*, puisque la déformation et le choix arbitraire des idées devient le caractère distinctif de l'idéologie, celle-ci se trouvant d'emblée dépréciée et opposée à la science. Une telle définition serait sans doute acceptée par les adversaires de l'idéologie, mais rejetée par ses partisans. Elle a toutefois l'avantage d'être précise, tandis que les définitions neutres que nous avons citées restent schématiques et ne permettent guère de distinguer une idéologie d'une vision ou d'une conception du monde (*Weltanschauung*) <sup>11</sup>.

2. Le second caractère de l'idéologie est sa relation étroite à l'action sociale, ce qui la distingue de la science: 'L'idéologie, dit Julien Freund <sup>12</sup>, est une pensée d'action, non de connaissance ou d'explication'. Ce second caractère est peut-être plus important que le premier, car il indique au moins *grosso modo* la fonction de l'idéologie qui est de déterminer une attitude, un comportement, ou encore une action politique ou sociale. Sur ce second point, le passage ou le glissement de la définition *neutre* aux définitions dépréciatives est aisé.

Comme l'idéologie est en relation étroite avec la pratique politique, on dira, par exemple, qu'elle est indifférente au vrai et au faux, ou encore étrangère 'aux catégories du vrai et du faux'. Ainsi Julien Freund <sup>13</sup>: 'Certes, l'idéologie s'affirme comme opinion vraie, bien qu'en général, elle ne se plie pas aux conditions théoriques et méthodologiques de la pensée désintéressée. Son but est cependant immédiatement pratique, de sorte que sa soi-disant vérité n'est qu'un



moyen pour conquérir et dominer l'opinion, s'imposer aux esprits afin de les diriger dans un sens déterminé: celui de la puissance qu'elle sert'. Pour caractériser l'idéologie, on l'affublera des expressions 'soi-disant vérité', 'pseudo-savoir', 'mensonge', 'tromperie' <sup>14</sup>. Les idéologies seront ainsi présentées comme 'des entreprises rationnelles de pression' (R. Polin) ou des 'instruments de domination'.

## II. L'HISTOIRE DU MOT OU LES ÉLÉMENTS GÉNÉTIQUES

Comme nous l'avons dit au début, il est indispensable, si l'on veut essayer de comprendre le sens ou les divers sens du mot *idéologie*, de se référer à son histoire. Sans entreprendre ici une histoire du mot, je me bornerai à indiquer quelques jalons et m'en tiendrai à trois: 1) Napoléon et la condamnation des idéologues; 2) la conception marxiste de l'idéologie; 3) l'idéologie et la sociologie de la connaissance. Ce sont là, en effet, les trois étapes qu'il faut rappeler, si l'on veut comprendre les problèmes actuels posés par l'idéologie.

### 1. Napoléon et les idéologues

Pour Destutt de Tracy, le créateur du mot, l'idéologie désigne une science sans rapport direct avec la politique. C'est, en réalité, Napoléon qui, en qualifiant les adeptes de l'idéologie, parmi lesquels il incluait les adversaires du régime, et, en premier lieu, sa bête noire, Madame de Staël, du terme péjoratif d'*idéologues*, a ouvert la voie à la conception moderne de l'idéologie, comme l'ont souligné la plupart des historiens. Ainsi François Picavet, dont on connaît le volumineux ouvrage sur *Les Idéologues* (Paris, 1891), écrit dans le tome XX de la *Grande Encyclopédie* (p. 538 A): 'C'est en 1796... que Destutt de Tracy créa le mot *idéologie*. Ses amis et lui s'appelèrent des *idéologistes*. Plus que personne Bonaparte et Chateaubriand ont donné au mot *idéologue* l'acception défavorable qu'il a longtemps conservée'. Plus récemment Karl Mannheim a insisté sur le rôle joué par Napoléon dans l'histoire du mot:

'La conception moderne de l'idéologie, dit-il, prit naissance lorsque Napoléon, trouvant que ce groupe de philosophes s'opposait à ses ambitions impériales, les étiqueta dédaigneusement *idéologues*. Par là, le mot prit un sens péjoratif que, comme le mot *doc-*



*trinaire*, il a conservé jusqu'à ce jour... Nous avons appelé l'attention sur la nuance de sens que Napoléon donna au mot "idéologie", afin de montrer clairement que la langue courante contient souvent plus de philosophie et a une signification plus grande pour l'exposé futur des problèmes que les discussions académiques qui tendent à devenir stériles parce qu'elles ignorent le monde extérieur aux murs des académies' <sup>15</sup>.

## 2. La conception marxiste

Les historiens <sup>16</sup> ont souligné que Marx a adopté le sens donné au mot idéologie par Napoléon. Ainsi Roucek: 'Le mot, dit-il, a pris un sens dépréciatif, qui a été renforcé par la connotation qui lui a été donnée dans les écrits de Marx' <sup>17</sup>.

Il faut néanmoins préciser ou nuancer.

a) Certes, dans le marxisme, le mot idéologie est pris dans un sens défavorable, puisqu'une idéologie est une vision partielle, partielle, donc déformée des choses. Ce que Engels exprime en disant – l'expression a été souvent citée – que l'idéologie est une "conscience fausse". Nous reviendrons plus longuement sur ce point dans la troisième partie de notre exposé.

b) Mais le marxisme ne condamne ni ne rejette pour autant l'idéologie. Il a, au contraire, montré qu'elle a une fonction indispensable à remplir dans la vie et dans le changement des sociétés. Elle est, certes, un instrument ou un produit de la lutte des classes, puisqu'il y a une "idéologie bourgeoise" et une "idéologie prolétarienne", mais, comme nous le verrons dans la quatrième partie de cet exposé, elle subsiste et a un rôle essentiel à jouer dans la société sans classes.

## 3. La sociologie de la connaissance

Karl Mannheim, l'un des fondateurs de la sociologie de la connaissance, a montré les liens étroits qui unissent cette science nouvelle au concept d'idéologie, puisqu'il écrit: 'Avec l'apparition de la formulation générale de la conception totale de l'idéologie, la simple théorie de l'idéologie devient la Sociologie de la Connaissance. Ce qui était autrefois l'armement intellectuel d'un parti s'est transformé en une méthode de recherche de l'histoire sociale et intellec-



tuelle' <sup>18</sup>. Je me bornerai à citer ce texte, non seulement parce que je n'ai pas le temps d'exposer la conception de l'idéologie dans la sociologie de la connaissance, mais surtout parce que je suis incompetent en ce domaine. Je tenais seulement à signaler un aspect important de notre sujet que d'autres que moi aborderont sans doute avec plus de compétence que je ne pourrais le faire.

### III. L'IDÉOLOGIE COMME "CONSCIENCE FAUSSE"

J'aborde maintenant la troisième partie de mon exposé, peut-être la plus importante, au moins pour la conception marxiste de l'idéologie.

On a remarqué <sup>19</sup> que, dans l'*Idéologie allemande*, le mot *idéologie* apparaît une cinquantaine de fois, sans qu'on y trouve la moindre définition. Cette lacune est en partie comblée par trois lettres de Engels: celle à A. J. Bloch du 21 septembre 1890 <sup>20</sup>, celle à A. C. Schmidt du 27 octobre 1890, enfin celle du 14 juillet 1893 à Franz Mehring <sup>21</sup>. Dans cette lettre à Franz Mehring, Engels écrit:

'L'idéologie est un processus, que le soi-disant penseur accomplit bien avec conscience, mais avec une conscience fautive (*mit einem falschen Bewusstsein*). Les forces motrices véritables qui le meuvent lui restent inconnues, sans quoi ce ne serait pas un processus idéologique. Parce qu'il s'agit d'un processus de pensée (*Denkprozess*), le soi-disant penseur en tire le contenu aussi bien que la forme de la pensée pure, ou bien de la sienne propre ou bien de celle de ses prédécesseurs. Il travaille avec un matériel purement intellectuel (*mit blosser Gedankenmaterial*), qu'il prend inconsidérément comme produit par la pensée et qu'il ne cherche pas à mettre en rapport avec un processus plus éloigné, indépendant de la pensée. Et pour lui, cela va de soi, puisque toute activité, étant médiatisée par la pensée, lui apparaît en dernière instance fondée dans la pensée. — L'idéologue historique (et ici historique doit être pris dans un sens général, qui englobe aussi les termes politique, juridique, philosophique, théologique et, en un mot, s'applique à tous les domaines qui appartiennent à la société et pas seulement à la nature), l'idéologue historique a donc dans chaque domaine de la science une matière qui s'est formée d'une manière indépendante en provenant de la pensée des générations antérieures et qui s'est développée de manière indépendante dans le cerveau de cette suite de générations' <sup>22</sup>.



L'illusion (*Schein*) incluse dans l'idéologie consiste donc à croire que la formation et le développement de la pensée (ou, si l'on veut, des idées) se font indépendamment des autres facteurs qui déterminent la vie et les changements des sociétés. C'est ce que Engels dit très clairement dans la Lettre à A. C. Schmidt du 27 octobre 1890:

'Toute idéologie, une fois qu'elle est apparue, se développe en liaison avec le matériel conceptuel donné et développe par la suite ce matériel, *sans quoi ce ne serait plus une idéologie*, c'est-à-dire une occupation avec des idées considérées comme des entités indépendantes, se développant de façon indépendante et sujettes seulement à leurs propres lois. Il faut que les conditions de vie matérielle de ceux dans la tête desquels s'accomplit ce processus de pensée, et déterminent en dernière instance le cours de ce processus, demeurent nécessairement inconnues de ces personnes, *sans quoi ce serait la fin du siècle de l'idéologie*'<sup>23</sup>.

Ce qui constitue l'idéologie, c'est la conviction ou l'illusion que le développement des idées s'effectue indépendamment des autres facteurs, en particulier des facteurs économiques ou matériels, qui déterminent la vie des sociétés. C'est pourquoi Engels écrit encore dans la Lettre à Franz Mehring (p. 386): 'C'est cette apparence (*Schein*) d'une histoire indépendante des constitutions, des systèmes juridiques, des représentations idéologiques dans chaque domaine particulier, qui avant tout aveugle la plupart des hommes'.

L'idéologie est donc essentiellement une conception fautive de l'histoire, héritée de l'hégélianisme, fautive parce qu'elle fait abstraction ou ne tient pas compte des facteurs économiques ou matériels et qui, par conséquent, consiste à croire que 'l'Esprit est souverain dans l'histoire'. C'est ce que Marx et Engels ne cessent de répéter dans *l'Idéologie allemande*. C'est en opposant leur conception matérialiste de l'histoire à la conception idéaliste des Allemands qu'ils ont été amenés à dénoncer l'illusion idéologique. 'Cette méthode historique, qui régnait surtout en Allemagne, et pour cause, disent-ils, il faut l'expliquer en partant du contexte: l'illusion des idéologues en général'<sup>24</sup>.

'Tandis que les Français et les Anglais s'en tiennent au moins à l'illusion politique, qui est encore plus proche de la réalité, les Allemands se meuvent dans le domaine de l'"esprit pur" et font de l'illusion religieuse la force motrice de l'histoire. La



philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel est la dernière expression conséquente, poussée à sa "plus pure expression", de toute cette façon qu'ont les Allemands d'écrire l'histoire et dans laquelle il ne s'agit pas d'intérêts réels, pas même d'intérêts politiques, mais d'idées pures' <sup>25</sup>. Pour les fondateurs du marxisme, 'le premier fait historique... est la production de la vie matérielle' et 'la première chose dans toute conception historique est donc d'observer ce fait fondamental'. Or 'chacun sait que les Allemands ne l'ont jamais fait; ils n'ont donc jamais eu de *base terrestre* pour l'histoire, et n'ont, par conséquent, jamais eu un seul historien. Bien qu'ils n'aient vu la connexité de ce fait avec ce qu'on appelle l'histoire que sous l'angle le plus étroit, surtout tant qu'ils restèrent emprisonnés dans l'idéologie politique, les Français et les Anglais n'en ont pas moins fait les premiers essais pour donner à l'histoire une base matérialiste, en écrivant d'abord des histoires de la société civile, du commerce et de l'industrie' <sup>26</sup>.

Les autres textes de l'*Idéologie allemande* sont trop connus pour qu'il soit nécessaire de les rappeler ici. Je tiens cependant à en citer brièvement deux, en relation étroite avec ce qui vient d'être dit. Le premier est célèbre:

'La production des idées, des représentations et de la conscience est d'abord directement et intimement mêlée à l'activité matérielle et au commerce matériel des hommes, elle est la langue de la vie réelle. Les représentations, la pensée, le commerce intellectuel des hommes apparaissent ici encore comme l'émanation directe de leur comportement matériel... Si, dans toute l'idéologie, les hommes et leurs rapports nous apparaissent placés la *tête en bas* comme dans une *camera obscura*, ce phénomène découle de leur processus de vie historique, absolument comme le renversement des objets sur la rétine découle de son processus de vie directement physique. — A l'encontre de la philosophie allemande qui descend du ciel sur la terre, c'est de la terre au ciel que l'on monte ici' <sup>27</sup>.

Il faut s'arrêter au moins un instant sur l'expression 'la tête en bas'. Elle est empruntée à Hegel qui écrit dans la *Philosophie de l'histoire* <sup>28</sup> au sujet de la Révolution française:

'La pensée, le concept du droit se fit tout d'un coup valoir et le vieil édifice d'iniquité ne put lui résister. Dans la pensée du droit, on construit donc maintenant une constitution, tout devant désormais reposer sur cette base. Depuis que le soleil se trouve au



firmament et que les planètes tournent autour de lui, *on n'avait pas vu d'homme se placer la tête en bas*, c'est-à-dire se fonder sur l'Idée et construire d'après elle la réalité'

Marx tourne donc en dérision la célèbre formule de Hegel: pour lui, voir uniquement dans l'histoire le mouvement du concept ou le développement de l'Idée, c'est réellement se placer la tête en bas et voir les choses à l'envers.

De là le second texte de l'*Idéologie allemande*, que nous tenons également à citer:

'Pour dépouiller de cet aspect mystique *ce concept qui se développe par lui-même*, on le transforme en une personne — *la conscience de soi* — ou, pour paraître tout à fait matérialiste, on en fait une série de personnes qui représentent *le concept* dans l'histoire, à savoir les penseurs, les philosophes, les idéologues, qui sont considérés à leur tour comme les fabricants de l'histoire, comme "le comité des gardiens", comme les dominateurs. Du même coup, on a éliminé tous les éléments matérialistes de l'histoire et l'on peut tranquillement lâcher la bride à son destrier spéculatif' <sup>29</sup>.

On le voit, la conception marxiste de l'idéologie est inséparable de la 'déformation idéologique', de 'l'illusion idéologique', ou encore de la 'conscience fausse'.

On ne doit cependant pas en conclure que l'idéologie, malgré l'illusion qu'elle implique ou crée, reste sans action sur le cours de l'histoire. Engels s'élève contre une telle conclusion qu'il qualifie de 'représentation stupide des idéologues': 'Parce que nous refusons, dit-il, aux différentes sphères idéologiques, qui jouent un rôle dans l'histoire, un développement historique indépendant, nous leur refuserions toute action historique' <sup>30</sup>. Comme le dit Gustave Wetter <sup>31</sup>, Engels reconnaît aux idéologies un rôle déterminant, quoique secondaire dans l'histoire: 'Selon la conception matérialiste de l'histoire, écrit Engels le 21 septembre 1890 à Bloch, le facteur déterminant en dernière instance dans l'histoire est la production et la reproduction de la vie réelle. Ni Marx ni moi n'en avons jamais dit davantage. Si quelqu'un interprète cela arbitrairement en ce sens que le facteur économique serait le *seul* déterminant, il transforme cette proposition en une phrase absurde, qui ne veut rien dire'.

De là, la mise au point de Franz Mehring <sup>32</sup>, que je tiens à citer,



car c'est peut-être ce qui a été écrit de meilleur sur le sujet, par un historien proche de Engels et Marx:

'Rien de moins solide que l'affirmation que Marx et Engels, avec leur conception matérialiste de l'histoire, ont prôné un fatalisme accablant et chassé du développement historique de l'humanité tous les éléments idéels. De leur méthode dialectique, il résulte — cela va de soi — que si la société détermine l'Etat, pourtant l'Etat, à son tour, réagit sur la société, donc si les facteurs décident en dernière instance, cependant les représentations idéologiques peuvent avoir une influence sur eux, autrement dit que l'idéologie n'est nullement sans action, sous le prétexte qu'elle ne peut exercer aucune influence indépendante. Dans ses Thèses sur Feuerbach, où Marx a développé les principes géniaux de la nouvelle conception du monde, il a dit clairement qu'il a voulu sauver le côté actif de l'idéalisme en face de l'inertie du matérialisme; que, pour lui, le matérialisme historique n'était pas seulement une connaissance théorique, mais aussi une arme pratique, qu'il le considérait comme un instrument révolutionnaire, en vue de bouleverser la société bourgeoise et de la transformer en une humanité sociale'.

#### IV. LA FIN DU SIÈCLE DE L'IDÉOLOGIE

En envisageant la fonction de l'idéologie dans le cours de l'histoire, nous voici parvenus à la dernière question que nous avons à traiter: la fin du siècle de l'idéologie.

Cette question qui a été suscitée et discutée vers les années 1950 avec les études de Daniel Bell <sup>33</sup> et de Raymond Aron <sup>34</sup>, ne semble plus d'actualité.

Il ne faut pas oublier qu'elle a été posée, sans doute pour la première fois, par Engels dans sa lettre à Conrad Schmidt du 27 octobre 1890, que nous avons déjà citée <sup>35</sup>. Pour Engels, si l'illusion idéologique ou la fausse conscience liée à l'idéologie prenait fin, ce serait aussi la fin de l'idéologie. 'Il faut, dit-il, que les conditions matérielles de vie des personnes dans la tête desquelles ce processus de pensée se développe, conditions qui, en dernière instance, déterminent ce développement, il faut que ces conditions restent de toute nécessité ignorées de ces personnes, sans quoi ce serait la fin de toute idéologie'.

Aujourd'hui, personne ne croit plus à la fin du siècle de l'idéologie, ni les marxistes ni les non-marxistes. Sur ces derniers, nous renvoyons aux pages consacrées à ce sujet dans les articles déjà cités de



Edward Shils <sup>36</sup> et de Harry M. Johnson <sup>37</sup>. Pour les marxistes, je me bornerai à rappeler un texte de Louis Althusser, auquel j'ai déjà fait allusion et qui est décisif sur ce point, car il souligne la fonction de l'idéologie, y compris la société sans classes.

'Dans toute société, on constate..., sous des formes parfois très paradoxales, l'existence d'une activité économique de base, d'une organisation politique, et de "formes idéologiques" (religion, morale, philosophie, etc.). *L'idéologie fait donc organiquement partie, comme telle, de toute totalité sociale.* Tout se passe comme si les sociétés humaines ne pouvaient subsister sans ces *formations spécifiques*, ces systèmes de représentations (de niveau divers) que sont les idéologies. Les sociétés humaines secrètent l'idéologie comme l'élément et l'atmosphère même indispensable à leur respiration, à leur vie historique. Seule une conception idéologique du monde a pu imaginer des sociétés *sans idéologies*, et admettre l'idée utopique d'un monde où l'idéologie (et non telle de ses formes historiques) disparaîtrait sans laisser de traces, pour être remplacée par la science... Et, pour ne pas éviter la question la plus brûlante, *le matérialisme historique ne peut concevoir qu'une société communiste puisse jamais se passer d'idéologie...* L'idéologie n'est donc pas une aberration ou une excroissance contingente de l'Histoire: elle est une structure essentielle à la vie historique des sociétés. Seules, d'ailleurs, l'existence et la reconnaissance de sa nécessité peuvent permettre d'agir sur l'idéologie et de transformer l'idéologie en instrument d'action réfléchi sur l'Histoire' <sup>38</sup>.

On ne peut pas être plus net, ni plus clair. Althusser ajoute (p. 240): le rapport "vécu" des hommes au monde, y compris dans l'Histoire, passe par l'idéologie, bien mieux est l'idéologie elle-même.

Althusser en profite pour préciser que l'idéologie contient nécessairement une part d'inconscience et que le rapport vécu des hommes à leurs conditions d'existence est en grande partie un rapport imaginaire: 'Dans l'idéologie, dit-il <sup>39</sup>, le rapport réel est inévitablement investi dans le rapport imaginaire: rapport qui *exprime* plus une volonté (conservatrice, conformiste, réformiste ou révolutionnaire), voire une espérance ou une nostalgie, qu'il ne décrit une réalité'.

Althusser prend comme exemple l'analyse de l'idéologie bourgeoise, telle qu'on la trouve dans *l'Idéologie allemande*. Ces textes où les auteurs soulignent que l'idéologie dominante est l'idéologie de la classe dominante sont connus pour qu'il soit utile de les rappeler ici.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Weidlé, 'Sur le concept d'idéologie', *Le Contrat social*, Mars 1959, pp. 75-78.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, 'La définition fonctionnelle de l'idéologie et le problème de la fin du siècle de l'idéologie', *L'homme et la société*, Avril-Mai-Juin 1967, pp. 49-59.

<sup>3</sup> Shils, 'The concept and function of ideology', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 7, 1968, pp. 66-75.

<sup>4</sup> Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Dans l'édition publiée dans la collection Gallia (Paris et Londres, s.d.). Si j'ai tenu à citer ce texte, c'est qu'il a été publié en 1892, donc à une date où le mot idéologie n'était pas d'un usage courant.

<sup>6</sup> Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 50. De la définition d'Adam Schaff on peut rapprocher celle qu'a donnée Karl Loewenstein dans les *Studi politici* (III, 2-3) en 1954: 'L'idéologie est un système cohérent et structuré de concepts et de croyances, ou bien de concepts convertis en croyances, visant à expliquer le comportement de l'homme concernant la vie et son existence en société, et qui impose une conduite et un modèle des actions cohérentes en accord avec ces concepts ou ces croyances'.

<sup>7</sup> Althusser, *Pour Marx*, Paris, 1965, p. 238.

<sup>8</sup> Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in D. E. Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*, New York, 1964, pp. 47-76.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, 'Ideology and the Social System', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 7, 1968, p. 77.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Selon Maurice Cranston, ce qui distingue une idéologie d'une conception du monde, c'est la forme d'adhésion à ces systèmes ou le type de "commitment": 'Thus, unlike the "commitment" entailed by a *Weltanschauung*, which is a matter of reflection and conduct, the "commitment" to an ideology is really a form of *enlistment*. To become an adherent of an ideology is to become a *partisan*' ('What is an ideology', texte inédit, conclusion). De son côté, Julien Freund déclare (*l'essence du politique*, Paris, 1965, p. 431) que "l'idéologie est une pensée engagée, tournée vers le recrutement de partisans et de militants". M.lle Collette Moreux affirme que "l'adhésion idéologique procède de la foi" (*La conviction idéologique*, Texte manuscrit, p. 14).

Selon W. Weidlé (*op. cit.*, p. 76), l'idéologie se distingue de la *Weltanschauung* par 'la cohérence beaucoup plus stricte de ses éléments' et par 'son caractère impersonnel': 'Une *Weltanschauung*' dit-il, plutôt qu'un système est une nébuleuse à peine systématisée, beaucoup plus souple encore, moins clairement formulée et moins formulable qu'une philosophie. Si on la confond avec l'idéologie, c'est uniquement parce qu'elle peut, tout aussi bien qu'individuelle, être collective, Pourtant, elle le *peut* seulement et quand elle le devient, c'est à la manière d'une synthèse qui se superpose aux cas particuliers, et ne les supprime pas, tandis qu'une idéologie n'est jamais individuelle, ne sert à rien d'individuel et ne varie pas selon les individus'.

<sup>12</sup> Freund, *op. cit.* p. 424.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Raymond Polin (*La liberté de notre temps* (Paris, 1977), pp. 134-135): 'Il est donc inscrit dans l'usage idéologique des valeurs que l'on néglige leur signification authentique et leur intention de vérité au point que, dans cet usage systématiquement arbitraire et objectivement indifférent, les termes de tromperie et de mensonge perdent leur sens. Objectivement, le mensonge est proprement la violence spirituelle, mais il n'y a pas de mensonges qui tiennent pour une idéologie. La seule valeur objective, c'est l'efficacité'.



- <sup>15</sup> Mannheim, *Idéologie et Utopie*, trad. franç. (Paris, 1956), pp. 66-69.
- <sup>16</sup> En particulier Mac Iver et Joseph S. Roucek, cités par Arne Naes, *Democracy, Ideology and Objectivity* (Oslo-Oxford, 1956), p. 271, note 190.
- <sup>17</sup> Roucek, 'A History of the Concept of Ideology', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. V, 1944, p. 482.
- <sup>18</sup> Mannheim, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
- <sup>19</sup> Naes, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
- <sup>20</sup> Traduite dans Marx et Engels, *Etudes philosophiques* (Paris, Editions Sociales) et longuement commentée par Althusser (*Pour Marx*, pp. 117-128).
- <sup>21</sup> Publiée par Mehring dans sa *Geschichte der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. I (8<sup>ème</sup> édition, Stuttgart, 1919), pp. 385-387, et traduite dans le recueil cité dans la note précédente.
- <sup>22</sup> Nous traduisons d'après le texte de Mehring, *op. cit.*, p. 386.
- <sup>23</sup> Nous citons d'après la traduction anglaise de Rudolf Schlesinger, *Marx, His Time and ours*, Londres, 1950, p. 73.
- <sup>24</sup> *L'idéologie allemande*, trad. franç. (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1968), p. 79.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
- <sup>28</sup> Hegel, Philosophie de l'histoire, trad. Gibelin (Paris, Vrin, 1945), p. 401.
- <sup>29</sup> Marx et Engels, *L'idéologie allemande*, p. 78.
- <sup>30</sup> Engels, Lettre à Franz Mehring, in F. Mehring, *Geschichte der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. I, p. 387.
- <sup>31</sup> *Le matérialisme dialectique*, Paris, 1962, p. 62. C'est à la même page que se trouve le passage de la lettre à Bloch, que nous citons.
- <sup>32</sup> Mehring, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309.
- <sup>33</sup> *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*, 2<sup>me</sup> éd., N.Y., 1962 (1ère éd. 1960).
- <sup>34</sup> 'La fin de l'âge idéologique', dans *Sociologica*, Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie, B. 1, 1955, réimprimé dans *l'Opium des intellectuels*.
- <sup>35</sup> Mehring, *op. cit.*, pp. 385-387.
- <sup>36</sup> Shils, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
- <sup>37</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.
- <sup>38</sup> Althusser, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.







*Jean Baechler*

## POUVOIR ET IDEOLOGIE

L'intitulé de notre colloque porte: 'Politique et Idéologie'. J'ai la faiblesse d'y voir une tautologie, en ce sens que je définis, pour mon compte, l'idéologie comme l'ensemble des états de conscience qui accompagnent l'action politique. Il me paraît inefficace d'en étendre l'acception au-delà du politique, jusqu'à englober toutes les propositions non-scientifiques, parce qu'un genre qui incluerait aussi bien le maoïsme que le christianisme ou la mythologie grecque, ne serait peut-être pas entièrement dénué de sens, mais ne pourrait donner lieu qu'à l'établissement de propositions trop vagues pour être intéressantes. Il me paraît, d'autre part, dangereux d'en restreindre l'usage aux formes les plus extrêmes, aussi bien pour des raisons de méthode que par crainte de succomber à la tentation de désigner par idéologie la manière de penser de ceux avec qui l'on n'est pas d'accord. J'admets que la décision de ne retenir comme idéologique que ce qui a trait à la politique, est arbitraire, comme sont arbitraires toutes les définitions des sciences sociales qui portent sur la délimitation des objets d'études.

Si l'on tombe d'accord sur cette décision arbitraire, l'analyse des idéologies affronte une série de problèmes difficiles, dont j'ai essayé de traiter ailleurs. Je voudrais revenir sur l'un des deux, probablement le plus important. S'il ne saurait y avoir de politique sans idéologie, il reste constant, en vertu d'évidences empiriques, qu'il y a plusieurs types de régimes politiques. D'où le problème: tous les régimes ont-ils les mêmes besoins d'idéologie? Si non, comment expliquer les différences? Pour trouver au moins un début de réponse, le chemin le plus court est de partir de la réalité qui se trouve au coeur de la différenciation des régimes politiques, le pouvoir, et d'étudier



les rapports qu'il peut entretenir avec l'idéologie. Après avoir montré qu'il y a plusieurs modalités du pouvoir et repéré les fonctions de l'idéologie, il sera aisé de saisir quelle modalité éprouve le besoin le plus urgent d'idéologie.

#### LES MODALITÉS DU POUVOIR

Convenons d'une définition du pouvoir. Nous dirons que 'A dispose d'un pouvoir à l'égard de B, si A est en mesure d'inciter ou d'empêcher B d'accomplir ou de ne pas accomplir une action X'. Le pouvoir ainsi conçu est une *tension* entre deux volontés individuelles ou collectives, mais une tension dissymétrique, en ce que l'une l'emporte sur l'autre. Nous excluons donc des relations de pouvoir, tous les rapports où une volonté affronte une inertie. Si, par exemple, le code génétique qui caractérise l'espèce humaine, nous impartit une durée de vie maximale, il ne faut pas dire que la dégénérescence physiologique nous impose son pouvoir. Il vaut mieux, dans ce cas, parler d'une *contrainte* qui s'exerce sur une volonté. Ces contraintes aveugles peuvent à l'occasion résulter d'une addition de volontés, sans que l'addition soit elle même une volonté. Sur un marché pur et parfait, le niveau des prix s'établit en fonction des décisions de tous les demandeurs et de tous les offreurs, sans que la décision de l'un quelconque puisse l'affecter en rien: chacun subit une contrainte, non un pouvoir.

Si le pouvoir est une tension dissymétrique entre deux volontés, il suit que tout rapport de pouvoir se compose de quatre éléments. Pour qu'il y ait pouvoir, il faut que:

— A occupe une position et dispose de moyens pour imposer sa volonté à B; si, en effet, B occupe la même position et dispose des mêmes moyens, cette identité parfaite empêche toute relation de pouvoir, de même que deux pôles magnétiques de même signe se repoussent;

— B obéisse, c'est-à-dire se plie à la volonté de A; si B n'obéit pas, la volonté de A se perd dans le vide et il n'y a pas de pouvoir;

— B *puisse* désobéir; si l'obéissance de B était toujours garantie à l'avance, A n'aurait nul besoin d'exprimer une volonté à partir d'une certaine position et en usant de certains moyens, on aurait affaire, non à un rapport de pouvoir, mais à un mécanisme; ce n'est



que par métaphore que l'on dit d'une voiture qu'elle obéit à son conducteur, car si une voiture peut tomber en panne, elle ne peut désobéir en ignorant les instructions de la volonté qui la mène;

— la désobéissance de B soit sanctionnée; si la désobéissance ne rencontrait aucune punition, B ne courrait aucun risque à désobéir et n'obéirait qu'à sa volonté, annulant par le fait même la volonté de A et toute relation de pouvoir.

Ces quatre éléments — la volonté, l'obéissance, la désobéissance et la sanction — sont consubstantiels à tout rapport de pouvoir. Supprimez l'un deux, le pouvoir s'évanouit instantanément, et l'on se retrouve dans un univers soit de volontés libres insoucieuses l'une de l'autre, soit d'objets inertes soumis à la nécessité. Le pouvoir est ainsi une réalité propre à des êtres animés et conscients et à des êtres vivant en société: il est à la fois humain et social.

Il se trouve que ces quatre éléments constitutifs du pouvoir, présentés jusqu'ici dans leur formulation abstraite, peuvent se présenter concrètement selon trois modalités.

Dans la première, A s'avance armé de la *force*, sa volonté s'exprime en s'appuyant sur la violence physique ou morale ou sur la menace d'user de violence. B obéit à cette volonté, parce qu'il a *peur*, que cette peur naisse de l'attente craintive d'une douleur physique ou d'une souffrance morale infligées au sujet lui-même ou à des êtres dont le sort lui importe. B peut cesser d'obéir en cessant de craindre; sa désobéissance se nomme *révolte*. Elle ne saurait entraîner qu'une sanction: la *mort*; à moins que, par un calcul intéressé, A ne sursoie à l'exécution en transformant le révolté en esclave. Nous pouvons appeler *puissance* cette modalité du pouvoir, où la force impose la peur et où la révolte risque la mort.

Une deuxième modalité est tout à fait différente. A est investi d'un prestige, qui irradie d'un *charisme* soit personnel soit attaché à la position même, dont il n'est qu'un titulaire transitoire. B consent à obéir, parce qu'il admire ou qu'il respecte A. Cette *admiration* ou ce *respect* ne se peuvent concevoir que si A et B communient dans la reconnaissance d'une même valeur et que si B concède à A une supériorité sur lui dans le contact avec la valeur ou dans sa réalisation. Cette communion fonde la désobéissance possible de B. Elle survient si B change de système de valeurs ou s'il considère que A trahit la valeur, en un mot si, pour une raison quelconque, A et B se retrouvent en *dissentiment*. La sanction se nomme ici *excommunication*, par laquelle A expulse B de la communauté des voyants et le plonge



dans les ténèbres extérieures. Convenons de nommer *autorité* une relation de pouvoir, où A est investi d'un charisme, B obéit par admiration ou respect, désobéit par dissentiment et se trouve sanctionné par l'excommunication.

Il est une dernière modalité tout aussi différente. A se trouve doté, par la nature ou à la suite d'un apprentissage spécifique, d'une certaine *compétence*. B calcule qu'il lui serait avantageux de s'incliner devant la volonté de A, parce que la compétence de celui-ci est aux yeux de B un gage de réussite dans une entreprise commune aux deux. B peut désobéir et *tricher*, c'est-à-dire ne pas se plier aux règles et aux conséquences du contrat qui le lie à A pour l'accomplissement de cette entreprise commune. La sanction de la tricherie est soit la *faillite* de l'association, si une seule tricherie suffit à ruiner le projet commun, soit *l'exclusion* du tricheur, s'il y a plusieurs B, dont la plupart continuent à obéir. Il nous est loisible de désigner comme une *direction* cette modalité du pouvoir, où A est compétent, B calcule, peut tricher et subit comme sanction la faillite ou l'exclusion.

Le pouvoir connaît ainsi trois incarnations radicalement différentes. La puissance, l'autorité et la direction présentent sans conteste possible les quatre éléments dont nous avons dit qu'ils fondaient conjointement une relation de pouvoir. Elles sont à ce point différentes que l'on serait tenté d'avancer qu'il est inutile et dangereux de maintenir un concept comme celui de pouvoir et qu'il vaudrait mieux passer immédiatement à la puissance, à l'autorité et à la direction, en cessant de les considérer comme trois espèces d'un même genre. Cette simplification est malheureusement interdite par la nature des choses. Il est, certes, possible de rencontrer des relations où les trois modalités s'exercent à l'état pur: dans un club, les dirigeants exercent un pouvoir de direction, dépourvue de toute puissance et même, à l'occasion, de toute autorité; dans une association religieuse, le mage peut n'être investi que d'autorité et se voir privé de toute puissance et de toute direction; dans un gang, le patron peut asseoir son pouvoir sur la seule puissance. Même dans ces cas limites, il est clair que chaque modalité reçoit toujours quelques reflets des deux autres. Il reste constant que dans une association politique elles sont nécessairement conjointes et qu'une politique qui serait entièrement privée de l'une quelconque se dissoudrait immanquablement. Mais les proportions de puissance, d'autorité et de direction peuvent varier, qui composent le pouvoir dans une politique donnée. On appellera *régime politique* cette proportion, ce qui re-



vient à dire qu'il y a autant de régimes politiques possibles que de combinaisons possibles.

Notre problème initial portant sur les rapports entre pouvoir et idéologie se trouve précisé. Il concerne les affinités de l'idéologie avec la puissance, l'autorité et la direction. Avant de pouvoir les cerner, il faut commencer par dégager les fonctions de l'idéologie.

#### LES FONCTIONS DE L'IDÉOLOGIE

Elles sont multiples et se laissent distinguer sans trop de difficulté. J'en retiendrai cinq, qui paraissent recouvrir l'ensemble du champ. Une première fonction peut être dite de *ralliement*. La politique concerne, par sa nature même, l'assurance de la sécurité extérieure et la garantie de la concorde intérieure. Ces deux biens n'auraient pas à être assurés par une activité sociale spécifique, si la condition humaine n'impliquait pas la menace permanente du conflit et du désordre. La politique est donc avant tout occupée de discordes et de conflits, soit entre ennemis, soit entre adversaires. Or l'on ne se bat jamais seul lorsque l'on se bat politiquement. L'idéologie assure une première fonction en permettant de se reconnaître entre amis et de désigner l'ennemi. Cette fonction peut se contenter de formulations très rudimentaires, limitées à l'occasion à un morceau d'étoffe ou à une mélodie. Elle vise également à éveiller des passions très primitives, celle qui pousse l'individu à se fondre dans un groupe protecteur et celle qui l'excite à user de violence contre tout ce qui n'est pas le groupe. Le ralliement peut le plus facilement s'observer dans les relations internationales, quelque type de sociétés qu'elles concernent.

Une deuxième fonction est la *justification*. Dans la proposition 'j'ai accompli telle action politique, parce que...', tout ce qui est susceptible de remplacer les points de suspension est de l'idéologie de justification. A qui s'adresse-t-elle? Improbablement aux acteurs politiques eux-mêmes. En effet, ceux-ci sont ou bien des croyants ou bien des techniciens de l'action politique. Dans l'un et l'autre cas, ils n'ont guère besoin de se justifier à leurs propres yeux, il serait même dangereux de perdre du temps et de l'énergie à parler au lieu d'agir. Le besoin de justification grandit dans les rangs des sympathisants, qui ont besoin de se donner de bonnes raisons de croire ce qu'ils croient, en réfutant les croyances de l'adversaire ou de l'ennemi et en



lui prodiguant les preuves de la véracité des siennes propres. Mais la justification s'adresse évidemment par priorité aux partisans éventuels, car tous les camps recrutant dans le même vivier social, il faut bien donner aux sociétaires des raisons de rallier un camp idéologique plutôt que l'autre. Il se trouve qu'il est impossible de justifier absolument une idéologie, en produisant l'argument ultime qui la fonde en raison, parce qu'une idéologie est la saisie véhémement d'une valeur — la liberté, l'égalité, l'abondance, l'ordre, etc... — et la volonté de modeler une société sur ce patron. Comme il y a plusieurs valeurs et que l'on ne saurait les classer qu'en introduisant une information supplémentaire, qui serait à son tour une valeur, il suit que tout choix est finalement arbitraire. Par conséquent, on n'en a jamais fini de justifier une idéologie. La justification est la principale responsable de la prolifération idéologique.

Le *voilement* est la fonction la plus connue. L'idéologie permet de masquer, à ses propres yeux, ou à ceux d'autrui, soit des intérêts soit des passions. Masquer des intérêts à ses propres yeux est dépourvu de sens; le faire devant autrui ne saurait rencontrer le succès. Autrement dit, affirmer que la défense et l'illustration de la liberté n'est qu'un paravent de la bourgeoisie, derrière lequel elle peut à loisir exploiter le peuple, une telle affirmation est ou vide de sens ou sottise. On montrerait, par contre, que le voilement des passions est fort utile. Toutes les passions sont dangereuses pour autrui; leur donner libre cours serait, pour le sujet, risquer des mesures préventives ou de rétorsion; il vaut donc mieux les masquer, ce que l'on appelle la politesse. La politesse et le voilement se rencontrent dans toutes les activités sociales; dans les activités politiques, le voilement idéologique sert à cacher l'ambition et la cupidité derrière le dévouement au bien public ou au peuple. Il est encore plus utile de voiler ses passions à ses propres yeux. Il est très désagréable de se sentir dominé par des passions, surtout si elles introduisent des actions contraires aux normes reçues. Il n'est pas facile de tuer, de piller, de violer, d'être fourbe, de se goberger pendant que les autres souffrent, etc...: le cynisme pur n'est accessible qu'aux brutes ou aux âmes très fortes. Le commun éprouve le besoin de se donner de bonnes raisons d'agir avec scélératesse. La guerre est traditionnellement ce convertisseur de valeurs, qui rend licite à l'encontre de l'étranger ce qui reste interdit entre sociétaires. L'idéologie permet précisément la scélératesse entre sociétaires, en désignant certains comme ennemis à



abattre et en conférant aux turpitudes de l'âme les apparences de moyens au service d'une fin délectable.

La quatrième fonction est moins évidente. Disons-là de *désignation*. Lorsqu'un acteur se trouve devant une gamme de choix et qu'il n'existe aucune solution rationnelle permettant de choisir bien absolument, il faut une information supplémentaire non-rationnelle, si l'on ne veut pas rester dans une expectative perpétuelle. L'acteur politique ne peut pas ne pas agir, car en n'agissant pas, il agit encore, en orientant les actions de ses adversaires. Nous avons déjà indiqué que l'on ne peut choisir rationnellement entre des valeurs: l'idéologie permet de désigner la ou les valeurs, sur lesquelles fonder une certaine organisation de la société. En principe, la fonction devrait cesser après cet usage fondateur, car toutes les actions subséquentes ne devraient être qu'autant de moyens rationnels au service d'une fin arbitraire. Il n'en est rien, parce que l'acteur politique se trouve toujours placé dans des conditions extrêmes d'incertitude. Son information n'est jamais exhaustive et les conséquences ultimes de ses actions restent imprévisibles. L'idéologie lui permet de réduire artificiellement l'incertitude, en ramenant la complexité du réel à quelques formules simples: le régime parlementaire fonde la liberté, l'étatisation permet l'efficacité et la justice, l'autogestion garantit la liberté et l'égalité, etc... La fonction devient d'autant plus indispensable que les choix se multiplient et touchent de nouveaux secteurs de la vie sociale. A la limite, on se donne pour ambition de refondre toute une société à partir d'une même valeur. Cette ambition suppose une idéologie totale, que l'on peut convenir d'appeler une *utopie*.

Une dernière fonction de l'idéologie est d'autoriser la *perception*. Cette fonction ne fait que préciser la précédente. Pour se guider au sein de l'incertitude, où les données sûres sont toujours minimales, l'acteur doit impérativement procéder à une simplification extrême des données. Il a besoin de percevoir la réalité sociale comme une pseudo-réalité épurée et figée. Il doit aussi la percevoir comme une totalité transparente, car cette perception irréaliste lui permet de supputer les conséquences de ses actions. Il lui faut, enfin, pouvoir se projeter par la pensée au point d'aboutissement de ses actions, maîtriser l'avenir et les voies qui y mènent; il doit conserver l'illusion qu'il domine l'histoire que ses actions font se dérouler. Sans cette perception informée par l'idéologie, il ne serait que le jouet du hasard et de la fortune, il ne serait plus un acteur politique se propo-



sant des fins parmi d'autres fins possibles. Il va de soi que cette fonction de perception revêt une importance croissante, à mesure que les ambitions de l'acteur s'élèvent et qu'il prétend agir sur des secteurs de plus en plus englobants de la réalité sociale. La limite en est donnée par l'utopie, où la réalité est entièrement dévoilée, où elle est saisie comme une totalité sans mystères et où l'avenir est parfaitement connu. En un mot, on ne peut, en politique, agir de manière entièrement rationnelle ou scientifique; comme il faut agir malgré tout, on ne peut le faire qu'en introduisant des doses variables d'irrationalité, en se donnant par avance une réalité transparente, totale et accomplie.

On voit par quel biais, du moins dans mon interprétation, l'idéologie est consubstantielle à la politique.

Comme le pouvoir est, par sa nature même, susceptible de se présenter selon trois modalités, il importe de repérer les affinités de chaque modalité avec les différentes fonctions de l'idéologie, de manière à déterminer dans quelle mesure, s'il est vrai que l'on ne saurait rencontrer de politique sans idéologie, les différents régimes typiques consomment de l'idéologie en proportion constante ou non.

#### IDÉOLOGIE ET MODALITÉS DU POUVOIR

Les réponses se déduisent sans peine des points établis précédemment. Il en ressort que la puissance adresse une demande nulle à l'idéologie, la direction une demande douce – comme l'on parle de drogues douces – et l'autorité une demande dure.

Un régime de *puissance* pure n'aurait besoin d'aucune idéologie. Le titulaire de la puissance n'aurait nul besoin de *rallier* les amis et de désigner les ennemis, car il n'a que des ennemis, actuels ou virtuels. En effet, la puissance repose sur la force et la peur et ne saurait qu'osciller entre l'obéissance craintive et la révolte; comme la peur est contre nature et que, par hypothèse, un régime pur ne saurait s'appuyer sur d'autres ressorts, le titulaire doit compter sur la révolte à tout moment possible de ses esclaves. La puissance n'a pas non plus besoin de *justification*, parce que la force est à elle-même sa propre justification. A n'a pas besoin de se justifier à ses propres yeux, car le pouvoir est ou bien un moyen de satisfaire ses passions ou bien sa propre fin. Il n'a évidemment pas à se justifier devant ses ennemis. Ni devant ses partisans, car il n'en a pas, chaque sociétaire



n'étant qu'un révolté virtuel. Le *voilement* est inutile, car A n'a rien à cacher à soi-même, ni aux yeux de B. La puissance pure est le régime de l'arbitraire pur; du déchaînement sans frein de la subjectivité d'un seul, où la distinction du Bien et du Mal, du Juste et de l'Injuste se trouve privée de toute signification. La *désignation* n'a que faire ici. L'objectif constant de la puissance est de rester en place, c'est-à-dire de toujours être en état de répondre à une révolte par une force supérieure. De cet objectif exclusif, on peut déduire deux règles centrales de la puissance, dont le statut est d'être techniques et non idéologiques: l'atomisation de B, de manière à empêcher toute coalition menaçante; le contrôle de l'appareil, un instrument indispensable pour atomiser, mais un instrument vivant, donc susceptible d'échapper à son maître et de se retourner contre lui. Enfin la *perception* est ici aisée, car les données sont claires et distinctes, la société ayant été soumise à une simplification extrême par la force; le calcul est facile: pour atomiser le peuple et contrôler l'appareil, les moyens sont connus et d'un maniement assez sûr, pour que le puissant n'ait pas besoin de se donner la conclusion à l'avance. En un mot, un tyran pur et parfait parlerait et écrirait très peu, il agirait, et il agirait rationnellement dans son intérêt propre: il n'aurait absolument pas besoin d'idéologie.

La *direction* doit introduire des doses modérées d'idéologie. Nous avons vu que le *ralliement* n'exige jamais du raffinement idéologique. Comme la direction est, par nature et par définition, une association libre fondée dans l'intérêt des associés, il est facile de repérer ceux qui en veulent faire partie et les autres. Il convient, malgré tout, de produire un signe quelconque de reconnaissance, par exemple le serment de respecter les termes du contrat d'association. La *justification* n'a pas lieu de se développer beaucoup. En effet, on montrerait qu'une direction pure se fonderait sur l'intérêt bien entendu des sociétaires, et que cet intérêt serait composé de sûreté, de prospérité et de liberté. Il n'est pas nécessaire de produire de longs discours pour justifier ces choix, car il est inscrit dans le cœur de chaque homme: à preuve, l'impossibilité de justifier la contradictoire, l'insécurité, la pénurie extrême et l'esclavage. Le *voilement* ne peut être que modéré. Les intérêts sont explicites, puisque l'association est fondée précisément pour la poursuite des intérêts des associés. Les passions doivent être masquées dans la sphère privée — la politesse y subvient, non l'idéologie —, mais très peu dans la sphère publique, car on montrerait encore que les associés ne sauraient trouver de diri-



geants sans flatter — ni surveiller — leur ambition, leur cupidité et leur vanité. Par contre, la *désignation* devient indispensable. En effet, un régime de direction pure comporterait des zones d'incertitude majeures, c'est-à-dire des points qu'il est impossible de déduire de la nature du régime. Il est, en particulier, impossible de décider rationnellement le partage entre le centre et la périphérie, ni entre l'Etat et la société civile, pas plus que l'on ne peut trancher rationnellement les problèmes posés par l'égalité, la justice et l'équité. Pour chacun de ces points, plusieurs solutions sont possibles, où seules des idéologies différentes permettent un choix. Quant à la *perception*, elle est également requise, car si les valeurs sont claires et distinctes — sûreté, prospérité, liberté —, les moyens sont incertains de les réaliser, en raison des incertitudes de l'histoire, du tempérament national et de la conjoncture. A chaque incertitude correspondent plusieurs solutions possibles, prises chacune en charge par des idéologies différentes. Bref, dans une direction pure et parfaite, les sociétaires seraient d'accord sur l'essentiel — à savoir, vivre en commun, en respectant les règles du jeu qui permettent d'assurer les trois valeurs centrales — et se partageraient perpétuellement sur les détails: une idéologie commune se trouverait réfractée en un nombre indéfini de variations idéologiques secondaires.

C'est *l'autorité* qui, à l'évidence, a le plus besoin d'idéologie. Le *ralliement* est indispensable, car le partage entre amis et ennemis est vital: le charisme du chef repose sur la conviction des croyants, qui doivent être protégés du contact avec les incroyants. La *justification* est centrale, car les valeurs en lesquelles les dirigeants et les dirigés communient, sont multiples et arbitraires, de sorte que, pour susciter et conserver l'admiration et le respect, il faut produire de bonnes raisons de croire et que, pour bien convaincre autrui, il est préférable de croire soi-même ce que l'on dit. Le *voilement* est vital, car toute passion et tout intérêt qui ne correspondraient pas à la valeur défendue, apparaîtraient comme autant de dissentiments menaçant l'unanimité et risqueraient l'excommunication. La *désignation* est essentielle, car il faut présenter tous les choix comme non seulement conformes à la valeur centrale, mais même comme en découlant. Dans le cas limite de l'utopie, même les aspects les plus menus de la vie des sociétaires sont précisés par la doctrine. Enfin, la *perception* est inévitable, car les actions doivent se développer dans un champ social unifié et dépourvu d'ambiguïtés, si l'on veut éviter les dissentiments. Dans l'utopie au pouvoir, on en vient même à remplacer la



réalité par une surréalité parfaitement conforme à la doctrine, de sorte que toute résistance émanée de la nature des choses est perçue comme une trahison et induit l'élimination des traîtres supposés. En résumé, l'autorité repose entièrement sur *une* idéologie, qui prolifère et se fait envahissante à mesure qu'augmentent le nombre et la complexité des activités sociales incluses dans le combat politique.

## CONCLUSION

La puissance, l'autorité et la direction sont des modalités pures, donc abstraites, du pouvoir. Les régimes politiques concrets sont toujours, avons-nous dit, des mélanges en proportions variables de ces trois modalités. Mais il est impossible qu'un même régime valorise simultanément les trois. L'une d'elles l'emporte toujours, de sorte qu'il est possible de construire une première typologie générale des régimes politiques, en fonction de la modalité du pouvoir qu'ils privilégient. Convenons de nommer *autocratiques* les régimes qui valorisent la puissance; *charismatiques* ceux qui se fondent sur l'autorité; et *démocratiques* ceux qui développent la direction. Il découle de nos analyses que l'idéologie est consubstantielle aux régimes charismatiques, qu'elle est subordonnée dans les régimes démocratiques et à peu près inutile dans les régimes autocratiques. Mais pour chacun de ces trois types fondamentaux, les proportions varient dans lesquelles se trouvent combinées nos trois modalités. La réalité politique revêt ainsi une bigarrure infinie. Il revient à l'analyste de repérer, pour chaque cas concret, le mélange réalisé hic et nunc, s'il veut pouvoir apprécier les liens que l'idéologie noue avec le pouvoir.







*Kenneth Minogue*

## ON IDENTIFYING IDEOLOGY

The point of this paper is to state a theory of ideology, and to consider how this helps us to prevent the whole idea of ideology from going fuzzy at the edges and absorbing all forms of thought. The study of ideologies in political science is but a tiny corner of human culture; but there are theories of ideology which detect ideological presuppositions as the foundation of *all* thought; and by a very slight extension of this plausible view, all thought turns into ideology, since it is (at a minimum) a 'reflection' of the social circumstances in which it arises, and in which it continues to be asserted. It is the alarming cannibalism of the idea of ideology, its propensity to eat up *all* other ideas, which justifies the pages that follow. More specifically, however, I shall be concerned with demarcating the idea of ideology from political doctrines on the one hand and ideological presuppositions on the other.

### I. 'GOOD THOUGHT' AND 'BAD THOUGHT'

The vast success of the word 'ideology' is the direct consequence of a diagnosis of the human condition. This diagnosis is that men are the victims of bad thought. Such a diagnosis is not a philosophical theory, since its main drive is the practical one of improving the lot of mankind. Nor is it the kind of theological fervour which censures some men as entertaining a heretical doctrine, for the project of ideology is concerned less with this or that doctrine than with *all* thought. The most important precondition of the emergence of the idea of ideology was supplied by the modern project of destroying



inherited Scholasticism and putting thought on new and sound foundations. This attempt, of course, we associate with the seventeenth century, and with figures like Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz and Locke. The eighteenth century *philosophes* turned this belief into a practical gospel for improving the world. They added a kind of Messianic psychology, believing that 'they could demonstrate scientifically that knowledge was the key of happiness, and that it sufficed to enlighten men to make them perfect' \*. These endeavours culminated during the French Revolution in the invention of both the term and the science of *ideologie* by Destutt de Tracy and his fellow members of the Academy.

Although not itself a philosophy, the project of saving the world by a new kind of cognitive hygiene was obviously attractive to philosophers. Hegel, for example, is not at all part of this tradition, but he can easily be incorporated into it if we take his philosophy to be the understanding of concrete reality which would be arrived at if struggling, striving men were to think through the understanding of their situation. Hegel recognised the imperfections of human thought as a necessary part of the unfolding of Spirit, but many of his followers incorporated his philosophy into the project of saving mankind from bad thought. Feuerbach discovered the source of bad thought in religious alienation. The 'sacrifices' that mankind made to imaginary deities blocked the realisation of human potentialities; a true understanding (so Feuerbach thought) that it is Man who creates God, rather than the reverse, will allow men to stand on their own feet and at last attain the truly human status towards which they have been evolving. All of this is well known, and so is the sequel. Marx and Engels took over the project and the theory, but they gave it a dramatic new twist. They yoked together the project of ideology and the aspirations of socialism by a simple and powerful idea: the defects of human thought are not the result of ordinary confusion, but rather of our involvement in particular kinds of class-divided societies. This changed not only the problem but also the solution. The problem was no longer bad thoughts; it was now bad societies. Correspondingly, the solution was no longer a matter of seeing the light and embracing rationality; release from victimhood now required a dramatic transformation of society, known as a revolution.

This powerful theory, generally dated from *The German Ideology* written in 1846, is responsible for one of the fundamental am-



biguities which continues to confuse the whole subject. The word 'ideology' came to stand for two quite separate things. It could be used to denote the bad thoughts from which we are suffering. Marx, for example, was hostile to the distortions of 'bourgeois ideology', and as the term came to be taken up in this sense, others began to attack Jewish, or imperialist, or sexist ideology. The adjective in all such cases refers to the interest in society which is allegedly being sustained by the bad ideas being attacked. But a second sense of the word came to be developed. It could also refer to the good thoughts in terms of which the bad thoughts were detected and criticised. It is in this sense that Marxism, and Anarchism, and Fascism, and all the rest of the '-ism' family came to feature in courses of political science. Marx and Engels generally stuck to the first meaning, and always used the word 'ideology' to refer to bad, distorted thought whose function was to rationalise an oppressive social interest. But the word has continued to be used in both these senses, and I have chosen to try and bring them out in this section by using a simple notion of 'good thoughts' and 'bad thoughts', where the goodness and badness are obviously in the eyes of the beholder.

We are dealing here with the practical world in which men try to persuade each other into different courses of action. Nevertheless, the context of much discussion of ideology has been academic, and it has been possible to transform some of the propositions of the theory of ideology into the academic (in fact sociological) hypothesis that thought may be studied and understood in terms of its social context. Out of this strand of thought comes the sociology of knowledge. An academic theory of this kind could only be developed by abandoning the idea that ideology was *ipso facto* bad thought. The theory of ideology could thus become a study of the social context of thought, a study whose plausibility was enhanced by the extent to which it relaxed the notion that society *determined* thought. But my concern in this paper lies elsewhere, in the problems of demarcating ideologies one from another, and Ideology itself from other modes of thought. But it has been necessary to begin, as the Michelin Guides have it, with *un peu d'histoire*.

## II. UN PEU D'HISTOIRE

The point of *un peu d'histoire* in a definitional exercise is to move to a *description détaillée*. One aspect of the problem involved can easily be seen if we consider the Oxford English Dictionary en-



try for 'ideology' as: 'A system of ideas concerning phenomena, esp. those of social life; the manner of thinking characteristic of a class or an individual'. All of these phrases, even the apparent qualification of 'esp. those of social life' can lead to the conclusion that all thought is ideology, or at least that all thought has an ideological aspect. Given the strong contemporary inclination to prefer the technical to the ordinary word, it is hardly surprising that the word pops up everywhere, and consequently that its usefulness is constantly being destroyed by promiscuous application. The point of our definitional exercise is therefore to prevent this from happening by discovering a central meaning. We are not, of course, concerned to find an essence of ideology; further, the exercise of demarcation means that we shall have to sketch a theory of ideology.

Our historical excursion generates the following range of meanings of the term 'ideology':

1. Ideology is all thought understood as arising from a determinate social context. Understood simply as a statement about thought, this is the meaning which has generated the sociology of knowledge. In Karl Mannheim's version of this theory, however, while all thought is determined, some is more determined than others. Mannheim believes that the class of free floating intellectuals are less sociologically determined than ordinary people. He promoted the theory as a form of salutary self-understanding, making theorists more aware of the dangers of cognitive distortion arising from the cultural limitations of the theorist. Marxist writers, on the other hand, have been more concerned to emphasise that all hitherto existing societies have been bad, and hence that all thought is distorted. The obvious difficulty of this position is, of course, that of reflexivity. Whoever asserts such an opinion must presumably find some way of explaining how he himself has escaped from its operation. One solution is to take Marxism itself as ideology, but as proletarian ideology, and hence the ideology of the rising class which is on the way to becoming identical with society itself. The superiority of Marxism would thus be that its truth is guaranteed by the emergence of a superior society which would be immune to the distortions of all previous class-divided societies.

2. A second and more limited meaning of 'ideology' is that it refers to all thought which rationalises the situation of a particular social group. Ideology in this more limited sense can then be con-



trusted with science and philosophy. Ideology is, on this meaning, always bad thought, and it may include not only political justifications, but also theology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics and much else. This second meaning is more limited than the first, but its range can still be very wide indeed, and ideological traces may be detected in all but the most abstract manners of thinking. Mathematics and physics are manners of thought about as far as one can get from ideology, but even here attempts have been made to diagnose ideological distortion.

We may note here that the force of this meaning of ideology is similar to the force of the kind of positivism which was extremely current in the first part of the twentieth century. The positivism to which I refer holds the view that the only valid form of knowledge is scientific, because only such knowledge is both meaningful and verifiable. Every other kind of thought is, in a technical sense, 'nonsense'. Here again we have a distinction between good and bad thought not altogether dissimilar to many eighteenth century views. Since positivism is a deeply entrenched European opinion, we may suggest that the theory of ideology thus far discussed is positivism with sociological trimmings.

3. Thirdly, we encounter a series of thoughts grouped together under the names they have acquired in varying historical circumstances: communism, anarchism, populism, nationalism and so on, each being a doctrine of salvation by revolution, each promising and pointing the way towards a radically different world. 'Communism' is a body of knowledge which diagnoses the ideological character of all beliefs which run counter to it; and, with some element of paradox, any doctrine which diagnoses other beliefs as 'ideological' has come in political science to be called an 'ideology'. If such doctrines were merely advanced as bodies of knowledge, then presumably they would have been called 'communology', 'anarchology' etc. But these doctrines have become '-isms' in part because they seek not only to interpret the world, but also to change it. But each of these '-isms' claims to be the truth about the world, and has in its service intellectuals who explain why their doctrine is the truth, and that of others is socially distorted. So far as this meaning of ideology is concerned, we need to distinguish three possibilities:

a) The various -isms we have so far cited, insofar as they are comprehensive diagnoses of the human situation.



*b)* Any kind of political doctrine at all. Thus to be a Republican or a Democrat in the United States, or a Gaullist in France, or a Tory in Britain is not in fact to subscribe to any comprehensive diagnosis of the human situation. It is merely to assert some set of political desirabilities. But since Communists and Conservatives, Anarchists and Democrats, all assert proposals for political change, the principle on which the term ideology in this sense is constructed has come to suggest any sort of political involvement. Ideologies are political doctrines. I shall presently argue that this contingent slide in meaning has been fatal to the understanding of ideologies.

*c)* This second meaning can then be subject to the positivist distinction between facts and values. Beliefs about facts are presumably subject to testing and scientific validation, but beliefs about values are the irreducible materials of human conflict. Hence we generate a third meaning of ideology when used in the plural. It means the political values espoused; and if these are seen as indistinguishable from moral, aesthetic and other sorts of values, ideology comes to mean values in general. In this sense everybody has an ideology and we begin to close the circle by returning to the first and second meanings.

Now our brief historical remarks help us to understand most of these meanings by relation to what I have taken to be the central ideological project, i.e. the diagnosis and cure of bad thought and its bad consequences in human life. But it is clear that the various political party labels which appeared in the move from what we have just distinguished in 3 (*a*) to 3 (*b*) – party labels such as Republican, Democrat, Tory, Labour and so on – are not at all comprehensive diagnoses of the human condition. They are beliefs of a much more limited range. Further, these beliefs are essentially practical, and are usually subordinate to the task of unifying a party which either governs, or hopes to take over the government, in a constitutional and democratic state. Hence, if we take all ‘-isms’ to be ideological in the same degree and in the same respect, we shall obliterate what seems to be a fundamental feature of any inquiry into ideology. Some ‘-isms’, that is to say, refer almost exclusively to politics, while others are concerned with the human situation as a whole. To be an American Democrat, for example, is not to espouse any particular religion, or literary theory, or position on the evolution of man (except, perhaps, in Tennessee in the 1920s) or any wider subject;



whereas a Communist will have a position on religion, on literature, on the development of science, and so on. And it is the same with Anarchists, some nationalists and so on.

As thus far stated, we have been concerned to point to variations in the range of reference of these various bundles of beliefs. And it might be objected that this is no more than a distinction of explicitness. Some Marxists have argued, for example, that liberalism is merely the political top of the iceberg whose submerged elements include the entire bourgeois way of life. To be a liberal, therefore, is to implicitly or explicitly embrace a range of positions no less extensive than those expounded by communists. I do not think this is a very plausible argument, since 'the bourgeois way of life' includes a great variety of constantly changing opinions and practices. This element of variety is virtually admitted by Marxist writers, when they talk about the 'internal contradictions' of capitalism, and proceed to argue for a harmoniously classless condition which would not suffer from these contradictions. In this technical language, 'contradictions' means variety, usually of an unacceptable kind. Hence the question of whether liberalism is an ideology in the same sense as communism partly rests upon what view we take of variety and homogeneity in social life.

We may push this point one stage further if we observe that some of these -isms diagnose society as suffering from a single fatal conflict, and the cure is a kind of purification or homogenisation. Communism seeks to rid modern society of an impure element called the bourgeoisie; some nationalisms attribute all problems to the domination of the imperialist oppressor who must be driven out. Racialism seeks either racial purity, or at least a clear racial hierarchy. Later developments of the ideological spirit, such as Women's Liberation, diagnose the problems of life as a split in sexual roles, and its cure as the adoption of a single sexual manner of human interrelationship in so far as biological differences permit. The ideal of these -isms — we may generalise — is a certain kind of pure society. The -ism is the analysis and the tactics that will bring it about, and the situation is so serious that only a dramatic event called a revolution can effect the necessary change. Beliefs of this kind are clearly quite different from the beliefs held by the major political parties in liberal democratic states. These beliefs are often also called '-isms' but, in general, they involve accepting the 'impurity' of existing societies. They take it for granted that the state must be governed in



such a way that people of very different kinds — in sex, race, religion, attitude, nationality and class — may live together without too much overt conflict.

This distinction is of the first importance, and we shall presently mention some of its implications. But one widely noted implication will licence us to entrench this distinction at the centre of our understanding of ideology. This implication is that the set of beliefs bent on the purification of society is, as a direct consequence, also bent on the abolition of political activity. Anarchists are the clearest example since they are simply and directly against any kind of government, but communists look forward to the withering away of the state. A pure society, in other words, is one without the kinds of conflict which would otherwise necessitate legislatures, governments, police and all the other apparatus with which we are familiar. The doctrines of political parties, by contrast, are statements of principles which are thought to be desirable in the actual conduct of politics itself, and politics is thought to be an inevitable feature of any sort of society. We thus reach the paradoxical conclusion that the first group of -isms — i.e. those which seek a pure society — are not only not political doctrines, but are in fact radically anti-political. They explicitly look forward to the abolition of politics.

For these reasons, I would argue that it is a serious mistake to be misled by the contingently political character of the familiar -isms of the modern world into thinking of them as being of the same kind. In fact, ideologies and political doctrines are diametrically opposed to one another, and any definition of ideology which does not recognise this point has failed to see the central characteristic of ideology.

This argument, which is implicit in what often used to be a common distinction between evolutionary and revolutionary doctrines, is itself not without some paradoxical results. For it would on the face of it seem to be obvious that in many important ways (and some people would argue, in all) the Communists (for example) who canvass for votes in an Italian election are on all fours with the Christian Democrats who are also engaged in the same exercise. Is it not better to stick with the 'inclusive' view of ideology which accepts all political doctrines as ideologies? Part of the solution to this problem consists, of course, in observing that the difference between the two kinds of parties is to be found in how they construe political and electoral activity. Playing the game of politics is often the only way open to those who seek the power with which they can abolish



politics altogether. But another part of the solution to this problem lies in the very nature of definition itself. No definition can encompass all the complexities of a concrete situation. No set of beliefs is ideology, and nothing else but ideology. Each complex set of beliefs has peculiar functions such as helping people to define themselves in relation to others. Just as political doctrines, such as liberalism, conservatism or social democracy can be transposed into ideologies if they incorporate theories of history, analyses of human natures, beliefs about man's place in the universe, etc., so also can ideologies operate as political doctrines in electoral situations where ideological comprehensiveness of range falls into the background. The very exercise of definition exacts a price for the clarity it allows in distancing us from the confused hurley-burley of the world.

In political doctrines, the State is to be influenced to govern society in a certain way, but the character of society is allowed to emerge from the dispositions of the people who compose it. In ideological thought, the State must be replaced by a Society (now with a capital 'S') in which purity has brought about harmony. Politicians sometimes dream of particular kinds of Society, while ideologists must in this preconsummatory epoch continue to think in terms of the State. Thinking politically, and thinking ideologically, are two manners of thought used by modern men engaged in the business of communicating with each other and running their societies, and there are very few of us who do not think in both these manners. But that does not destroy the distinction between them; they are quite different ways of thinking.

### III. DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN IDEOLOGIES

An ideology is, then, a comprehensive diagnosis of the fundamental evil of the modern world, which further explains how that evil is to be cured. The cure is always in terms of some purification of society, and is typically achieved by a revolution following a catastrophic breakdown of the existing system. There is a great variety of ideologies currently competing with one another for supporters, each of them promising, in different ways, a 'liberation' from what currently afflicts us.

The problem we now face is: how do we distinguish each ideology from each other ideology? In principle the answer is ex-



tremely simple. The various names of all the most popular ideologies usually incorporate a social group in terms of which the ideological purity will be achieved, and this distinction in the central concept of salvation affords us a clear way of demarcating one ideology from another. Racialism as the attempt to achieve a racially pure society is evidently different from socialism or communism in which the principle of purification is based on class, or nationalism in which it is based on the nation, or populism in which it is based upon the people. This argument needs to be tidied up to cover some of the contingent anomalies of nomenclature. Thus 'communism' is a name referring to the ultimate aspirations of communists, rather than to their class analysis of the present impurity. And fascism is merely a historically contingent version of nationalism arising from our preoccupation with Mussolini's version of national self-assertion. Anarchism refers to one of the conditions (lack of governmental authority) for the achievement of a true human community. And so on. Such a scheme can even take in the more eccentric spin-offs generated by ideological thought in our century, such as agism and heightism.

This scheme of analysis is largely a derivative from intellectual history. Particular ideological ideas and movements do have a certain stability over time. Those historians concerned with racialism, for example, can turn to the ideas of Boulainvilliers, Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Adolf Hitler, and connect these ideas with recent racialist movements. And the same is true of socialism, nationalism and anarchism.

But the more closely one looks at the matter, the more the lines of demarcation begin to dissolve. Anti-semitism, for example, ought to fit only into racialism, but is in fact to be found in many versions of socialism and populism. Nazism has often been treated as 'integral nationalism', and with some justification, since one of the obvious ways of distinguishing a nation is in terms of race: a nation is a *natural* community, and this can plausibly be seen in terms of race. Populist ideas, which distinguish the inauthentic, oppressive, cosmopolitan city from the authentic, oppressed, native countryside may turn up in communist thought, as in Mao Tse Tung's comparison between the industrialised countries as a kind of 'city' and the underdeveloped countries as the countryside of the globe. Afrikaner nationalism appears to be nationalist in its understanding of the Black population. In addition to this kind of cognitive promiscuity of



ideas, we also find that loyalties in the world of ideological adherence are extremely fluid. At all levels in the history of European ideological involvement men, according to their circumstances, have moved with striking freedom between socialism, fascism and nationalism. It is true, of course, that these movements regard each other with scorn and hostility, but it is the hostility of competitors for the same pool of support rather than of genuinely different kinds of things.

I conclude that these ideological self-identifications are useful primarily to practising politicians and to historians of political movements. Even in the case of historians, clarity and coherence not only require a specification of the type of movement, but also of the place and the time of the movement. For there is nothing solid and stable which, in the history of Germany for example, separates the history of nationalism, nazism, and racialism. And whatever defects there may be in the concept of 'totalitarianism', it does testify to a variety of striking practical similarities in the kinds of regime established by ideologists no matter what disagreements of ideas they may indulge. The advance of an ideological movement is the beginning of a quite unpredictable change in human affairs, and it is impartial in its effects, engulfing everybody, gentile or Jew, Black or White, rich or poor, and so on, irrespective of the abstractly specified heroes and villains of the ideological doctrine. Even the use of that most traditional of political distinctions, that between Right and Left, is of little avail, since the threshings of ideology threaten rich and poor alike and lead in all cases to a command economy.

It follows that any attempt to define particular ideologies is doomed to failure. Political scientists have come up with an amazing variety of 'ideologies', and this very variety testifies to the intellectual confusion of the area. The main exponents of such definitions, however, are ideologists themselves, and the formulae they produce are all designed for the purpose of political manoeuvring. Is anarchism really a 'petit bourgeois doctrine' as Marx argued when he attacked Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*? Is socialism really the outcome of a Jewish conspiracy as Hitler averred? Is nationalism the belief of a bourgeoisie seeking protected markets? All such definitions are pretty evidently what advertisers call 'knocking copy'. They seek to discredit a competitor, rather than to illuminate a dark area of the understanding. But such practical men as produced formulae of this kind are, for all their intellectual pretensions, essentially op-



portunists who will not hesitate to steal either supporters or ideas from their competitors. There is a single world of ideology, which is a vast supermarket of ideas and slogans, vocabulary and devices, more or less equally available to whoever seeks to use it in the promotion of his own purposes; and in the richly unstable world of liberation movements of the underdeveloped countries one may find almost any combination of ideas imaginable. There is no idea so foolish it has not been espoused by the philosophers, remarked Descartes; and similarly there is no proposal so bizarre it has not been embraced by the ideologists.

The drift of my argument will be clear. It is that there is no stable definition of ideologies which allows us to distinguish one ideology from another; rather, the political reality of modern times is that the word 'ideology' stands for a single fundamental project in human development, and that project is the quest for a pure and unchanging society. The actual kind of society aspired to is a matter of contingent variations. The fundamental distinction upon which any sound definition of ideology must depend is one between ideology on the one hand, and political doctrine on the other. And what remains for us to do in a sketch of this kind is to suggest how such a distinction ought to be developed.

#### IV. IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL DOCTRINE

It is clear that both ideologies and political doctrines deal with policies affecting political and social life. In this respect, at least, they are similar. Further, we find in both cases that they are all composed of statements about the world, of descriptions of likely futures, of social attitudes, values, and political proposals. Because each is composed of these common elements, it has often been taken for granted that they are intellectual constructions of the same kind. In what terms, then, can they be distinguished?

An abbreviated answer to this complicated question can be found if we take our cue from one or two typical ideological arguments. The first of these is the familiar distinction between piecemeal and total solutions. Political doctrines are concerned with this or that problem because they recognise that political activity, if seen in problem-solution terms at all, is a matter of dealing with a stream of problems that will never end. Ideologies, by contrast, insist that no



piecemeal solution is a proper solution, and that the ideological proposal is the solution to all problems. Thus capitalism is understood in Marxist terms as the fundamental condition of a great variety of problems, none of which can be properly solved short of the abolition of capitalism. There is a weaker version of this kind of argument which has the widest possible currency and is to a large extent constitutive of modern liberal doctrines. This weaker version suggests that we can only cure social ills if we remove the fundamental causes of those ills. This is a common argument used in politics, but it may be seen as fundamentally ideological in that it takes it for granted that people are the creatures of their conditions, and hence that changed conditions will lead to changed people. Thus the solution to criminality is thought to be found in the removal of the conditions that cause criminality, and these conditions are thought to be such features of society as poverty and inequality.

A second argument which we may recognise as essentially ideological holds that the destruction of oppression is to the benefit of oppressors and oppressed alike. In other words, the benefits of oppression are of an entirely different and lesser order than the benefits of liberation, and men in their oppressive roles in relation to women (for example) are as much caught in the vice of a bad society as the women they oppress. Similarly, although capitalists are alienated in a different manner from the workers whose labour they appropriate, they are nonetheless also alienated, and would be able to enter fully into their human heritage only as liberation releases all, oppressors and oppressed alike, from the bondage of the modern world.

In these typically ideological arguments we find the suggestion that human beings have the potentiality to create a kind of society which would not be riven with the destructive conflicts of modern history; and further, that this new kind of society would not impose upon men the necessity of choosing between better and worse alternatives. It would be qualitatively different and qualitatively better. In fact, these assumptions do away with both politics and economics, since politics is always concerned with piecemeal solutions arising from compromises between different interests and demands, while economics studies the costs we must pay in choosing between alternatives. With ideology, we enter a world without costs and without compromises, and such a world is radically different from any with which we are in fact familiar.



Arguments of the kind we have just cited are used to validate ideological policies, and we may suggest that the fundamental distinction between ideologies and political doctrines lies in the way in which they are validated. In the case of political policies, validation is achieved in two quite different ways. Political policies are partly validated in terms of the cogency of their arguments about desirable and undesirable consequences. If, for example, we are supporting a policy of increasing defence expenditure, or liberalising laws on homosexual relations, or entering the Common Market, it is clear that a balance must be struck between costs and benefits. Politicians gain marks for realism if they frankly warn of the undesirable features of policies which they nonetheless espouse and, in sophisticated electorates, the politician who merely promises benefits is widely distrusted. Here, then, we find validation in terms of rhetorical arguments about expediency. But there is a second form of validation in politics, and this is by means of the support which a party can elicit for the policies it suggests. These days support is usually in terms of success at the polls, but the situation is not fundamentally altered if we are concerned merely with a king and his council, or an oligarchy holding the reins of power. Politics is about actually getting support, and lack of support is, over the long term, evidence of bad policies.

The case of ideologies is different, however. Ideologies purport to be bodies of knowledge, and their validity lies not in the desirability of their policies (for a populace long corrupted by an evil system would be in no position to make a valid judgement) nor in the support they may gain at large (which would merely be a matter of accident arising from some opportunity like war or internal crisis) but rather in the truth of the beliefs. The claim upon our attention and support made by an ideology is not in terms of its appeal to our interest, nor in its expediency, nor in the popular support it has, but in its truth as an analysis of the human situation. This is the central issue, but it is not, of course, the end of the matter. For if the ideology is actually true, then those whose interests it supposedly most clearly reflects have a duty to support it on pain of being denounced as traitors. For while a political party must gain the support of people each of whom is recognised as having the right to throw his support in any direction he chooses, an ideology claims in the first instance the automatic support of the class of people whom it has nominated as the agency of liberation: women, proletarians,



members of the race or class, and so on. If these people withhold support then they are likely to be castigated as traitors to their class, sex, race, nation, etc.

An ideology may be distinguished, then, in terms of its analytical mode of argument; and the significance of this distinguishing mark is that it is an alternative to democratic support. The interests of the working class, for example, are in political terms determined by what the working class will itself vote for; but in ideological terms, the interests of the proletariat emerge not from support, but from a supposedly correct analysis of the situation. Hence arises a correlative distinction which we shall not pursue: that while political doctrines must seek to *persuade*, ideologies purport to *educate*. They are tutorial in attitude, and talk in terms of true and false consciousness. It is this characteristic which links them with the *philosophe* ambition to save the world from bad thought, and which makes them competitors of, and often parodies of, academic inquiries.

## NOTE

- \* Kingsley Martin, *French Liberal Thought in the 18th Century* (New York, 1962), p. 123.







Olivier Lutaud

## IDEOLOGIE, REVOLUTION, GUERRE CIVILE

LE MESSAGE DE L'ANGLETERRE DU XVII<sup>e</sup> SIECLE

C'est pour un Français, à l'invitation d'un éminent maître de la philosophie politique anglaise du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, une entreprise hardie de prétendre aborder, depuis Florence, ou depuis Paris, le rivage anglais, sous un triple titre, aussi troublant en 1978; et précisément pour rapporter de ce voyage, en votre compagnie, un message *actuel*. En l'*Historia della guerra civile d'Inghilterra de' nostri tempi* que Bissaccioni publia en langue toscane en 1653, en la *Relazione...* de Guasconi publiée à Florence, en les inquiétudes du Cardinal Mazarin, ou dans une histoire d'Angleterre que son rival Retz fit publier par son secrétaire (de Salmonet), nous trouverions comme une première justification, que confirmeront de multiples échos en l'Histoire: de la révolution américaine de Jefferson aux emprunts de Mirabeau puis de Sieyès, et jusqu'à cette explosion de recherches unissant le libéral russe en exil (Kovalevsky), le marxiste révisionniste allemand (Bernstein), les érudits anglais (Gardiner, Gooch) à la fin du siècle dernier, et aboutissant à ces amples retours aux sources qu'offrent les écoles actuelles d'Angleterre, d'Amérique, d'U.R.S.S. et aussi d'Italie: ainsi l'admirable anthologie de mon collègue V. Gabrieli, *Puritanesimo e Libertà*.

Parler d'un siècle en trente minutes, n'est-ce pas, dira-t-on, peu sérieux? Or, en fait, non moins trompeur est notre découpage universitaire, qui isole, détaillant en l'immense symphonie d'un 'carmen seculare' politique, ici une tranche chronologique, là une approche thématique. En notre époque de satellites et de cosmonautes il est bon au contraire de rechercher une vision, un survol, un 'survey',



qui présentent, selon le mot du poète Fitzgerald, 'the scheme of things entire'. Car ce siècle anglais a une unité magnifique, depuis la mort de la reine vierge Tudor en 1603 déjà comme annoncée par les fossoyeurs de *Hamlet*, jusqu'à ce mois de mars 1702 où un souverain de substitution (et importé, lui, par la grâce du mariage) 'King William of ever blessed memory, departed this life...'

Définirons-nous d'entrée nos trois termes: idéologie, révolution, guerre civile? Oui, peut-être pour dire qu'ils annexent, de l'extérieur, une unique réalité, en se référant à des formes constantes de l'entendement. *Idéologie*: s'exprimant donc à travers un corps d'idées et d'idéaux qui sont à la base d'un système politique, économique, religieux, bref une *Pensée*, qui 'réfléchit' et qui 'pèse' le monde. *Révolution*: donc à travers un changement qui, vu d'abord comme cyclique (un éternel retour), va ici symboliser bouleversement ou renversement, et traduire les mutations lentes puis brusques du *Temps*. *Guerre Civile* enfin: c'est-à-dire, concentrée en un lieu qui comporte un message 'topique' (si ce n'est point là un pléonasme), en l'*Angleterre*, société civile, en conflit contre elle-même, et pour nous exemplaire. Une symphonie que nous écouterons en trois temps, en son tempo: Réforme, Révolte et Règlement.

## I. REFORME

Révolution et guerres civiles: voilà ce que le long règne élisabéthain avait précisément voulu éviter, et exorciser, au besoin en le rejouant sur la scène shakespearienne, pour mettre la société en garde: 'take but degree away, untune that string, and, hark, what discord follows...'; ou par un mythe littéraire, évocateur de ce passé lointain fait de luttes intérieures féodales puis religieuses, opérant la 'catharsis' et préservant ainsi l'ordre, les ordres, établis. Mais en cet 'endless jar', que va favoriser la médiocrité de la dynastie d'importation étrangère des Stuarts, la discorde va reprendre tout son élan. Débordant même le cadre national (car la guerre idéologique, dite de Trente Ans, va, malgré la 'non-intervention' officielle, tôt jouer son rôle de catalyse), voici que les anciennes valeurs s'inversent:

— à la quête du Graal ambigu qu'exaltait le poète Spenser se substitue le franc retour à la Réforme, cette rivale de la Renaissance depuis le coup de tonnerre de 1517: reprenant l'héritage de Calvin,



ou même de la lointaine 'étoile du matin' nationale que fut Wyclif, le protestant anglais réclame la reprise d'une 'reformation without tarrying': England semper reformanda!

— à un exercice charismatique du pouvoir s'oppose la pressante requête d'une neuve bourgeoisie, qui veut posséder sa terre comme son ciel.

— Enfin les alchimies aventureuses de l'esprit font place au test, à cet 'essay' qu'est l'expérience, intellectuelle et politique.

Isolons un instant ces trois démarches d'une même idéologie.

### 1. *Foi... et désordre*

Quelle ironie de constater, avec notre recul, combien l'exigence —, 'faith and order' —, de toute église officielle et notamment de ce césaro-papisme qu'incarnait la 'Church of England by law established', est désormais en fait refusée. Car le mouvement 'puritain' (celui-là même qui, à l'écoute des messages venus, depuis la Suisse et au long de la vallée du Rhin, ou de la Hollande voisine, enfin prenant l'Angleterre à revers via l'Ecosse, avait exaspéré la reine), le voici qui repart à l'assaut: en ses partisans bourgeois, 'presbytériens', noyant Eglise et Parlement, ou encore en ses éléments populaires "séparatistes" qui récusent un Etat-Eglise prétendant incorporer d'autorité tout Anglais. En vain le Maître-Jacques royal prétend-il au magistère théologique, et n'autorise-t-il qu'une version retraduite de la Bible, dûment privée de tout commentaire subversif: car le Livre d'Autorité se retourne contre l'Autorité. Le souverain n'en voudrait citer que le confortable "obey the powers that be" de l'épître aux Romains; mais on lui répond par l'audace du Psaume 2 ou du Magnificat (Luc 1/52-53); en famille comme en la Cité, le citoyen-croyant s'intoxique de visions qui mènent loin: Adam et Eve égalitaires, 'peuple élu' choisissant ses 'Juges', prophètes sermonnant les rois, malédictions lors de l'Exode et de l'Exil contre tout Pharaon et contre toute Babylone, famille d'amour des Evangiles, argumentation démocratique de Saint Paul, pèlerinage des martyrs, fureurs d'apocalypse. Chacun retrouve Dieu en son histoire, et Sion est sur la Tamise. Les scléroses théologiques et les palinodies politiques officielles flirtant avec l'Espagne, favorisent ainsi 'l'enthousiasme' au



sens propre, lequel justifie la prise en mains de son destin par le parti du mouvement (qu'il s'agisse des sectes clandestines, ou surtout des hommes de bien —, légistes, marchands, pasteurs —), qui double le clergé officiel et oppose aux prélats, même talentueux, une libre foi et les ordres du vrai Dieu, celui qui secoue et rénove les nations.

## 2. *Absolutisme, Bourgeoisie, Capitalisme (an ABC Guide)*

Le souverain, non content d'annexer Dieu, s'y était identifié (Kings are Gods), associant la domesticité épiscopale à sa prétention (no bishops, no king): ainsi s'affirmait, en avance même sur la France, une théorie et technique de l'absolutisme prétendument de droit divin. Or une classe dirigeante montante, qui déjà piaffait sous la vieille reine, ne pouvait tolérer un 'magistrat' réduit à cette prétention dictatoriale; elle y vit scandale. Les justifications bibliques ou classiques, renforcées d'exemples étrangers récents ('Gueux', huguenots; et l'Italie, depuis déjà Marsile de Padoue jusqu'à Machiavel; réussite vénitienne) viennent alors retrouver et le souvenir démocratique saxon, et une tradition médiévale que les légistes de Droit Public (Common Law), opposés à toute juridiction d'exception, à toute taxation arbitraire, à toute emprise d'un clergé sur l'état, font habilement remonter jusqu'à la Grande Charte et autres précédents. Mieux, se développe le concept, plus neuf, du trust —, qui est délégation politique et engagement contractuel appliqué d'ailleurs simultanément aux domaines religieux (le Covenant entre Dieu et son peuple) et économiques (naissance et garantie des grandes compagnies commerciales à charte, où pullule le puritain actionnaire). Rapidement l'élite montante, faite des marchands de Londres (London interest) et de la 'Gentry' la plus active (landed interest) veut voir dans le Parlement (essentiellement dans les Communes qu'elles contrôlent) plus qu'un simple Conseil Consultatif; mais un organisme de surveillance, voire de législation, ayant vocation —, si insuffisante qu'en soit la base électorale —, de représenter toute la nation et ses intérêts. Ainsi s'amorce —, comment l'oublier dans le monde de 1978? —, la doctrine parlementaire: d'abord à pas feutrés, puis dans l'exaspération; devant les parlements mort-nés puis bafoués, le gouvernement des favoris, les emprunts forcés, l'échec extérieur, les excès judiciaires, — le combat va prendre une grandeur épique. Le



nouveau roi Charles qui s'est tôt vu opposer une Pétition du Droit —, dûment votée —, franchit le pas: ne pouvant mater son parlement, en un putsch il le congédie; pire, il installe une tyrannie de onze ans —, préfiguration de toutes les futures alliances entre 'le sabre et le goupillon' et dont le nom est tout un programme: le thorough, l'intégrisme, appuyé sur un Richelieu de pacotille, l'archevêque Laud et un ministre, ex-parlementaire passé à l'ennemi. Révolution contre le droit, guerre civile froide et sans pitié: contre ce monstre à deux têtes, un jeune poète, Milton, annonce en 1637 l'imminence du châtiement où Dieu défendra son peuple. A vrai dire, si la bourgeoisie patriote, juriste et pieuse s'opposait ainsi à ce néo-féodalisme concentré au bénéfice d'un seul, c'est qu'elle se savait force économique: le procès fameux du 'ship-money' vient ainsi prendre le relais des refus parlementaires des impositions non consenties, amorçant une tradition de liberté très anglaise —, et que l'on retrouvera à la naissance même de l'Indépendance américaine. Et si le puritain veut s'organiser (les fameux Pères Pèlerins de 1620 fonderont, encore en mer, un 'civil body politic'), s'il croit à l'engagement mutuel —, c'est cependant en contrepartie d'une libre entreprise qui préserve les droits civiques et matériels du sujet anglais. En cette économie nouvelle de Dieu et de l'homme il veut faire fructifier son talent, et avoir le plein management de sa vie, morale tout comme financière. D'où cet égoïsme de groupe qui serait une des racines du capitalisme comme l'a, avec quelque excès, affirmé le sociologue Weber: d'où un dynamisme, qui refuse les maigres inspections de l'Etat royal, et ses monopoles commerciaux que cyniquement il afferme au plus offrant; d'où un libéralisme décentralisé qui se méfie de Whitehall et dirige sur place les finances des comtés; d'où un impérialisme sûr de lui, féru de libertés politiques et économiques, et dur pour lui et pour les faibles, en ces temps d'inflation et de démographie ascendante; autant de caractères clairement à l'origine des succès de l'Angleterre victorienne, des Etats-Unis d'aujourd'hui.

### 3. Une nouvelle frontière de la Pensée

L'Anglais a la pudeur de ce qui est affirmation intellectuelle. Or tout est pourtant alors sous-tendu par ce qu'on peut appeler un nouveau 'Discours', une neuve 'Méthode'. En son habile usage des autorités de la conscience contre l'autorité brute, en sa chrétienne...



semi-laïcisation de l'Etat (Selden) contre un clergé ou souverain divinisé, en son sens du passé et du futur qui nourrit toute une méditation sur l'Histoire (Raleigh), sur ses mues, moteurs et mouvements, bref sur ses "révolutions" —, ce temps de réformes exprime une dialectique moderne.

Et moderne, il l'est encore plus par sa méthode de progrès; 'test' en effet remplace quest, expérience et 'experiment' se rencontrent, le religieux et le scientifique s'unissent en un même terme, 'seeker'. 'Prove' et 'improve' riment à l'unisson et Bacon y répond à saint Paul ('prove all'). Tout prend donc l'allure d'une immense Expérience où se manifestent des Lois de nature. Toute 'idole' —, politique ou mentale —, est récusée. Bacon en est comme le symbole, à l'écho partout entendu: chez le prédicateur psychologue comme chez le poète ironique, chez le scientifique comme chez le dramaturge —, de Preston à Donne, de Harvey à Massinger, et surtout dans son oeuvre propre; depuis ces 'Essays', civils et moraux qui testent là où Montaigne séduisait, jusqu'à son programme d'avancement de la Connaissance, jusqu'à son Utopie même de la *Nouvelle Atlantide*, où un Collège de Sciences (dont, soit dit en passant, les académies soviétiques ont copié la structure) comprend, accepte, utilise la nature pour l'amélioration de la condition humaine —, cette ambition nourrit toutes les nouveautés. Elle revendique un outil épistémologique qui écarte Aristote (et ses catégories préconçues) et Platon (avec son Idée en mal d'incarnation). Elle se veut ouverture, qui fonde la science sur un réel qu'elle analyse puis contrôle; ainsi évaluant le jeu des forces sociales, à l'aube du monde moderne: la France révolutionnaire le traduira; et sans lui il n'y aurait eu ni Newton, ni les Encyclopédistes, ni Marx, ni Mill, ni science, ni politique. Il est l'idéologie suprême de ce temps, en contrepoint ici-bas du Dieu de la Bible: à l'écart comme lui, mais tout-puissant, ou presque.

## II. REVOLTE

Ce segment de vingt ans (1640-1660) qui fixe solidement le siècle tout en le laissant pivoter tel un dièdre autour de l'axe de 1649, cette première 'révolution nationale' qui ouvre l'Histoire Moderne, — et que l'on nommera 'puritaine' ou 'bourgeoise', ou 'grande rébellion', donne en apparence la primauté à l'acte, à une guerre civile, multiple (il y en eut deux, sinon trois si l'on inclut l'Ecosse), mais une en son



dessein. Car elle fut l'abcès qui éclata, la crise qui jugeait, le 'climax' ne tragédie chrétienne et classique, une suite de "signes des temps", où se jouait la Good Old Cause, quand religion et intérêts se transcendaient en idéologie: 'God... knows... with what a perfect hatred I detest this war without an enemy; but I look upon it as Opus Domini... We... must act those parts that are assigned us in this tragedy' (Sir William Waller). Sur scène, assurant l'unité d'action sur plus de seize ans, voici un héros, le protagoniste, Cromwell, au rôle ambigu: député puis chasseur de parlements, paysan devenu homme de guerre, zélé mais tolérant, temporisateur avant de brusquer ses choix, 'visage anglais' de Machiavel et chevaleresque Great-heart menant vers une terre promise. Entouré d'autres acteurs –, alliés, adversaires –, il abat le tyran, tranche le chef de droit divin. Immense branle-bas d'humanité, nourrissant un combat qui était aussi débat et où furent renversées les valeurs acceptées depuis un millénaire, en une lutte idéologique brisant successivement trois monopoles d'oppression.

### 1. *Liberté de Pensée*

Pour la première fois tout un peuple parle, et doublement.

D'abord en son Parlement affranchi. Depuis novembre 1640 s'affirme, s'éteint, resurgit cette institution, dont marxistes de gauche et extrémistes de droite ont imprudemment méprisé trop longtemps les nécessaires vertus: droit de cette 'représentative' de se réunir en son immunité, de légiférer, de redresser les abus, de contrôler les autres forces (cléricales, militaires, économiques); de surveiller, voire de choisir, l'exécutif... et même de le faire passer en jugement; d'innombrables documents témoignent alors: entre autres, la *Grande Remontrance*, la *Ligue et Accord solennels* (engageant la population), les *Propositions* – ultimatum au roi, etc... Certes cette parole put errer, faiblir: car le Parlement fut partial, et partiel puisque épuré, mais toujours renaissant, phénix recevant l'allégeance d'un Vane, d'un Milton. De nos jours, dans l'Angleterre démocratique, les Etats-Unis du Watergate, l'Italie, l'Allemagne, la péninsule ibérique, la Grèce, et mon pays, où en serions-nous sans Parlement...? Sans lui il n'est pas d'idéologie politique, sinon dénaturée par les inquisitions, ou asservie par des clans armés.



Ce peuple anglais parlait aussi, enseignant aux générations à venir, à travers *ses* écrits. Le miracle de la Collection Thomason (regroupant près de vingt-trois mille titres en ces vingt ans) illustre la lutte d'idées, et témoigne à son tour: la censure fut alors, en fait ou en droit, absente. L'on sait qu'un appel de Milton symbolise en 1644 cet acquis extraordinaire de la *liberté des presses*, de cette liberté concomitante d'impression et d'expression. Son message, traduit par Mirabeau en français, puis en allemand, russe, italien, espagnol, devait être en 1944 célébré sous les bombes à Londres, citadelle de liberté, et fut présent à la création de l'Unesco. Originellement socié à la revendication de la tolérance religieuse, il exalte clairement la liberté "idéologique", puisque à travers les 'hérésies' s'annonçaient les nobles audaces de la pensée. Contre toute 'chasse aux sorcières' va s'affirmer le droit du *non-conformiste*, refusant préjugés, coutumes d'erreurs, injustices; et récusant Etat, Eglise, 'parti unique' totalitaires. Né de l'association du libre arbitre et de la liberté chrétienne, pur d'une lumière évangélique annonçant le siècle des Lumières, fier d'une Loi naturelle retrouvée en l'union coopérative des recherches, ce traité, et quelques autres, revendique une franchise fondamentale: hors de laquelle, à Prague, à Santiago, on ne saurait même discuter d'aucune autre liberté...

## 2. *Egalité devant le Pouvoir*

Vite allait surgir, exaspéré par certaines prudences (et relevant le défi d'hommes d'Etat ou d'Eglise tentés de confisquer, avec la Pensée, le Pouvoir à leur profit), ce souci politique qui nous hante encore. Prolongeant quelques projets fort modernes (droit à l'éducation, au divorce; refus des dogmes ou des prébendes, associés au système clérical ou légal, et garantissant le 'quadrillage' idéologique de la société), un groupe, bientôt un parti organisé (que les adversaires baptisent habilement 'levellers' ou 'niveleurs'), levain du moyen peuple de Londres, et ayant ses antennes dans une Armée Nouvelle de recrutement plus libéral ('nous ne sommes pas une armée mercenaire...'), défendit ce que nous appelons la démocratie. Quatre leaders, souvent incarcérés, inondent Londres et sa région de manifestes: Lilbrune, 'Jean-né-libre', partout présent, exigeant que l'élu de Dieu soit aussi électeur ici-bas, défenseur des 'fundamental liberties'; Overton, le Cockney, en appelant de toutes les représentations au



seul peuple souverain; Walwyn, humaniste ironique et socialisant; Wildman jeune juriste républicain. L'érudition américaine, attentive aux ancêtres de sa révolution, a réédité ces manifestes. Quant aux Russes, séduits par le rôle des militaires idéologues, ils leur empruntèrent pour l'usage que l'on sait, cela dès 1892, les termes d' 'agitateur' et de 'conseil' (soviet...). En voici deux exemples:

— La remarquable sténographie des Débats de l'Armée (trois jours de 1647) où se heurtent soldats et officiers, en trois discussions successives: le risque et le devoir du changement politique; l'extension vers le suffrage universel en dépit de dangers pour la propriété; le refus du veto d'un monarque appuyé sur la force. Trois thèmes que retrouvera —, d'ailleurs Burke nous le rappelle —, la révolution française. A cette occasion Wildman lira un projet, d'où je cite cet axiome stupéfiant '... All power is originally and essentially in the whole body of the people of this nation..., and their free choice or consent by their representers is the only original or foundation of all just government...': cent quinze ans avant Rousseau.

— Une constitution, le *Pacte du peuple*, aux multiples rédactions dont la dernière sortit en fraude de la Tour de Londres le 1<sup>er</sup> mai 1649 (avec le décalage du calendrier Julien d'alors, l'anniversaire serait aujourd'hui), complète par une déclaration de Droits de l'Homme son projet parlementaire, et stipule: élections au suffrage élargi, démocratie locale, réforme judiciaire et pénitentiaire, liberté de conscience, totale égalité devant la loi, impôt direct progressif, objection de conscience possible, armée sous contrôle civil, etc... Le texte passa en France déjà à Bordeaux sous la Fronde, et la révolution française le connut. Il reste valable.

L'avènement de la *République* en 1649 ne saurait enfin être oublié: ni par un Français ou un Italien, ni non plus par un Anglais, puisque c'est au coup de semonce salutaire du procès de Charles Stuart (précédant de loin Louis Capet) que nous devons l'alliance unique de la monarchie et de la démocratie. Alors fut proclamé le droit qu'à un peuple de se débarrasser d'un tyran: 'rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God', dira Jefferson. Le même cri devait déjà être lancé, à juste titre, contre Cromwell devenu Protecteur et tenté par la couronne, dans le fameux tract *Killing No Murder*. Mais justification théorique en fut aussi donnée par Milton, ce hardi républicain chrétien que devait tant admirer l'Amérique, du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours: refusant tout pseudo-droit divin ou onction sainte, il défi-



nit la légitimité de l'emprise du pouvoir (tenure) par le contrat politique, passé entre la nation et celui qu'elle délègue ou accepte, quitte à l'éliminer, comme tout autre citoyen, en cas de forfaiture; puis ce grand bourgeois, en son mépris pour l'aristocratie et pour la populace, défendit la liberté et le régicide en une controverse internationale où il sacrifia sa vue mais gagna la gloire. Noble époque où, lorsque Cromwell se voulut à son tour autoritaire, il s'attira d'un de ses généraux la cinglante réponse: un simple juge de paix a plus de pouvoir légal que vous en Angleterre.

### 3. *Fraternité dans la Possession?*

C'est autour de cet enjeu que nous regrouperons trois grandes oeuvres, placées en triangle, et dont le seul point d'accord est un anticléricalisme méprisant; entre 1649 et 1656, où le social et l'économique sont explicitement ou implicitement associés au politique; et qui nous influencent fondamentalement; puisqu'il s'agit, prises à la naissance même, de trois doctrines: l'Etat fort, le socialisme planificateur, le libéralisme économique, et politique.

Hobbes, conservateur mais matérialiste (d'où l'intérêt que lui porte le marxisme), analyste scientifique (mathématiques et psychologie sociale), voit dans l'exigence de sécurité qui nous obsède la justification de l'abdication devant le souverain, *Leviathan* absolu; c'est, en outre, consacrer tout ordre, établi ou vainqueur, et pour autant qu'il s'impose. Cette thèse, rompant avec la tradition anglaise, exalte l'Etat, propriétaire des esprits et protecteur des biens.

A l'opposé voici l'autodidacte Winstanley; pré-Quaker, à la limite du christianisme, parlant en prophète, il lance avec ses squatters du Surrey un microcosme communautaire, symbolique mais aussi bien expérimental: c'est à la fois Christ et Prométhée libérés, en un système intégré, où la communion anticléricale mais oecuménique des pensées, unies par un Christ-Logos prolétarisé, se projette et se complète en communisme des biens: la 'clôture' du 'mien' et du 'tien' est dénoncée, mieux que par More et bien avant tout autre socialiste. L'échec sur le terrain le mènera à un programme très élaboré de gouvernement révolutionnaire (*Loi de Liberté*), représentatif, égalitaire, et où justice et raison, nature et expérience, étendues au 'Globe', se substituent à Dieu. Quel message pour le Tiers Monde!



Entre eux deux, Harrington, conscient des étiologies historiques, relie en son *Oceana* stabilité politique et économique-foncière, puis en déduit une société sous influence de la 'gentry', où une cybernétique habile de la fortune, des élections (scrutin secret) et des structures administratives, associée à une utilisation de l'équilibre des forces (checks and balances), maintient un libéralisme avancé, constitutionnel et économique; depuis deux siècles les Etats-Unis lui sont souvent redevables de leur essor républicain; et aussi bien l'Angleterre du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et même l'Occident d'aujourd'hui.

Ainsi peut se structurer, à grands traits, l'idéologie d'une révolution extraordinairement annonciatrice de notre temps.

### III. LE REGLEMENT

L'idéologie a-t-elle péri avec la Restauration de 1660, dans l'attente de nos tardives exhumations? Non certes, puisque vingt-neuf ans plus tard et juste cent ans avant notre '1789', surgit cette révolution que les Anglais appellent 'glorieuse' ou, comme le dira plus brutalement Guizot, 'la révolution qui a réussi': mais il est caractéristique que notre historien, malgré son annonce répétée d'une étude de cette dernière, qui avait toute sa sympathie, n'ait jamais pu qu'être l'historien... de la première: celle qui avait peut-être échoué, mais qui laissait, tel un souvenir brûlant ou tel un précipité chimique concentré par l'épreuve, tout son acquis idéologique que la génération suivante bientôt reprit, assimila et transmit à son tour, dûment digéré. En un sens 1660 annonçait déjà une Révolution, au sens double: à savoir un retour des choses mais plus haut, comme en un mouvement hélicoïdal où l'on repasse à la verticale d'un point passé, 'révolu'.

Ce fut d'abord un règlement de comptes brutal, mais productif, du moins 'a contrario': ainsi 1815, 1905, 1940 annonceront 1830, 1917, 1945. Par la répression qu'ils imposent, en effet, les monarchistes de la 'Contre-Révolution' (sous Charles II) vont non seulement ressouder l'alliance des puritains vaincus mais faire que la foi persécutée se réfugie à l'écart des objectifs terrestres: à épouser son ciel comme chez Bunyan, elle y maintient sa puissance. Si Brutus a été vaincu, Polyeucte alors va renaître; et naît le Dissenter, bientôt actif, et si vivace, comme plante sous la neige: on le retrouvera, sur



deux siècles, de Penn le Quaker à Paine le triple révolutionnaire, puis influençant le Chartisme, l'éducation ou la philanthropie victorienne de certains libéraux, et enfin le 'Labour', pénétrant même l'esprit de toute la nation.

Plus dans l'immédiat, aux jours où meurent les grands maîtres hérétiques d'Occident (Rembrandt et son Jésus, Molière et son Don Juan, Milton et Samson, Spinoza et son Traité), voici deux 'partis', au sens moderne et au nom sarcastique (whigs/tories), qui se créent et qui, maîtres du parlement, se partagent les dépouilles, mais assurent aussi l'idéologie: à travers des rivalités, des trafics, des ingérences extérieures, une guerre civile froide reprend, faite de complots opposés, mais qui a aussi virtuellement sa politique (l'alternance gouvernementale), son enjeu ('droit divin patriarcal') ou 'Lex-Regina' remplaçant 'Lex-Rex'), ses martyrs (Sidney, Russell), ses documents républicains, ses utopies, ses exils, et même son joyau: le bill d'Habeas Corpus. Puis c'est l'accord des partis, et du bas peuple, qui finalement procédera à l'extraction sans douleur d'un successeur, roi très catholique et provocateur, pâle imitateur de Louis XIV: on le remplace par la fille et le gendre; 1689 annonce donc aussi notre 1830... Mais l'affaire de famille fut tout autant idéologique: depuis la Hollande une invasion sans grands risques fut préparée par un brain-trust 'whig'; tout y est habilement mené: un souverain en remplaçant un autre, mais sur contrat politique accepté. La formule ambiguë, 'King *in* Parliament', dont le père du roi déposé avait fait le mauvais usage que l'on sait, en entrant au parlement sans être invité, conserve une dignité d'étiquette mais "encadre" définitivement le souverain. Et soixante-et-un ans après la Petition of Right, voici venir la réponse: le Bill of Rights, complété plus tard d'un 'settlement' dynastique; avec entre temps, sans éclats de voix, des audaces: ainsi la suspension de la censure..., obtenue par la simple absence de renouvellement des censeurs... Ce règlement du jeu parlementaire et politique était bourgeois et stabilisant, mais dès lors viable, et acceptable par la majorité. Monarchie constitutionnelle en esprit, certes; mais de constitution, au sens français, point. L'idéologie fut pourtant explicitement associée à la crise: Locke, défenseur de la tolérance pour le progrès, en deux brillants traités justifiait la liberté à travers le contrat politique, et la propriété, reliée au travail productif; image parfaite de libéralisme, fondé au surplus sur une philoso-



phie écartant jusqu'au concept des idées archétypes et des catégories tranchées, qui, imprudemment mises au compte de Dieu, avaient rendu les guerres civiles inexpiables. Bref, le noble brasero révolutionnaire finissait en bon chauffage central whig: une réussite, que bientôt les esprits éclairés d'Europe entière voulurent imiter, et qui, mutatis mutandis, a eu droit de cité jusqu'à la première guerre mondiale.

Quant aux visions antérieures, elles étaient, on l'a vu, suffisamment en avance sur leur temps pour être désormais à la mesure du nôtre...







Léo Moulin

UN EXEMPLE D'IMPACT IDEOLOGIQUE:  
DE L'ORDRE DE CITEAUX A L'ESPRIT DE 1848

Mon propos est de montrer comment l'esprit des techniques d'élection et de décision (T.E.D.) qui avaient été élaborées par l'Eglise et, plus particulièrement, par les Ordres religieux, au cours du Moyen Age, comme techniques pures et simples, sans plus, a été faussé par l'impact d'une idéologie, en l'occurrence l'idéologie de 1848.

UN RÉGIME DE DROIT

Dès le départ, l'Eglise et les Ordres religieux ont fondé des *régimes de droit*, c'est-à-dire des régimes dont les structures, l'esprit, le fonctionnement et les mécanismes de révision constitutionnelle étaient (et sont encore) minutieusement définis par la Règle et les Constitutions. Les pouvoirs de l'Abbé, de l'Evêque, du Pape, ne sont ni illimités, ni absolus. Les droits de la conscience sont explicitement reconnus: '*militans sub Regula vel abbate*', écrit saint Benoit (534). On doit obéissance à la Règle et à sa conscience, affirment les Franciscains, '*ubi peccatum non cernetur*', précisent les Jésuites. L'Assemblée détient la *summa potestas*. Le premier Parlement supranational, dans l'histoire de l'Occident, est le Chapitre général de l'ordre de Cîteaux, en 1115, soit cent ans avant le système, au demeurant assez rustique, instauré par la *Magna Charta* d'Angleterre. Le supérieur élu par elle et à laquelle il est 'soumis', dont il n'est que 'le sujet', le 'vicaire', le 'lieutenant', n'a que la *plena potestas, ad aedificandum*,



disent les Jésuites, dans les limites qui lui sont assignées par la Règle et les décisions de l'Assemblée. Il n'est pas source de droit ni de pouvoir.

#### DES PRINCIPES DÉMOCRATIQUES

Régime de droit, primauté de l'Assemblée: de ces deux principes de base découlent des pratiques que, pour faire bref, nous appellerons "démocratiques", et qui sont destinées à en assurer le plein et correct fonctionnement, *juxta et praeter statuta*, et jamais *contra*, pour reprendre les termes des chartreux. Citons-les: ils nous sont assez familiers pour se passer de commentaires. Principe de l'élection au suffrage 'universel'. Principe de la participation de tous aux décisions. Principe de la délégation de pouvoirs: Présence du 'peuple' Droit de 'recall'.

#### LES T.E.D. AU MOYEN AGE

Dans ce contexte s'inscrivent tout naturellement des techniques électorales et délibératives (T.E.D.) destinées à assurer le respect et la réalisation de ces principes. Citons: *a*) le principe du vote à la *majorité absolue* (dès 341). La division des opinions n'est, en principe, ni '*reprehensibile nec irreligiosum*' (Léon I<sup>er</sup>, 440-460). Elle est fréquente, constate le Chapitre général de Cîteaux (1133). Pratique pendant des siècles ('*stetur sententiae maioris partis*', dit Cîteaux en 1134), il est pleinement reconnu et réaffirmé par Rome, au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: le nombre *seul* est 'présumé' être un indice de "saniorité". '*Semper stabitur maiori parti*' (1261); *b*) interdiction de recourir à la *majorité relative* (au moins dès 1222), sauf en cas de '*sanior pars*', notion introduite par saint Benoît au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle; *c*) interdiction de recourir au *tirage au sort* (dès 404), technique très courante dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age, et dont Jean-Jacques Rousseau dit (1762) qu'elle est 'de la nature de la démocratie' (parce que égalitaire); *d*) la *majorité qualifiée* des 2/3 (dès 1179, pour l'élection des papes); *e*) la technique, dès le VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, dite '*arbitraria*', ou du '*compromis*', qui consiste à confier, par décision unanime de l'Assemblée, à un nombre impair 'd'arbitres', le soin d'élire et de décider; *f*) les *tours de scrutin* (dès le V<sup>e</sup> siècle); *g*) le *scrutin secret*,



'*juxta consuetudinem*', écrit Cîteaux dès 1159, ce qui prouve son ancienneté; *b*) la façon de compter 'les voix': de bouche à oreille (la 'voix') avec examen ('*scrutinium*') et pondération des votes par les *scrutatores*, par 'ballotta' (cf. ballottage), par 'assis et levé', en sortant de la salle ('*pedibus ire in sententiam*'), en opinant du bonnet, par écrit ('*per schedulas*'); *i*) le *quorum*; *j*) le *mandat impératif* est interdit: chacun doit voter '*in sua conscientia*'; *k*) l'abstention est, au mieux, tolérée; *l*) la *durée de la délibération*; très souvent réglée par le temps qu'une chandelle met à se consumer.

Seul le *conclave* est d'origine laïque: c'est une invention des Communes désireuses d'abrèger la durée des élections papales et d'alléger la charge financière qui en résultait. De tout quoi, résultent, très tôt, l'apparition et la mise au point de codes électoraux d'une étonnante minutie, destinés à assurer des élections libres et régulières. Le premier est l'oeuvre d'un anglais, Lawrence de Somercote (1254). Suivent l'ouvrage de Guillaume de Mandagout (1285), puis celui de Guido de Pise (1377).

#### LES ORIGINES RELIGIEUSES DES T.E.D.

Ces techniques, je crois l'avoir établi<sup>1</sup>, trouvent leurs origines, non pas dans les techniques d'Athènes ou de Rome, ni, moins encore, dans celles des Communes médiévales, mais, exclusivement, dans l'Eglise et, plus particulièrement, les abbayes bénédictines et ordres religieux de l'Occident médiéval. Pareille situation peut s'expliquer *a*) par la disparition, pour non-utilisation, des techniques T.E.D., par ailleurs passablement rudimentaires, pratiquées à Rome et à Athènes; *b*) par le fait que la naissance des communes est postérieure à celle des abbayes et des ordres et leurs techniques d'élection et de décision, remarquablement moins élaborées (dans certains cas, elles sont empruntées aux religieux); *c*) par le besoin où, dès les premiers siècles de notre ère, l'Eglise, les diocèses et les abbayes où, par définition, le pouvoir n'est pas héréditaire, se sont trouvés de procéder à l'élection de leurs gouvernants, papes, évêques et abbés; *d*) par la nécessité, pour ces institutions, de se mettre à l'abri, autant que possible des groupes de pression de l'époque — princes, communes, évêques, abbés voisins, grands ordres rivaux, pouvoirs centraux.



## DES T.E.D. NON-IDÉOLOGISÉES

Ce qui frappe dans ces techniques électorales et délibératives religieuses du Moyen Age est qu'elles ne sont pas le moins du monde idéologisées, moins encore sacralisées. Les électeurs invoquent, certes, l'Esprit-Saint pour les aider à bien choisir; et les élections se font selon un cérémonial très élaboré de chants, de prières et de jeûnes, qui doivent, en principe, assurer le maximum de chances de désigner un Supérieur de qualité ou de prendre de bonnes décisions. Ceci dit, les religieux ne se font aucune illusion. Un vote majoritaire, ou même unanime, peut se porter sur un homme indigne parce qu'il est 'complice des vices de la Communauté' (Saint Benoît, VI<sup>e</sup> siècle) ou, tout simplement, se tromper, c'est-à-dire mal choisir ou prendre une mauvaise décision. Le nombre n'est qu'une *présomption* ('*praesumitur*') de 'saniorité', c'est-à-dire de qualité et de légitimité, et non une preuve; mais il faut s'en satisfaire. Car la minorité n'a pas nécessairement raison: elle aussi peut errer. Au demeurant, le vote à la majorité relative, on l'a vu, n'est pas valable. Les élections peuvent être faussées, par la fraude, la violence ou la démagogie. Le système de l' 'unanimité spontanée' '*per quasi inspirationem spiritui sancti*', — le *quasi* est significatif<sup>2</sup> — a été, petit à petit, abandonné: il prêtait à fraudes et à tumultes et l'unanimité acquise de cette façon était trop souvent suspecte. Il fut interdit (dans la plupart des cas) par le Concile de Trente (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle).

Si soigneusement choisi qu'il soit, le Supérieur peut être tenté d'abuser de son pouvoir: la Règle de Saint Benoît prévoit que, dans les affaires importantes, il demandera l'avis de la Communauté.

S'il n'est pas élu à vie, le Supérieur rendra compte de sa gestion à la fin de son mandat. Les Chartreux précisent qu'il ne lui est pas permis d'emporter des documents officiels dans sa cellule.

Les Constitutions de la plupart des Ordres religieux interdisent au Supérieur de révoquer, d'éloigner, d'écarter (en les envoyant en mission, par exemple) ou de remplacer *ex officio* (en cas de maladie ou de décès), les Conseillers qui ont été élus par l'Assemblée pour lui être adjoints et dont il doit obtenir l'accord en cas de décisions importantes. Le pouvoir corrompt, le pouvoir absolu corrompt absolument: telle est bien la philosophie politique des Ordres religieux. Mais de très grands pouvoirs sont accordés à ceux qui sont chargés de gouverner: c'est que cette même philosophie politique leur a fait



comprendre que, sans pouvoirs et sans une certaine liberté d'action, il est impossible de gouverner.

Les Constitutions des Ordres religieux prévoient aussi que le Supérieur pourra être déposé: l'Assemblée peut défaire ce qu'elle a fait. Dans certains cas, graves, bien sûr, et à la condition de respecter un certain nombre de règles fort précises.

L'Assemblée elle-même n'est pas toute puissante: elle ne peut jamais décider, fût-ce à l'unanimité, d'abandonner au Supérieur l'intégralité des pouvoirs que lui reconnaît la Règle. Le cas est prévu: on ne mise pas plus sur la sagesse des Assemblées que sur celle des gouvernants ou de leurs conseillers.

En outre, les Religieux manifestent une grande méfiance à l'égard des assemblées trop nombreuses. Ils savent, d'expérience, qu'elles sont souvent sources d'incohérence, de bavardages stériles, d'indécision: c'est pourquoi ils se tournent volontiers vers le système du 'pacte', dit du '*compromissum*'.

Tout le Moyen Age est favorable au principe de l'élection à vie qui évite la répétition trop fréquente des intrigues et des déchaînements d'ambition qui sont, dit Ignace de Loyola (Constit. 720) 'la peste' des réunions électorales. D'une façon générale, tout est élaboré, à commencer par le régime de droit lui-même, *comme si* la Providence n'intervenait pas nécessairement dans la conduite des hommes. Il n'est rien de plus éloigné, politiquement parlant, de l'esprit des Ordres religieux, que le slogan '*Vox populi, vox Dei*'.

#### LA MÉTAPOLITIQUE DE JEAN-JACQUES

Tout change avec Rousseau (et déjà, chose curieuse, avec Machiavel): 'Ce qui généralise la Volonté est moins le *nombre de voix* (je souligne L. M.) que l'intérêt commun (?) qui les unit'. La 'pluralité' (qui est le terme utilisé jusqu'au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle pour dire 'majorité' encore considéré, en 1842, comme un néologisme et auquel Littré continue à préférer 'pluralité') dit si la proposition faite au peuple est 'conforme ou non à la Volonté générale' qui est la sienne...

La minorité ne diffère pas d'avis; elle 'se trompe': 'si son avis particulier l'eût emporté... c'est alors que je n'aurais pas été libre'.



Quant au citoyen face à la Volonté Générale, il sera contraint d'obéir par tout le corps, 'ce qui ne signifie pas autre chose sinon qu'on le forcera d'être libre'. Nous sommes, on le voit, fort éloignés du pragmatisme médiéval.

## LE DÉLIRE ROMANTIQUE

Cette métapolitique rousseauiste va prendre toute son ampleur et toute sa redoutable signification en s'incarnant dans l'idéologie romantique du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Voici, par exemple, ce qu'écrit le *Dictionnaire politique* de 1842: 'La majorité désigne un être moral... bien que constatée par le nombre, (elle) est encore autre chose que le nombre'. Possédant 'l'instinct social' qui ne s'écarte 'jamais des lois divines', 'elle ne se trompe jamais', et permet d'arriver 'à la connaissance de la vérité sociale', une vérité 'incontestée', puisque évidente.

Quant à la minorité, si elle est porteuse d'une certaine vérité, 'toute les voies (lui seront) ouvertes pour réparer l'erreur': car 'l'erreur seule (je souligne, L. M.) peut perdre du terrain; le vrai ne recule jamais' (idem). Et encore: 'Rien de ce qui est faux ne dure longtemps sous un régime où tout le monde a, tout à la fois, le droit de parler et le droit de voter'. Le lieu privilégié du débat entre le vrai et le faux est évidemment les assemblées, surtout si elles sont nombreuses. Je cite: 'Il y a, dans le seul fait de la réunion d'un grand nombre d'individus, une garantie positive de justice, d'intelligence, de droiture et de fermeté. Il n'y a plus d'avares ni de fripons, ni de lâches sur la place publique. L'intelligence elle-même (Autre citation: 'Dans l'exercice des droits politiques, l'intelligence est pour beaucoup plus que la volonté') s'échauffe, se développe et s'agrandit au milieu de l'Assemblée'. Le moins que l'on puisse dire de ces déclarations flamboyantes — qui jetteront tant d'hommes sur les barricades de 1848 — c'est que leur ton diffère singulièrement de celui des Codes religieux du Moyen Age. L'impact du romantisme politique et de son idéologie a profondément modifié l'esprit qui avait présidé, pendant tant de siècles, à l'élaboration et à la mise en pratique des T.E.D.



## NOTES

1. 'Sanior et Maior Pars. Etude sur l'évolution des techniques électorales et délibératives dans les Ordres religieux du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue Historique de Droit français et étranger*, n<sup>os</sup> 3 et 4, 1958. (Paru en italien in *Studi Politici*, 1960, pp. 48-75 et 364-395); *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione* (Ed. Paoline) (1976), S. V<sup>o</sup> Elezioni. Cf. aussi, du même auteur, 'Les origines religieuses des techniques électorales et délibératives modernes', in *Revue internationale d'Histoire politique et constitutionnelle*, avril-juin 1953, pp. 106-148; 'Les origines des techniques électorales utilisées en 1789', in *Le Contrat social*, mai 1960, pp. 172-178; 'El Ejecutivo y el legislativo en las Ordenes religiosas', *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, n<sup>o</sup>. 106, Madrid, juillet-août 1959, pp. 103-128 (paru in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, janvier 1960, pp. 341-358); 'Le pluralisme dans l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs', in *Res Publica*, 1960/1; 'L'Assemblée, autorité souveraine dans l'Ordre des Chartreux', in *Res Publica*, 1970/1.

2. Objet, en 1523, d'une élection 'par acclamations', le Pape Clément VII exigea qu'il fût procédé, en outre, à un scrutin confirmatif.







Zbigniew Pelczynski

## THE ROOTS OF IDEOLOGY IN HEGEL'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Hegel never used the word 'ideology' in his writings though he did, at the end of his life, write of 'ideologues' <sup>1</sup>. He used the term in the early pejorative French sense, meaning men with abstract, unrealistic ideas and a pernicious influence on the ignorant multitude, and he seemed to applaud Napoleon for putting them in their place. In his commentary on the English Reform Bill of 1830, in which he touched on the July revolution in France, he referred to the reappearance of the antithesis between *hommes d'état* and *hommes à principes* which had marked the beginning of the 1789 revolution <sup>2</sup>. It is clear that he regarded the contemporary *hommes à principes* – French liberals and English radicals – to be the equivalent of the ideologues of Napoleon's time. French liberalism was in his eyes a revolutionary doctrine, based on ideas about popular sovereignty and the rights of men which were incompatible with rational political arrangements. He might well have called it a revolutionary ideology.

However, there is more to it than such references. I agree with the late John Plamenatz that, although Hegel did not use the term, the idea of ideology is deeply rooted in his philosophy <sup>3</sup>. But I differ from Plamenatz in tracing the root to Hegel's political philosophy rather than to his general philosophy of spirit, and I attempt to discuss the issue in a more concrete way.

Plamenatz has wisely remarked that ideology is not a concept; it is a family of related concepts. I would like to concentrate on four members of this family, which is enough for a short paper. The four are: 1) the relativity of social/political ideas, 2) the relationship between such ideas and social/political structures, 3) the problem of



truth and illusion (Marx's 'false consciousness'), and 4) the functional character of social/political ideas.

### 1. THE RELATIVITY OF SOCIAL/POLITICAL IDEAS

The concept of the relativity of ideas can be traced to Hegel's concept of *Volksgeist* – the spirit of the people or the nation. Hegel's *Volksgeist* did not have the nationalistic implications which it had for the later Fichte or the historical school in jurisprudence: the ancient Persians, Greeks and Romans were for him *Völker* no less than the modern Germans, Englishmen or Frenchmen. And he regarded *Völker* as typically having some kind of political expression, whether it was a city state, an empire or a nation-state. He received it from Montesquieu, probably with some additions and modifications of Herder's, and transformed it into a grandiose philosophy of history which interpreted the course of world history as the development of a metaphysical entity, the Spirit with a capital 'S', to the fullness of its being. The spatial and temporal aspect of this process was the rise of world historical peoples or nations whose culture and society formed stages in the development of the Spirit. While the *ultimate* significance of particular national spirits could be grasped only within the metaphysical context, they also had a secular existence and could be grasped as actual historical, social and cultural phenomena. Seen in this way *Volksgeist* was the totality of a community's attitudes, beliefs, values and purposes embodied in social relations, customs, laws, institutions and political constitutions, but also expressed in a more intellectual way in art, religion, science and philosophy.

Hegel asserted three fundamental propositions about *Volksgeist*. First, that it had permanence and continuity over long periods of time even though it was capable of gradual modification and development. Second, that it possessed unity and coherence such that the fundamental features or 'principles' of all the social and cultural phenomena had a common character. Third, that the shape or configuration of each *Volksgeist* was distinct and peculiar to it. Hegel was well aware that individual peoples often belonged to wider cultural realms or civilizations such as the Hellenic or Christian, and that through conquest and trade the ideas and institutions of diverse communities became assimilated; to that extent their distinctiveness



was relative rather than absolute. But the diversity of geography, tradition and history was so strong that several distinctive national spirits co-existed in any historical period. 'Every state is an individual totality from which it is impossible to select and isolate any particular aspect... and to consider it solely in relation to itself' <sup>4</sup>.

The conclusion which Hegel drew from his theory of *Volksgeist* was that social and political ideas, values and arrangements were relative. Their significance and validity varied according to the historical, social and cultural context. World historical peoples had different conceptions of human dignity, valued authority and liberty in differing proportions, and accepted different degrees of political participation. To expect them to see social and political issues in the same way was naive; to expect them to have the same institutions was foolish. Despotism in the true sense of the word was possible only in oriental societies. Democracy was the political system peculiar to Greek city states: it had no relevance to the modern world. Liberal, civil and political institutions of the kind Napoleon attempted to transplant to Spain were naturally rejected by a community steeped in a dogmatic and authoritarian religion, unaffected by the Reformation and Enlightenment. Marx and the Marxists afterwards rejected the idea of national homogeneity, as well as the central place of political institutions in social life. But the idea of relativism of national cultures paved the way to the idea of relativism of class ideologies. X

## 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL/POLITICAL IDEAS AND SOCIAL/POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Quite early in his intellectual evolution Hegel distinguished three different aspects of *Volksgeist* which constituted distinct but related modes of its existence and activity. First, it existed as the thoughts and sentiments of individual human beings, the members of the community, which were shaped by the beliefs and values dominant in the community. Put differently, the dominant belief and value systems constitutive of *Volksgeist* expressed themselves in individual thoughts, sentiments, volitions and actions. Secondly, *Volksgeist* existed in the form of fixed patterns of communal activities and social relations such as rituals, customs, laws and institutions. They structured social life in definite ways and had permanence and uni-



versality which subjective individual thoughts and sentiments lacked. What made them forms and integral parts of *Volksgeist* rather than independent phenomena was that they more or less explicitly embodied conceptions of men, their rights and duties to each other, and forms of good life which were conventionally accepted by the community. Thirdly, these ethical conceptions and other general principles of thought and action involved in social life could be expressed in legends and myths, works of literature and art, religious imagery and worship, and in scientific and philosophical theories. These were the most intellectual forms of the existence of *Volksgeist*; *Volksgeist* has its purest form as spirit. Through them a people became fully conscious of its own nature. In Hegel's mature philosophy the three aspects of *Volksgeist* became systematically distinguished and developed as Subjective, Objective and Absolute Spirit.

I believe that the origin of Marx's distinction between 'social existence' and 'consciousness' is to be found within this triangle of ideas. The difficulty of comparison is that the Marxian distinction is unclear and has been differently interpreted by Marx's followers and Marxian scholars. It is possible that by social existence Marx meant social relations in their purely external form, as existing behaviour patterns which were separate from the thoughts of the men whose behaviour they were. Such an idea is implied in Hegel's concept of purely 'positive' law and institutions which have lost the allegiance of a community and which exist mainly by force of habit and tradition. However, this does not seem to have been the Marxian sense, given that he insisted so strongly on men (unlike animals) being conscious of the rules governing their activity and, if they were conscious about them, they could not help having feelings and general thoughts as well. It is in the contrast between Subjective and Objective Spirit that John Plamenatz located the source of the Marxian distinction. What is more likely is that Marx meant by 'consciousness' roughly what Hegel meant by Absolute Spirit – the interpretations of general conceptions of social life (Hegel's Subjective and Objective Spirit combined) which men produced as an activity different from, and so to speak parasitic on, the substance of that life.

Hegel would not have basically disagreed with the proposition that social existence determined consciousness. Subjective human consciousness was for him moulded by communal beliefs and values and the social practices embodying them. Nor would Hegel have disagreed about the relationship of philosophy (Absolute Spirit) to



social structures and relations (Objective Spirit). He said of the philosophy of right that it was nothing but an interpretation of existing social reality, articulating that part of it which had vitality and *raison d'être* in terms of men's actual needs, purposes and values. Art and religion were also conceived by him as not something separate from and independent of social life, but as a part of the total culture of a society, produced by social life and interacting with its other features. The similarity of the two positions has been obscured by Hegel's teleological and metaphysical standpoint which takes him well beyond the analysis of Subjective and Objective Spirit. Once attention is focussed on the self-realization of a cosmic *Geist*, Absolute Spirit seems to become in some sense a primary factor in society and history.

Of course, Marx believed that while 'social existence' determined consciousness it was in turn itself determined by 'the material conditions of production' – the natural resources available to a society for processing into means of subsistence. Hegel was well aware of the historical importance of economic factors and, more generally, of the crucial dependence on nature of man's existence and development. Had he produced a complete theory of social development, it would have been a multifactor theory, based on the interaction of material and intellectual forces, social structures and belief systems, without assigning absolute causal primacy to any one of them.

### 3. THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH AND ILLUSION

The question whether men could be deceived about their society and their nature, whether they could labour under illusions of one kind or another, and therefore whether they could suffer from 'false consciousness', was one that occurred to Hegel very early. In the unpublished tract on the constitution of the German empire (written about 1800) he called the empire a fictitious or illusory state (*Gedankenstaat*)<sup>5</sup>. It was a state in thought or theory but not reality, since the pre-condition of statehood – the existence of an effective sovereign public authority – was not present. At the turn of the century, however, the Germans still deceived themselves that they belonged to a common imperial state. Memories of ancient unity, an elaborate terminology carried over from the past, rituals such as the coronation of the Emperor, powerless but surviving institutions such



as the Imperial Diet or the Imperial Court and learned treatises on the imperial public law all helped to perpetuate the fiction of the Empire and to maintain the German people in a state of self-delusion. It was Hegel's aim in the unpublished tract to expose this national self-deception and to make the Germans face up to reality. In a somewhat similar enterprise, the commentary on the Württemberg Diet of 1817, Hegel sought to demonstrate that the conservative members of the Diet were still steeped in the traditional mentality of an imperial province while the country had become a sovereign kingdom. They too suffered from self-deception and false consciousness.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, written only a few years after the German Empire tract, Hegel added a new dimension to his analysis. He argued that ideas and theories which were at one point true, and which adequately reflected the stage of mankind's social and cultural development, ceased to be true at a later and higher stage of development. The ancient Greek citizen's total commitment to political life was realistic and right within the context of Greek society and culture. It was an illusory and inappropriate ideal in the modern world, not just because social and economic conditions were now totally different, but also because men's images of themselves, of the good life and of their destiny had also changed. The Greek's conception of politics was a noble one for its time, but based on a false idea that men were essentially unequal and that only some of them were by nature free. World history was a process of mankind's progressive emancipation from such false and inadequate ideas, both on the level of theory and of social practice, and the creation of a community and a culture where men were fully what they were capable of being and knew it philosophically. Only then could they be said to have reached true self-consciousness and freedom.

Hegel recognized that this process had another aspect, particularly pronounced in the modern world, where men were highly reflective and self-conscious and undeterred from bold speculation by the weight of tradition and conventional wisdom. Especially in times of transition, when men were conscious of new trends, pining for change and struck by incoherencies in their community, they tended to produce radical criticism of existing ideas and institutions. Employing what Hegel called the faculty of understanding, they elaborated abstract theories of man and society which they opposed to the existing social relations. Such theories and the more popular



belief systems which corresponded to them contained an element of truth, but they were liable to distort and magnify it out of all proportion. Hegel regarded the different forms of modern individualism (which he so brilliantly discusses in the *Phenomenology*) and its two main political versions, revolutionary Jacobinism and parliamentary liberalism, as examples of such one-sided theories. The totally politicized citizen of the Jacobins and the abstract individual of the liberals were false images of man, and the political doctrines that incorporated them were inadequate. As Hegel realized, extreme theories, doctrines, or philosophies were often stages in a dialectical process and played a vital role in the progress towards more adequate forms of human culture.

#### 4. THE FUNCTIONAL CHARACTER OF SOCIAL/POLITICAL IDEAS

The fourth and final aspect of ideology which concerns me in this paper has been aptly called 'functional' by Plamenatz. Marx and his successors saw that particular ideologies appealed to particular social groups, that they served their group interest and bolstered up their position in society, and that they were frequently tools in political struggle. Hegel was clearly aware of this. Already in the *Constitution of the German Empire* he pointed out the peculiar appeal of the Reformation to the German bourgeoisie who had been seeking greater independence for themselves as an estate. 'The bourgeois spirit that was gaining countenance and political importance needed a kind of inner and outer legitimation'<sup>6</sup> and found it in Protestantism. In the constitutional struggle in Württemberg Hegel perceived the vested interest of a section of the legal profession behind the Diet's support for 'the good old law' and traditional provincial institutions. 'So long as there existed this bourgeois aristocracy, peculiar to Württemberg, which drew episcopal incomes as their revenues and exercised a general power over the municipalities, their officials, and their private citizens... no true concept of law, freedom and constitution could take root'<sup>7</sup>. But it was in this last political work, the commentary on the English Reform Bill, that Hegel came nearest to the concept of class ideology. The condition of political stability in England (he writes) has been the complete domination of Parliament by one economic class, the landed aristocracy, 'but, as a result of reform, the route to Parliament may be open to ideas which are op-



posed to the interest of this class and which therefore have not yet entered its head' <sup>8</sup>. There is in this work a clear recognition of the blinding effect of interests by class consciousness, and more than a hint that the ruling ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class. The widespread attachment of the English to their traditional institutions, the preference for customs and privileges rather than statutory laws, and the rejection of codification and universal legal principles served in Hegel's view to protect the position of the landed class *vis-a-vis* other classes, especially the bourgeoisie.

Hegel did not regard false ideas as serving only the interest of classes in the strict sense of the term. In the *Württemberg Estates* he conceived their function as safeguarding the interest of a professional group. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* he treated the conception of 'absolute liberty' as a weapon of a revolutionary political faction. This elasticity of outlook is today more a virtue than a defect. Some of the most fanatically held ideas in the twentieth century have been the ideas of political groups without a distinct class background. Even when he linked ideas with classes, Hegel did not view classes in terms of the ownership of the means of production, but rather in far broader terms which combined economic with legal, political and cultural factors. Nor did Hegel regard class conflict as the only or most basic form of human conflict. Conflict between politically organized communities seemed to him rather more important. Nevertheless he seemed to realize that conflict between classes was also a part of world history, and such conflict manifested itself in a clash between rival theories held or advanced by rival social groups. Such clashes were a part of that interplay of reason and passion which Hegel called 'the cunning of reason', and which he regarded as the driving force of historical development. And the roots of passion were in his view to be found in men's natural desires and material interests.

#### SUMMARY

It has not been my purpose in this paper to deny the originality of the Marxian theory of ideology or to question its intellectual magnitude. Marx formulated the theory explicitly and gave it a prominent place in his general theory of history and society. With all its difficulties and ambiguities, it was a major achievement and it did



permanently alter our perception of the social and political world. I would nevertheless claim that Hegel anticipated the theory of ideology in a number of important respects and opened up paths which Marx was later to travel. There was, of course, no question of a simple continuity of ideas. In this, as in other respects, Marx's relation to Hegel was dialectical – the former advanced his views by opposing and contradicting the latter. The tortuous road from the 'spirit of the people' to 'class ideology' would need a book to character it adequately.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of History*, tr. J. Sibree (New York, 1944), p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> *Hegel's Political Writings*, tr. T.M. Knox with an Introductory Essay by Z.A. Pelczynski (Oxford, 1964), p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> John Plamenatz, *Ideology* (London, 1970), chapter 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, tr. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1975), p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> *Hegel's Political Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.



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*Leonard Schapiro*

THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY  
AS EVOLVED BY MARX AND ADAPTED BY LENIN

There is no systematic exposition in the works of Marx of the nature and function of ideology, and his views have therefore to be gleaned from scattered references. Many years after Marx's death, Engels did attempt a definition of ideology, in a letter to Mehring of 14 July 1893:

'Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him: otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Hence he imagines false or seeming motive forces... He works with mere thought material, which he accepts without examination as the product of thought, and does not investigate further for a more remote source independent of thought'<sup>1</sup>.

The 'more remote' causes are, of course, the economic relations which determine the thought — it is evident from the references to 'false' consciousness that Engels restricts the term ideology to the 'political, juridical and other ideological notions' (to quote the same letter) of the bourgeoisie. In this letter Engels also stresses what he had already emphasized earlier in his correspondence (e.g. in his letter to J. Bloch of 21-22 September 1890) that both Marx and he had tended to over-emphasize the economic side of the derivation of ideological notions, and in a letter of 25 January of the following year to H. Starkenburg, he recognizes that ideological factors can exist separately from the economic condition which does not, he writes, produce an 'automatic effect': 'Men make their history them-



selves, only they do so in a given environment which conditions it and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other – political and ideological – ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones...'<sup>2</sup>.

Although Marx does not seem ever to have used the phrase 'false consciousness'<sup>3</sup>, the general notion that the bourgeoisie, consciously or unconsciously, uses political moral or juridical ideas to bolster its own economic hegemony occurs in his writings in a variety of forms. In a sense, *Capital* is an attack on bourgeois ideology, on economic theories which are designed or used to camouflage the nature of bourgeois exploitation. As a sympathetic analyst of the philosophy of Marx has expressed it, Marx 'demystified' the ideology 'of which capitalism made use in order to draw a veil over the real process by means of which it secreted alienated labour. This is in substance the whole meaning of *Capital*, a work of criticism, as indeed are all the works of Marx which preceded it. He tears away the veils of justification and specious explanation, lays bare the fundamental alienation which expresses itself in the exploitation of the labour of the proletariat, and denounces all the subterfuges of classical economic theory'<sup>4</sup>.

The treatment of ideology in *Capital* is, however, more developed and rather subtler than that which is to be found in earlier works. In *Capital* Marx is not concerned to argue that bourgeois ideology is consciously designed to deceive – though, of course, he would not have denied that deliberate deception by the manipulation of others into believing something that is false for advancement of self-interest can and does occur. But, as a recent analyst of the theory of ideology in *Capital* argues,

'it is not necessary to postulate that any basic role in the generation of ideological discourse is played by... the desire to deceive, or the deliberate intention to manipulate the beliefs of others in such a way as to protect one's own interests. Nor is it necessary to postulate that ideology need be believed only by the aid of some process of self-deception, or refusal or bad faith... Ideology arises from the fact that the situation might be such as to provide a person with reasons for thinking in terms of categories which necessarily generate falsehood and illusion... It is the forms of social relations with which we are apparently directly acquainted in experience (value, wages, money, commodities etc.) that are deceptive'<sup>5</sup>.



In other words, because the relations are accepted as the reality in bourgeois society, whereas they are in fact false, the language which is used to describe them necessarily generates a false ideology – and this can only be put right by changing the actual social and economic relations.

This view of ideology as inherently false because the language in which it is expressed is *necessarily* false was a considerable development when compared to the rather rougher views of ideology which are to be found in the earlier works, and especially in the *German Ideology*, written by Marx and Engels in 1845-46. In this work Marx was primarily concerned to establish the thesis that ideological convictions are determined by material circumstances, but there is no suggestion, as there would be in the later *Capital*, of the way in which ideology is actually conditioned by the false *language* which is a reflection of the deceptive forms of social relations which are accepted as real. 'Morals, religion, metaphysics and suchlike ideology, and the forms of consciousness which correspond to them', he wrote in the *German Ideology*, 'no longer... retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, and no development. Men, as they develop their material production, also change, as the reality changes, their thinking, and the products of their thought. It is not consciousness which determines life, but life which determines consciousness' <sup>6</sup>. In this key passage there is no suggestion of fraud or deception. The ideology is a reflection of the material relations, distorted, of course, but not as the result of any deliberate act. This becomes clear if one looks at the following, much quoted, image used by Marx in the same work: 'If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life process... we set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life progress' <sup>7</sup>. 'Reflexes and echoes' clearly do not imply any suggestion of deception or opprobrium. However, there are numerous passages in the *German Ideology* which suggest just this, and it is doubtless on the basis of these passages that the widely accepted picture of Marx's view of ideology as a fraudulent weapon of the bourgeoisie is based. To quote one of the



many examples, he refers to 'the perverted form in which the pseudosacrosanct and hypocritical ideology of the bourgeoisie portrays its own separate interests as universal' <sup>8</sup>.

It would seem that Marx, at all events in his mature writings, generally reserved the term 'ideology' for the moral and juridical principles proclaimed by the bourgeoisie. As will be seen later, this usage was abandoned or, more correctly, never adopted by Lenin, who uses 'ideas', 'theory' and 'ideology' virtually interchangeably. It is of interest to note, therefore, that in his earliest writings Marx uses 'idea', or 'ideas' in the more generally accepted sense of a political theory underlying a society or a movement. In *The Holy Family*, for example, written in 1845, we find such an assessment as the following: 'The revolutionary movement... had driven forward the Communist idea... This idea, worked out to its conclusion, is the idea of the new world order' <sup>9</sup>. Again, in *Misère de la Philosophie* (written in 1847) he uses words about 'ideas' which suggest that ideas can be the product of every kind of society, though always determined by the mode of production — a view which is repeatedly found in Lenin: 'the same men who establish the social relations which correspond to their material production, also produce the principles, the ideas, the categories which correspond to their social relations. Thus, these ideas, these categories are as little eternal as the relations which they express. *They are historical and transitory products*' <sup>10</sup>.

In this context, once again with Lenin in mind, it is of interest to trace in Marx's early writings, so far as it can be discerned, his view of the relationship of the 'idea' to political action. Can it be argued that Marx was at any period concerned with this problem? Before looking at the *Communist Manifesto*, which as distinct from other writings was written specifically as a call to action, and much less as a work of analysis, it is of interest to look at the most forcible expression of the notion that the revolutionary idea is a necessary element for revolutionary action. This is to be found in *Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction*, which dates from the end of 1843 and beginning of 1844, and therefore arguably belongs to the period before Marx had fully formulated his materialist interpretation of history. Stripped of the verbal fireworks in which this essay abounds, what Marx appears to be saying is that for a revolution to be achieved in Germany, socialist ideas are not enough. Socialist ideas, or philosophy, are merely the head: the heart is formed by the proletariat. The revolution can only be brought about



by the union of the 'head' and the 'heart' – in other words, of theory and action: 'Just as philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapon in philosophy. As soon as the lightning of thought has struck deeply into the naive popular soil, the emancipation of Germans into the rank of human beings will take place'<sup>11</sup>. Not unnaturally, this passage has occasionally been cited to support the view that Lenin's doctrine that revolutionary consciousness had to be brought to the proletariat from the outside has the authority of Marx. This argument is rendered all the more superficially attractive by the following circumstances. The *Introduction* was translated into Russian by a member of the circle of conspirators to assassinate Alexander III, formed in 1876-77 by Alexander Ulianov, Lenin's brother. When Alexander Ulianov was sentenced to death, after the discovery of the conspiracy, his younger brother devoted intense study to all that he could find of the revolutionary literature that had inspired Ulianov, and he made every effort to study all the circumstances which had induced him to become a revolutionary. It is a fair assumption, therefore, that he read the translation of the *Introduction* at the critically formative period of his intellectual development. There is no doubt that Lenin did read the *Introduction* at some stage, since he quotes it a number of times – though not the passage set out above.

However, whatever effect Marx's youthful argument may have had on Lenin (and it will be argued later that Lenin derived his distinctive doctrine of revolutionary consciousness from quite a different source), there is little substance in the case put forward that Marx believed that the proletariat had to have consciousness brought to it from the outside. But even if he believed this in 1843-44 (as phrases like 'the naive popular soil' may suggest) this was after all before he had developed, or fully developed his materialist interpretation of history. Only a year later, at the end of 1844 in *The Holy Family*, when discussing the role of the proletariat in the revolution, he made it clear that the proletariat will be carrying out its historical role quite irrespectively of what it consciously believes to be its objective: 'It is not a matter of what this or that proletarian or indeed the proletariat as a whole meanwhile imagines its aim to be. It is a matter of things *as they are*, and of what the proletariat will historically be forced to do by reason of its own *being*. Its aim is... inexorably laid down by its conditions of living and by the whole organization of contemporary bourgeois society'<sup>12</sup>.



So far as the mature Marx is concerned, both in the works and in the correspondence there are a number of statements which expressly deny the proposition that revolutionary consciousness must be brought to the proletariat 'from the outside'. The most specific of these denials is contained in a long confidential circular of the General Council of the International, dated 21 July 1873, which was signed by Marx among others (and, unmistakeably, drafted by him). The circular was a part of the death-struggle of the International against an attack launched upon it by Bakunin's *Alliance*, and it is mainly concerned with details which are both tedious and, so far as this enquiry is concerned, irrelevant<sup>13</sup>. What is relevant is the vigour with which Marx attacks the theoretical basis of his adversaries. He begins by quoting from one of their resolutions:

"In order to make the working class into the real representative of the new interests of mankind" its organization must "be guided by the idea which is destined to triumph. The aim must be to develop this idea out of the demands of our epoch, out of the inner strivings of mankind, through constant study of the manifestations of social life. The idea must *thereupon be carried into the midst* of our worker organization, etc.". And finally "one must create in the heart of our worker population a really socialist revolutionary *school*". And so the autonomous worker sections are transformed at a stroke into *schools*, whose masters will be these gentlemen from the Alliance. They *develop the idea* through "constant study", which leaves not a trace behind it. They "carry it into the midst of our worker organization." For them the working class is unworked material, a chaos that needs the breath of their Holy Ghost in order to take on form'<sup>14</sup>.

Lenin was too good a Marxist to claim Marx's authority for what he must have known was a refashioning of the doctrine of the master, and it was no doubt for this reason that he never adopted Marx's approach to ideology, but fashioned a doctrine of his own on to the subject. In fact, as will be shown later, it was from a very different source that Lenin derived his doctrine of bringing revolutionary consciousness to the workers from the outside.

Hitherto we have been concerned mainly with analytical writings of Marx (apart from the circular just referred to) in which he is developing his view of the nature of society in general, and the materialist interpretation of history in particular. It is therefore of particular interest to turn to the *Communist Manifesto*, because this was designed as a programme for action, a programme in



which the results of past analysis are synthesized in a call to revolution. Although discussion of ideology does not figure as such in the *Manifesto*, there are a number of references to it which enable one to assess Marx's treatment of this question in the context of action. This is, of course, of especial importance to bear in mind when one comes to discuss Lenin's views on ideology, since Lenin was almost exclusively concerned in his writing with the practical task of mobilizing people for action.

The first reference to ideology seems to drive a coach and four through the theoretical structure behind Marx's view of ideology. This theoretical structure can be summed up very roughly in two propositions: *a*) ideology, by which he meant bourgeois ideology, is always conditioned by the social relations on which bourgeois society is based; and (at any rate in the mature form, in *Capital*) *b*) although what the bourgeois ideologists proclaim is false, the falsity is not due to their deliberate falsification or deception, but is an inevitable result of the false language which corresponds to the false descriptions of social relations to which they are conditioned. In the *Manifesto*, however, where Marx argues that the proletariat is increased by the fact that impoverished members of the ruling class are driven to join the proletariat, he adds that 'in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists' goes over to the proletariat and helps to educate it and to supply it with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie. These are the bourgeois ideologists 'who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historic movement as a whole'<sup>15</sup>. So far as I am aware, Marx nowhere explains how these ideologists, the falsity of whose views is, as it were, built into their discourse in the very language which they use, come to see the light sufficiently to instruct the proletariat. Nor is it fully consistent with the materialist interpretation of history and the historically predestined role of the proletariat to make a revolution to suppose that the proletariat requires enlightenment from these *déclassés* bourgeois ideologists — though it is the case that this aspect of their enlightenment is only treated as one aspect of the general process of enlightenment. Indeed, a couple of pages further on, Marx stresses that 'the theoretical conclusions of the communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express in general terms actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from an historical movement going on under our very eyes'<sup>16</sup>.



The remaining references to ideology in the *Manifesto* are also more consistent with what one can glean of Marx's general view of ideology from his analytical writings. At one point, however, no doubt with an essentially propagandist and inflammatory document in mind, Marx does imply that the falsity of bourgeois ideology is, in fact, rooted in selfish self-interest. In a rhetorical address to the bourgeoisie he says: 'The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into the eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property-historical relations that rise and disappear in the process of production – this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you'. And the ideology which bolsters these social forms is no more than the expression of the class will: 'your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class' <sup>17</sup>.

Indeed, 'the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class' <sup>18</sup>. The coming revolution will therefore involve a complete rejection of all bourgeois ideology: 'Law, morality, religion are to him (i.e. the proletarian) so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests... The communist revolution... involves the most radical rupture with traditional property relations' <sup>19</sup>. But nowhere does Marx suggest that the proletariat on coming to power will have an ideology of its own. Indeed, the clear implication of the *Manifesto* is that with the abolition of classes, of class dominance, there will be no room for ideology at all; on what basis the ruling proletariat will develop its law and morality is nowhere discussed. But it is made clear that for communists there is no need for more theory than the abolition of private property. Since the communists' theoretical conclusions are not based 'on ideas or principles which have been invented', but merely express 'actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, ... in this sense, the theory of the communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property' <sup>20</sup>.

The evolution of Lenin's concept of ideology is very different from that of Marx. Imprisoned for a short time in 1895 and then exiled, Lenin's distinctive doctrine of the need to bring revolutionary consciousness to the workers from the outside, since otherwise they



would, if left to their spontaneous action, merely pursue 'trade-unionist' interest rather than revolution, seems in one sense to have emerged quite suddenly and to have been evolved between 1899 and 1902. Indeed, Lenin's thought between 1895 and 1899 has often been described as his 'menshevik period', by which is meant that his view of the function of the social-democratic party in its relations to the working class movement correspond to what the mensheviks (with some justification) believed to be Marx's view, namely, that the proletariat develops its revolutionary consciousness in the course of its struggle for its rights against the capitalist employers. Indeed Marx says this quite unequivocally in the passage from the *Communist Manifesto* quoted under the reference in footnote 16. While in prison in 1895 Lenin prepared a draft programme for the social-democratic party, on which he wrote a long commentary in exile in the summer of 1896. The main burden of this commentary is the need for the workers to develop revolutionary consciousness through the struggle for their rights: there is no suggestion that this consciousness has to be brought to them 'from the outside'. On the contrary, he specifically states that 'the task of the party does not consist in inventing out of its head some modern means of helping the workers, but to join the workers' struggle – to help them in the struggle which they have started themselves' <sup>21</sup>.

Nevertheless, this 'menshevik' phase must not be exaggerated. From the very start of his career as a revolutionary publicist, Lenin's view of ideology was sharply differentiated in several respects from that of Marx. For Marx ideology is, in effect, restricted to the bourgeoisie. It consist of the false moral, juridical and social values which the bourgeoisie – whether innocently and unconsciously or fraudulently – use in order to bolster the order which favours their interests. For Lenin, at the very outset of his long career of revolutionary writing in 1894, ideology in its relation to the class struggle is something quite different: it is the doctrine which enables the working class to conduct their struggle in a scientific manner. He quotes with approval Kautsky's view that social democracy consists of the union of the workers' movement with socialism – a view which recalls the Marx of 1843-44, (in the *Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction*) but which probably antedated Marx's conversion to historical materialism, and which at any rate does not recur in his later work. Lenin in 1894 refers repeatedly to Marxism as the ideology of the working class. Again, this view is



widely different from that of Marx who, at any rate in the *Communist Manifesto*, implies that the working class on conquering power requires no ideology and that its conquest of power is in fact signalled by the rejection of ideology, i.e. the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Consistently with his own, seemingly un-Marxist view of ideology, Lenin ridicules in these early works those who interpret Marx in such a way as to suggest that his view is that the working class acquires consciousness of its own accord in the course of its struggle against the capitalist employers, and stresses that the duty of socialists is to popularise Marx's theory, to bring it to the workers, to help the workers to assimilate it, and to work out the best conditions for uniting the workers into a political power<sup>22</sup>.

Of course, Lenin's knowledge of the writings of Marx was much too profound for him to have failed to perceive that his use of ideology in the sense of the correct 'revolutionary theory' was far removed from the sense in which Marx used the term 'ideology'. There is, indeed, one instance to be found in Lenin's writings where he does use the term more or less in the sense in which Marx used it – in an essay on Marx, written in 1914. After explaining that, according to Marx, being determines consciousness and not the reverse, he explains how the social revolution comes about when existing production forces come into conflict with existing production relations. In examining such transformations, it is essential to distinguish the material and scientifically determinable transformation in economic relations 'from the juridical, political, religious, philosophical – in a word, ideological forms – in which people perceive this conflict and struggle against it'<sup>23</sup>. What he seems to be saying here is, indeed, very close to what Marx says – that the bourgeoisie either use 'ideology' in order to struggle against the social revolution or, perhaps, are unable to perceive its true nature because they are blinded by essentially false forms of production relations, and therefore confused by the false language to which they are conditioned. Lenin nowhere, so far as I have been able to discover, explains that he used 'ideology' in a sense which bears no relationship to the sense in which Marx used the term. But statements abound in Lenin's works to the general effect that the theories of Marx were not to be treated as immutably fixed and rigid, but were to be interpreted creatively in accordance with changing conditions.

Apart from this one essay on Marx which, after all, was intended as an accurate exposition of his views, Lenin does not follow Marx



in confining 'ideology' to the juridical, moral etc. ideas of the bourgeoisie, but uses the term to express *any* accepted doctrine, whether true or false, whether bourgeois or proletarian. There are to be found in his writing, apart from bourgeois and socialist ideology, such variants as 'religious' ideology which is contrasted with 'scientific' ideology. There is even an essay on the thought of Tolstoy whose pessimism, nonresistance and appeal to the spirit is the 'ideology' which 'inevitably' arises in an epoch when the entire old order has been turned upside down, and the masses, which are still dominated by their old habits and traditions, are incapable of seeing what social forces could bring their liberation from the miseries which accompany an epoch of break up<sup>24</sup>.

In short, 'ideology' for Lenin is a neutral term, and his use of it is of little interest or significance in understanding his thought. The really important element in his doctrine is 'revolutionary theory', which is the term which he usually employs to designate the ideology of the class struggle of the proletariat. This 'revolutionary theory' is a very frequent theme in his writings – there are literally hundreds of references under the heading 'revolutionary theory' in the main index to the recently published *Complete Works of Lenin* – including its historical development, its significance in the class struggle of the proletariat, its relation to practical work, its creative character, its importance as a guide to action, revolutionary theory contrasted with revisionism, and many more. It is therefore in the context of the emergence of Lenin's distinctive views on socialism as the ideology of the working class (though, of course, only one ideology among many) that Lenin's original contribution to the theory of ideology becomes of interest. And this brings us back to 1899 since it was between 1899 and 1902 that his views on this question developed and matured.

It has already been suggested that Lenin had recognized in 1894, if not before, the supreme importance of the correct 'revolutionary theory' which he from the first designated as an 'ideology' for the success of the workers revolutionary struggle. But it was under the immediate impact of two events which shattered the relative peace of his (far from uncomfortable) exile that the views on this question which particularly distinguish him were formed and developed. The first was the arrival in July of a document sent to him by his sister. This document, to which she had added the derisory title of *Credo*, represented the summary of the



views of a private gathering of revisionist-minded social-democratic individualists as recorded by one of them, E.D. Kuskova. These views, much influenced by the leader of revisionist Marxism, E. Bernstein, in effect rejected the one-class rule of the proletariat as laid down by Marx, and may be summarized as follows: Nowhere in Western Europe has the working class won political freedom by its own effort. But, where political freedom has been achieved by the efforts of the bourgeoisies, the workers utilize the opportunities presented by civil and political freedom for the advancement of their own aims. Hence the emphasis laid by Marx on political struggle. But in Russia, where political freedom does not exist, the line of least resistance and the aim which should be followed by the workers is economic struggle. The fight for political freedom should be left to the bourgeoisie, and the task of Marxist intellectuals is to support the liberals in their economic struggle. Around the same time Lenin received the Russian translation of Bernstein's famous pamphlet, which is known in its English translation as *Evolutionary Socialism*. It seems to have been the first occasion on which he took the opportunity of seriously studying Bernstein's views, though the explosive pamphlet, published in 1899, had in fact been serialized in 1898 and 1899 in *Die Neue Zeit* of which Lenin was an attentive reader while in exile. He had also both reviewed and translated Kautsky's criticism of the arguments used by Bernstein in the course of 1899. It may be that the impulse to dedicate himself now to attacking the views of Bernstein was sparked off by the remark of Bernstein in the Russian translation of his pamphlet (quite untrue, incidentally) that the great majority of Russian social democrats were converts to his views.

Lenin's immediate reaction to the *Credo* was to organize a meeting of all the social democrats he could muster in exile to condemn the document. The main stress in this protest is on two points. First, on the need for a disciplined organization of Russian social democrats to fight these pernicious views; and secondly, that 'the manner of the class movement of the workers can only be the theory of revolutionary Marxism, and Russian social democracy must be concerned with its future development and transformation into living action' <sup>25</sup>.

There followed later in 1899 a series of articles in which Lenin's specific ideas on the nature of the party and on the role of the revolutionary theory are developed in greater detail. These articles,



written in October (though not published until 1925) summarize much of what was to be more fully developed in 1902 in *What is to be Done?*. They stress the need for a struggle against the ideas of Bernstein, and describe the role of the party as 'the organization and direction of the class struggle of the proletariat'. Lenin scoffs at accusations which might be levelled against him that he was promoting some kind of 'orthodoxy' or aiming at the persecution of 'heretics' (which, of course, was exactly what he was doing): 'There can be no strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory'. Lenin pointed out that the theories of Marx were not fixed once and for all, but had merely laid the foundations which require constant development. Above all, the articles stress that economic struggle without political struggle is useless, and lay heavy emphasis on the need for centralized and disciplined organization and, above all, on the need for a central party newspaper ('organ') to ensure the development of the correct theory<sup>26</sup>.

Although at the end of 1899 Lenin did stress the need to develop a worker intelligentsia which would be capable of explaining revolutionary theory to the more backward workers, there is as yet, at this stage of Lenin's thought, no direct enunciation of the doctrine that 'revolutionary consciousness' can only be brought to the workers from the outside. The idea was, however, developing in Lenin's mind, and almost certainly this was under the influence of the works of Kautsky, which he read with great attention and admiration, both in *Neue Zeit* and in book form as forwarded to him by his sister as the works appeared. The idea that workers may require the stimulus from intellectuals to accomplish their historic destiny is not quite foreign to Marx — the famous passage from the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction* has already been referred to; and there is also in the *Communist Manifesto* a reference to 'a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole' who go over to the proletariat, and, presumably, help them to become more revolutionary<sup>27</sup>. But Lenin does not anywhere quote these passages in support of his own theory, presumably since he knew that they were not typical of Marx's real views, and since Lenin was generally honest in his use of sources. In contrast, he frequently quotes Kautsky.

The idea that the workers, whether through lack of time or education, have to learn their revolutionary doctrine from bourgeois in-



tellelectuals is one which occurs frequently in the writings of Kautsky. As far back as 1892, he warned that a workers' movement spurred on by utopian, as distinct from scientifically correct socialist ideas risked ending up 'in perplexed trade-unionism' (*Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*)<sup>28</sup>. His fullest exposition of the ideas now generally associated with Lenin appeared in a long commentary on the new draft programme of the Austrian social democratic party<sup>29</sup> from which Lenin quotes at length in *What is to be Done?*:

'Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle not only create the conditions for socialist production but directly give birth to the *consciousness* of its necessity... The draft states: "The more the proletariat increases as the result of capitalist development... the more opportunity it acquires for struggle against capitalism. The proletariat reaches the consciousness" of the possibility and necessity of socialism... And this is quite wrong... socialism and the class struggle come into being side by side, not one from the other... in fact, contemporary economic science is as much a condition of socialist production as, shall we say, contemporary technology and the proletariat with the best will in the world can create neither the one nor the other... The bearer of science is not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia*... In this way socialist consciousness is something brought in from the outside (*Von Aussen Hineingetragenes*) into the class struggle of the proletariat, and not something that has spontaneously arisen in it'<sup>30</sup>.

This, in substance, contains the whole of Lenin's theory of the role and nature of revolutionary doctrine in the class struggle, except that he adds (something that Kautsky had also conceded in his earlier writings) that workers also participate in the working out of the theory – though they participate as theorists of socialism, and not as workers<sup>31</sup>. The whole of Lenin's pamphlet is, of course, an attack on spontaneity of worker action, a plea for organization, discipline and centralized direction within the social-democratic party, on the vital importance of the 'correct' revolutionary theory and on the harmfulness of debate about what the theory should be when once 'the truth' has been established. 'There can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory', he states at the outset. 'This can only come from the outside. The history of all countries bears witness that the working class, relying exclusively on its own power, is only capable of evolving a trade unionist consciousness... But socialist doctrine has grown out of the philosophical, historical





and economic theories which were worked out by the educated representatives of the property-owning classes, the intelligentsia. This was true of Marx and Engels and true of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia<sup>32</sup>. The rest of the pamphlet follows logically from the all-embracing importance which is attached to the introduction of the correct revolutionary theory of ideology into the struggle of the workers by the intellectuals who form the party: the party leaders must be professional, in other words, liberated from the burden of earning their living, and the party must be centralized and highly disciplined so that orthodoxy can be maintained. And (last but not least, as Lenin was fond of saying) it must be under the direction of a central theoretical 'organ', or newspaper, which would be responsible for developing the correct theory.

The contrast between the treatment of 'ideology' in the works of Marx and Lenin could hardly be more complete. For Marx, who was primarily concerned with analysis of society, ideology is always the sum total of the moral, juridical and social ideas of the bourgeoisie, false ideas, of course, and therefore fraudulent in their effect so far as the proletariat is concerned – though it is not clear whether Marx always believed that the fraudulence was deliberate. Indeed, there are many passages in his far from systematic treatment of 'ideology' which suggest that the falsity of bourgeois ideology was inherent in the falsity of the social relations which the bourgeoisie is conditioned to accept as true, and consequently in the very language used by the bourgeoisie. Lenin was concerned with revolution: analysis for him was subsidiary to this main purpose. He never followed Marx in restricting 'ideology' to the ideas of the bourgeoisie but accepted that there may be varieties of ideology – some true, some false, some rational, some irrational – though as an historical materialist he never doubted that the nature of every particular ideology was determined by the material conditions of the society or epoch in which it arose. Lenin, in fact, may be said to have destroyed the classical Marxist picture (deriving from Engels, not Marx) of ideology as 'false consciousness'. As Mannheim has said – though without giving Lenin the credit for the transformation – 'it is no longer the exclusive privilege of socialist thinkers to trace bourgeois thought to ideological foundations, and thereby to discredit it. Nowadays, groups of every standpoint use this weapon against all the rest'<sup>33</sup>.



Lenin's distinctive contribution, which has no solid foundation in the writings of Marx (if a few casual and untypical passages are disregarded), was to recognize the importance of 'revolutionary theory' – used by him interchangeably with such phrases as 'scientific socialism', or 'ideology of the proletariat', or 'socialist ideology' – as a *weapon* for the making of a revolution. Following Kautsky in this respect, he rejected the interpretation of Marx usually accepted among social democrats that socialist consciousness is an inevitable, indeed automatic product of the struggle of the working class for its rights. He argued that this consciousness had to be brought to the workers by bourgeois or worker intellectuals – but by intellectuals, who had the capacity to understand and interpret economic and socialist theories.

Lenin's interpretation of ideology, developed as and intended to be an instrument of revolution became, after the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917, an instrument of rule. This aspect was never discussed by Lenin in his speeches and writings as a question of theory, but became evident in practice, certainly by 1921. From the doctrine of the correct revolutionary theory imposed by central discipline and determined by a central sanhedrin there flowed such familiar features as censorship and other forms of control over information, limitation on debate and criticism and, before long, the notions of 'orthodox' and 'counter-revolutionary' opinion. It is arguable – though this is not the place to argue it – that the autocratic rigidity of communism can be derived from the theory of 'socialist ideology' enunciated by Lenin between 1899 and 1902.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II (London, 1950), p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Seliger, *The Marxist Conception of Ideology: A Critical Essay* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Yves Calvez, *La Pensée de Karl Marx* (Paris, 1956), p. 244.

<sup>5</sup> John Mepham, 'The Theory of Ideology in Capital', *Radical Philosophy* 2, Summer 1972, pp. 12-19, at p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, Erste Abteilung (Mega)*, Vol. V (Moscow, Leningrad, 1933), p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis Feuer (London, 1969), p. 247.



<sup>8</sup> *Mega*, V, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> *Mega*, III (Berlin, 1932), pp. 294-295.

<sup>10</sup> *Mega*, VI (Moscow, Leningrad, 1933), pp. 179-180.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. I (Berlin 1957), p. 391.

<sup>12</sup> *Werke*, Vol. II (Berlin, 1957), p. 38. For further discussion of this aspect of Marx's view of the interrelations between ideas and reality, and of his belief that theory (by which he meant left Hegelian theory) must be subjected to criticism by being made practical through being passed to the masses; and conversely that theory must become no more than an expression of the practical, of the real life of man, in order to be fully realized, see Calvez, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>13</sup> See Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx*, Third Impression (London, 1951), pp. 472-484; Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Vol. I (Hannover, 1961), pp. 184-194.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Marx, *Politische Schriften*, ed. Hans-Joachim Lieber, Vol. II (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 999-1000.

<sup>15</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I (London, 1950), pp. 41-42.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 50.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, Fifth Edition (hereafter cited as *Lenin*), Vol. II (Moscow, 1958), pp. 101-102.

<sup>22</sup> *Lenin*, Vol. I, pp. 332-333, 411.

<sup>23</sup> *Lenin*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 56-57.

<sup>24</sup> *Lenin*, Vol. XX, pp. 101-103.

<sup>25</sup> *Lenin*, Vol. IV, 1959, pp. 165-176, where the *Credo* is reprinted.

<sup>26</sup> *Lenin*, Vol. IV, pp. 177-198.

<sup>27</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>28</sup> K. Kautsky, *Das Erfurter Programm*, 3rd edition (Stuttgart, 1892), pp. 239-240.

<sup>29</sup> *Neue Zeit*, 1901-1902, Vol. XX (i), no. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Italics in the original.

<sup>31</sup> *Lenin*, Vol. VI, 1959, p. 49, footnote.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 30-31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ideology and Utopia*, paperback edition (London, 1960), pp. 66-67.







Wolfgang von Leyden

THE 'SITUATIONAL DETERMINATION'  
OF IDEOLOGICAL AND UTOPIAN CONCEPTS

THE 'FRANKFURT' SCHOOL: MANNHEIM, HORKHEIMER, MARCUSE

The concept of 'situationally' (or 'existentially') determined knowledge<sup>1</sup> – as used in connection with ideological or utopian beliefs – presupposes the idea of an interaction between knower and know, subject and object, and thereby leads to a variety of complex issues.

I think it is not generally appreciated that Mannheim's analysis of ideologies and utopias is closely linked with his interest in historical theory, particularly that of German 'historism'. Historism is derived from 19th and early 20th century ideas on the nature of historical study and is associated with the names of Rancke, Droysen, Troeltsch, and Meinecke. It is the reverse of what Popper has defined and criticized as 'historicism'. The goal of historicism is to search for essences and universally valid truths in the subject-matter of history, and to establish law-like generalizations about historical process as such. Historism, on the other hand, aims to understand the nature of a past *individual* (person, group of persons, state of affairs, or event) and to bring into the open other *particular* manifestations and developments of past life in their own right and against their particular historical setting. The idea of the *unique* contextual determination of everything historical appears here no less than in the special approach characteristic of the sociology of knowledge and of Mannheim's study of ideologies<sup>2</sup>.

For Mannheim, the absorption in the individual and its particular setting in history included an inquiry into 'temporal determinations',



i.e. the 'sense' and 'function' of time in connection with the object of historical and sociological knowledge. My own contact and exchange of ideas with him during the war centred round topics like these, which occur throughout his published work and which I have earlier discussed in an Oxford doctoral dissertation on 'Time and History'. The issues concerning temporal perspectives and relationism in the knowledge of history fascinated him greatly, as did the more elusive attempt to uncover the specifically 'temporal' conditioning of the particular in the course of human history. It was grist to his mill when I communicated to him the idea formulated by Herder (a forerunner of historicism) that everything in life carries within itself its own measure of time. Herder likewise insists that, contrary to Newton, time is nothing in itself and therefore not something absolute but relative, depending on the passage of events, actions and passions, or on the degree of a man's attention, as when days turn into moments and hours into days. The historian, therefore, has to become a discerning analyst of the multiplicity of individual characters among men and of their different time measures and life rhythms.

Now historians have claimed that a historian's task is achieved if he can uncover, investigate and, in Ranke's words, narrate 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' ('what actually happened'). Knowledge of past phenomena along these lines was thought to require no revision or further qualification. This claim is difficult to substantiate. New evidence and a more informed exegesis of documents may lead to novel inferences and to more accurate interpretations of the historical material. There might also have been determining factors in a situation which no historian had previously considered, or hitherto unexpected points of view underlying former human lives and actions.

It follows that historical knowledge is 'corrigible' and that the question of the 'precision' of explanations in history arises here as an acutely problematical issue. In the light of this reflection one might say that historical truth is at all times provisional *a parte objecti*. This is so particularly when, among the assumptions and evaluations of men in the past, there are such intangible factors as unconsciously inspired ideas, collectively determined prejudices, or outright utopian beliefs.

A further complication is that historical explanation is liable to revision *a parte subjecti*, chiefly in relation to the presuppositions underlying the thought of historians themselves. Tacitus and Gibbon



started from certain assumptions and professional preferences, as did Mommsen who wrote volumes 1-3 and 5 of his *History of Rome*, but never (for reasons of his own) volume 4 which was to have dealt with the Empire and the rise of Christianity.

Mannheim, of course – besides his allegiance to the historicist school – was greatly indebted to Max Weber and his view that no academic discipline is without its presuppositions<sup>3</sup>. Two points raised by Weber in this context should be kept in mind: 1) The question of whether the presuppositions of a historical or any other academic work are valid cannot be answered by scholarly means; in fact the truth of such presuppositions is not demonstrable in any form. 2) Presuppositions of the kind described are systematically contestable; they may be either qualified by some, or altogether rejected by others.

Weber's theory of presuppositions indicated very clearly that historical knowledge is 'situationally determined' on the part of the historian himself, i.e. at the level of the knowing subject as well as that of the object known. The kind of situational determination arising at this level introduces the distinct possibility of a conflict between the presuppositions made by different scholars. What a clash of presuppositions in this sense amounts to is that people wedded to different presuppositions are liable to talk at cross-purposes to one another – a stultifying exercise in any form of discourse since it leads to misunderstanding and, eventually, to deadlock.

In the case of ideologies the danger which I have mentioned is inbuilt, so to speak, because they themselves, and not only their presuppositions, are essentially controversial. One reason for this is that evaluations, the presence of which (according to Weber) is unwarranted within the body of an academic work because it would disrupt the understanding of the facts described<sup>4</sup>, are part and parcel of an ideology. A further reason for the 'pervasively' contestable nature of ideologies is that, while some of their tenets rest on deep-seated passions and irrational assumptions, others are biased in favour of a certain group (racial, national, class, or party) interest.

The antagonism between the exponents of ideologies and their 'talking past one another' is noted by Mannheim<sup>5</sup>. As he sees it, parties at loggerheads do not share the same 'universe of discourse'. He suggests that the aim of a sociology of knowledge is to overcome this predicament by explaining it as a function of the divergent frames of reference and the varying presuppositions implicit in



shifting social perspectives. The question is whether this procedure misses the real point of ideological argument. For what the sociologist attempts is to supplant the 'partial' perspectives behind the assertions of ideological opponents by his own 'total' perspective, without affecting, or even deciding, the bone of contention between the disputants themselves.

I think the criticism is unfounded. The sociologist does not 'side-step' the subject-matter of ideological debate by going behind the issues discussed. There is no genuine issue nor homogeneous subject-matter involved in disagreements of such a fundamental nature. Where there is absence of a common basis of thought there is no common problem, and no possible settlement of a difference of opinion. This can be illustrated in the following way. Machiavelli's doctrine that men only do good if necessity drives them is not usually thought of as an ideology. However, when challenged by believers in divine grace and redemption or by advocates of progress and human goodness, all these contending schools of thought assume the character of an ideology. Machiavelli's notion of the usefulness of both religion and the state in promoting virtue and unity then becomes as much of a half-truth as, for instance, the idea that the United Nations represents the human race as one people. Machiavelli might counter by saying that the liberal's belief in progress is an illusion: 'is it progress if a cannibal uses a knife and fork?' But does not myth haunt Machiavelli's own outlook: do not some men live unselfish lives? Machiavelli might reply that the men in question feel compelled to act as they do because they cannot face the fact of human egoism<sup>6</sup>.

What is the moral of this hypothetical dispute? As soon as the otherwise arguable views on each side of the contest are formulated as a set of rigid assumptions about man and the world, they take on the characteristics of a stereotyped and tendentious ideological programme. The upshot is that neither side can be too cautious when facing unexplained dogma: after all, it could be its own.

A more radical story and its lesson has come to our notice recently, as part of the East-West confrontation arguments about the inviolability of human rights has reached a stalemate. The attempt to persuade Communist countries to accept some of the beliefs of traditional liberalism has rebounded upon our own heads. The Russians claim that human rights are violated in Northern Ireland and by the extent of unemployment and racist conflict in Britain and the



United States. Here again there is no real argument, no common problem, nor even a 'common language'. Mannheim's views on the situational determinants of ideologies can be of little help where adherents of one ideology 'play' with words and allow deliberate distortions of fact.

We face a different issue in cases where the same word means (in a perfectly genuine and explicable way) different things to differently situated persons, just as each epoch might perceive the 'same' object from its own characteristic point of view. Mannheim acknowledges as much<sup>7</sup>. Let me choose, as my own illustration, a passage from Locke's *Essay*<sup>8</sup> where he mentions three explanations for the rule that men should keep their promises. For a Christian, he suggests, the obligation is demanded by God who has the power to punish and reward in a future life. A Hobbesian, on the other hand, might say that it is required and enforced by the Leviathan. Finally, ancient philosophers considered it dishonest and undignified for a man to act otherwise. Here we have three 'perspectives' offering equally defensible, 'situationally determined' views which could be dealt with in an illuminating fashion on Mannheim's premises with the help of his sociological methods. However, when contending sides do not 'speak the same language' and allow themselves to be forced into positions of unexamined, even arbitrarily imposed dogma, Mannheim's hermeneutic is bound to remain ineffectual.

I will mention one further aspect of Mannheim's theory, to which in my view he does not attach sufficient weight – the question of the relationship between ideologies and organized social action. He defines an ideology as a set of ideas by means of which a certain group of men seek to justify and maintain an 'established' form of life, whereas a utopia, according to him, consists of ideas which tend to undermine and demolish an existing order. I believe that Mannheim's definition underestimates the significance and complexity of the behavioural or pragmatic factor in cases of ideologies.

There may be *conflict* between theory and practice. As Seliger<sup>9</sup> has shown (convincingly, it seems to me), an ideological system may reveal within itself a tension between 'fundamental' and 'operative' principles. Such a cleft between pure and practical ideology, I think, may lead to a falsification of policies and their motivations. In fact, besides 'obsessional thinking'<sup>10</sup>, and 'cant mentality'<sup>11</sup>, stages of conscious deception may be reached, ranging from cheap promises, twisted evaluations and pretence, to concealment, indoctrination, and



ruthless, often self-contradictory exploitation of the devices of propaganda.

It seems probable that amid premeditated deviations from ideological principles or practice Mannheim's methods of sociology must fail. Where there is a genuine *discrepancy* between fundamental and operative principles, an explanation of the 'situational determination' of the factors involved will be both feasible and of value. However, where the conflict is dictated by a calculated *volteface* in operational principles, any attempt to explain this by underlying 'perspectives', unconscious purposes or irrational assumptions will be self-defeating<sup>12</sup>. A science of politics, dealing as it should with all the varieties of ideological make-believe, must therefore be difficult if not impossible to achieve, even on Mannheim's own sympathetic and comprehensive principles of understanding. Neither of my two criticisms of Mannheim's main thesis can rob it of two virtues, *viz.*, a) the invigorating *openmindedness*, and b) the astonishing *complexity* of his analysis. When we turn to Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse – pre-war colleagues of his at Frankfurt University and two of the leading exponents of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research – we encounter a narrow, almost naive treatment on their part of many of the questions at issue.

Horkheimer rejects Mannheim's method of inquiry into the various 'situational determinations' of ideologies, and instead advances his 'Critical Theory' of society, the aim of which is to correlate all possible historical ideas with just *one* allegedly decisive factor – the system of the economic means of production as conceived by Marx<sup>13</sup>. Thus, for instance, to understand Descartes's philosophy as an ideology originating from the breakdown of a unitary world-view, or from the influence of the aristocratic and Jesuit groups in the France of his day is not enough. One 'must penetrate deeper' and derive his mechanistic, mathematical thinking from the activities of the rising middle class in contemporary commerce and manufacture, or from the methods of precise calculation in the newly developed competitive market.

For Horkheimer the advantage of his Critical Theory is twofold. First, it avoids the (to him) unpalatable notion, implicit in Mannheim's concept of ideology, that there is no philosophical truth but only 'situationally determined' thought. Secondly, it explains that philosophy has a practical function – the critique of contemporary social systems and of the prevailing political auth-



ority. Accordingly Critical Theory aims at preventing people in every generation from falling in with the beliefs and practices instilled into them by the established order.

If one 'penetrates deeper' into the significance of this Marxian-inspired critique of present-day conditions one is faced by what to some may come as a revelation. Horkheimer<sup>14</sup> and his followers among the young during the sixties believed that, though the fascist totalitarian state had been smashed, its social roots remained intact. They argued that for this reason the new radical left must be severely critical of the attempts by its party's more liberal wing to enter into a 'coalition with the marines'. The slogan made it clear that in the eyes of the extreme left the difference between the authoritarian state and its socialist democratic opposition was minimal. In completely rejecting the institutions of liberal and competitive capitalism (including the reformist policies of the working-class parliamentary parties) as well as the authority-promoting role of the *family* within bourgeois culture, Critical Theory has set the stage for the militant youth movement of our own times. This is what Horkheimer's one-sided assessment of the situationally determining factor of Western ideologies has come to, in practice as well as in theory<sup>15</sup>.

Marcuse, too, believes in a close link between theory and practice. According to him, thinking about liberty and justice implies struggling against exploitation and limitations on freedom<sup>16</sup>. Thus he accepts Horkheimer's Critical Theory. He also applies Mannheim's 'total' conception of ideology to what he regards as the irrational, totalitarian conditions of modern society in both the West and the East. He likewise appears to endorse Mannheim's idea<sup>17</sup> that the nature of an ideology implies that in certain situations the collective unconscious of specific groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others, and thereby underwrites the established order. For all these borrowings from Mannheim, Marcuse's approach is not unlike that of socialists and communists who, as Mannheim again remarks<sup>18</sup>, discern an ideological bias in their opponent's beliefs while regarding their own thought as entirely free from any taint of ideology. His chief work, *One-Dimensional Man*<sup>19</sup>, has as its subtitle: 'The Ideology of Industrial Society'.

The book tells the story of what Marcuse sees as the conformist and repressive character of advanced industrial society. There is bureaucracy, the monotony of suburbia, soul-destroying work, auto-



mation, propaganda, state enterprise in commerce and education, and, together with growing productivity, both waste and the brinkmanship of nuclear annihilation. The technological conquest of nature, he argues, has gone hand in hand with the exploitation of man. And though we elect our masters freely, this fact abolishes neither master nor slave. Marcuse concludes on a note of pessimism. Revolutionary measures appear to him utopian as long as the dominant regimes in the East and the West control between them all the instruments of change and progress. This account of present-day society lacks both depth and articulation. In fact, it is inspired by the author's own one-dimensional ideology. For, contrary to what he maintains throughout, the 'situational determinants' of the prevailing social system in the Western world are neither uniform nor 'rigged'. In the first place, unlike George Orwell<sup>20</sup>, Marcuse does not see that it is not just capitalist or totalitarian managerialism, but socialist forces in the broadest sense (of which one would have thought Marcuse would approve) which are responsible for our dependence on the machine, for centralized control, and for progress towards greater material comfort and a more equal standard of living.

Secondly, Marcuse disregards the deep-probing, truly democratic forms of censure that are not only allowed nowadays, but also even encouraged by those in authority (at any rate in the West). He speaks of the control by the majority, not of the effectiveness of minority views; of the established order, not of the scruples in the minds of its leaders; of slogans and propaganda, not of the largely informed nature of the press and the versatility of the educational system

Thirdly, he gives the impression that, for him, the military establishment is responsible for most of the evils of industrial society. Many would argue that people have a *right* to security, and that a state which neglects this contradicts itself. The point arises in connection with the safety of any community, whether populated by hippies or anarchists. For there might always lurk a potential enemy without or a fifth-columnist within. It is a different matter if the purposes of defence are misdirected or developed to excess; but then the blame rests with the government in question, not with the fact that troops and armaments are at its disposal.

Finally, in fighting modern institutions in support of his so-called 'liberation', Marcuse strikes at the roots of law and order. He forgets that the law (if properly constituted and administered) is a



necessary and largely sufficient condition for everybody's freedom. As both Locke and Rousseau put it, liberty without either justice or laws is a veritable contradiction. Certainly the law permits self-development and promotes our gregarious interests; it also tries to ensure that there is no more legal constraint in a civilized society than is necessary to prevent constraints of a non-legal kind. As we know from history, a measure of legal regulation has often been called for even in the interests of revolutionary movements.

Marcuse's own revolutionary objectives either remain blank or are given fatuous expression<sup>21</sup>. This refusal to commit himself to specific revolutionary ideals may be Marxian in inspiration<sup>22</sup>. Or did he recognize the truth of Gottfried Keller's prophecy – 'The ultimate triumph of freedom will be barren'?<sup>23</sup> Certainly his own few formulations of utopia as the home of freedom and happiness are naive to a degree<sup>24</sup>. They open up a bogus dichotomy between established society as ugly, brutal, and noisy, and free life in the future as beautiful, tender, and calm. Besides, no one can be impressed by the vacuous conclusion to the *Essay on Liberation*: '... for the first time in our life, we shall be free to think about what we are going to do'. This kind of response, if it leads to anything, may just as well generate licence and anarchy, or waste and thoughtlessness. For the freedom *not to think* has become very popular with some men of today, particularly militants. Hence I agree with Ralf Dahrendorf's pronouncement that 'utopia is the home not of freedom, ... but of the perfection either of terror or of absolute boredom'<sup>25</sup>.

From points raised in this paper I draw three conclusions:

1) Mannheim's analysis of the concepts of ideology and utopia shows how human ideas and values are determined<sup>26</sup> by the social and historical situation prevailing at a given time, and are also influenced by certain unconsciously held assumptions. His findings are relevant for historians and sociologists, but since they *explain* rather than *justify* men's beliefs, philosophers (and not only those of the positivist school) are likely to ignore all talk of ideologies and instead concentrate on the methods, premises, and conclusions of rational arguments.

2) Discourse in ideological terms, especially if these terms are vague, narrowly conceived, or else exploited in extremist propaganda, is to be avoided for its stultifying and often intellectually corrupting consequences.



3) If the concept of an ideology is reserved for the *determining* factors of knowledge in the sense of Weber's 'presuppositions', rather than for the situationally *determined* contents of thought, it may serve an important function. But since in this capacity it would come very near Collingwood's idea of the 'absolute presuppositions' of people's thinking at any given time throughout history, its study would (according to Collingwood) fall to the metaphysician rather than to the sociologist or political scientist.

There is something to be said for the suggestion that philosophers should join the discussion at this stage. They are sufficiently equipped for analysing some biased explanations *a parte obiecti* (e.g. those advanced by Horkheimer and Marcuse), or some narrowly conceived presuppositions *a parte subjecti* (again those made by Horkheimer and Marcuse). Above all, they can break the deadlock between disputants who talk past one another. They should be able to sort out controversial issues in such a debate by raising them to a more objective level, where a higher order logical or linguistic analysis can be applied. Mannheim himself suggests 'two levels of imputation' in this context<sup>27</sup>, which are an improvement on his usual procedure of interpreting the multiplicity of divergent ideological perspectives from an ever more comprehensive, though still one-level context of understanding.

A more important reason for the role of the philosopher in this direction is that Mannheim's historicist approach to the study of ideologies and utopian beliefs is not enough. Nor do Marcuse's pronouncements on the 'stuff of thought' being 'historical stuff', or on 'historical tension and dialectic'<sup>28</sup> help. Historism, with all that this term implies, leads to the maxim 'Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner'<sup>29</sup>. What is needed in connection with inquiries into ideological explanation, however, is critical understanding together with a critique of misunderstanding, bias, or confusion. Here a philosopher should be able to penetrate, to appraise, and to clarify.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London, 1936; reprinted 1976), pp. 39-40, 69, 79-80, 180-181, 239, 244, 257-258, 274-275, 276-278 and *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, e.g. pp. 179-180.



<sup>3</sup> *Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen und Reden zur Philosophie, Heft VIII: Wissenschaft als Beruf*, 3rd edition (München-Leipzig, 1930), pp. 22, 24 and 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 26. This is the assumption made by those who speak of the social sciences as 'value-free', 'ethically neutral', or in fact as scientifically 'objective'.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 250-252. For the nature of scientific method and scientific objectivity as being at the opposite pole to the tendency to 'talk at cross-purposes', see K. R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Volume II (London, 1963), pp. 217-218.

<sup>6</sup> From an imaginary dialogue between Machiavelli and John Rae in *The Times*, 20 December, 1977.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 243-245.

<sup>8</sup> Bk. I, ch. 3, sect. 5, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), p. 68.

<sup>9</sup> M. Seliger, 'Fundamental and Operative Ideology: the Two Principal Dimensions of Political Argumentation', *Policy Sciences*, 1, 1970, pp. 325-338, and *Ideology and Politics* (London, 1976).

<sup>10</sup> The phrase is that of Mannheim: see his *Diagnosis of Our Time* (London, 1947), p. 90.

<sup>11</sup> *Ideology and Utopia, op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Karl Jaspers, *Die Geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin, 1932), p. 136.

<sup>13</sup> 'The Social Function of Philosophy', in *Critical Theory*, tr. M. J. O'Connell (New York, 1972), pp. 209, 262-265. The reference here is obviously to Marxian quotations like the following: 'The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life' (Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, tr. N. I. Stone (Chicago, 1913), p. 11).

<sup>14</sup> Particularly in his *Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1947), and the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London, 1973).

<sup>15</sup> For a confrontation between Popper and the Frankfurt School over this and related issues see T. W. Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, tr. G. Adey and D. Frisby (London, 1976).

<sup>16</sup> *Revolution oder Reform, Herbert Marcuse and Karl Popper: Eine Konfrontation* (München, 1971), p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Ideology and Utopia, op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> London, 1969.

<sup>20</sup> *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London, 1937), particularly chapter 12.

<sup>21</sup> *One-Dimensional Man, op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>22</sup> For Marx in this connection, see Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia, op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>24</sup> *An Essay on Liberation* (London, 1969), pp. 46, 90-91.

<sup>25</sup> 'On the Origin of Social Inequality', in *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, ed. P. Laslett and W. G. Runciman, 2nd series (Oxford, 1962), p. 109.

<sup>26</sup> For a full discussion of the senses of 'determine' in the context of Mannheim's analysis, see John Plamenatz, *Ideology* (London, 1970), chapter 3. For a more general ar-



gument, see J. L. Mackie, 'Ideological Explanation', in *Explanation*, ed. S. Korner (Oxford, 1975), chapter 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ideology and Utopia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>28</sup> *One-Dimensional Man*, *op. cit.*, pp. 118, 171. For other references to the 'historical sense' see pp. 86-87, 113, 117, 149, 158-159, 163, 165, 170.

<sup>29</sup> This is a common misquotation of a passage in Mme de Stael's *Corinne*, Book XVIII, Chapter 5 (*ab. init.*): 'tout comprendre rend très indulgent'.



Maurice Cranston

## IDEOLOGIE ET PHILOSOPHIE CHEZ SARTRE

La distinction entre idéologie et philosophie chez Sartre fait partie de son entreprise — ou de son 'projet' pour employer un mot plus Sartrien — d'effectuer une fusion entre le marxisme et l'existentialisme. Son livre *Critique de la raison dialectique* est consacré à cette fin.

Sartre commence ce livre en chantant les louanges du marxisme et en ne laissant qu'une part modeste à l'existentialisme. En effet, dit-il, alors que le marxisme est une des principales philosophies du monde, l'existentialisme n'est même pas une philosophie authentique. L'existentialisme n'est qu'une idéologie. Mais Sartre n'utilise pas le mot 'idéologie' dans le sens marxiste du terme. Il nous donne sa propre définition de ce mot et du mot 'philosophie'. Les philosophies, d'après Sartre, sont les grands systèmes créateurs de la pensée qui dominent certains 'moments' ou périodes de l'histoire, systèmes qui ne peuvent être dépassés avant que l'histoire elle-même ne soit parvenue à un nouveau stade de son évolution. Ainsi, au dix-septième siècle, le 'moment philosophique' était celui de Descartes et de Locke; à la fin du dix-huitième et au commencement du dix-neuvième siècle, c'était celui de Kant et de Hegel; notre propre époque est celle de Marx. Aucune philosophie ne peut aller au-delà de celle de Marx aujourd'hui. Nous sommes contraints, dit Sartre, de penser en termes marxistes, que nous le voulions ou non.

Non content d'exalter ainsi le marxisme, Sartre se donne beaucoup de mal pour amoindrir l'existentialisme, simple 'idéologie'. Les 'idéologies', suivant la définition de Sartre, sont de petits systèmes qui vivent en marge des grands systèmes de pensée et qui 'exploitent le domaine' des philosophies authentiques. Puisque le siècle actuel se



confond avec l'époque du marxisme, l'existentialisme exploite son domaine. L'existentialisme alors, écrit Sartre, 'est un système parasitaire qui vit en marge du Savoir, qui s'y est opposé d'abord et qui aujourd'hui tente de s'y intégrer' <sup>1</sup>.

Cette perspective est originale. Il y a quelque chose d'audacieux sinon outrageux à proposer d'intégrer l'existentialisme dans le marxisme, car jamais deux systèmes de pensées ne pourraient paraître plus dissemblables. Deux choses, au moins, semblent des obstacles insurmontables à toute fusion. D'abord, l'existentialisme croit à la liberté métaphysique, au libre arbitre, à l'indéterminisme: et Sartre, en particulier, l'a toujours souligné. Aucun thème n'est plus marqué ni aussi répété dans toutes ses oeuvres littéraires ou philosophiques que celui de l'homme 'condamné à être libre'. Marx, au contraire, appartient à cette tradition philosophique qui voudrait bannir complètement le problème du libre arbitre. Pour lui et selon l'expression de Hegel, 'la liberté c'est la reconnaître comme nécessaire'! Marx soutient d'abord que toute l'histoire est façonnée et déterminée par les rapports de production qui jaillissent des lois de la matière, ensuite que les hommes peuvent maîtriser leurs destinées dans la mesure où ils comprennent ces lois et, en accord avec elles, peuvent diriger consciemment leurs actions. Ainsi, Marx n'admet pas la moindre antinomie entre la liberté et le déterminisme. Au contraire, pour Sartre, non seulement le déterminisme est faux, mais c'est aussi une forme de mauvaise foi ou de coupable autodéception, par lesquelles certaines personnes s'évadent de leurs responsabilités morales.

Il y a ensuite la question de l'individualisme. Les existentialistes insistent lourdement sur l'isolation, la solitude, 'l'abandon' de l'individu; et aucun écrivain existentialiste ne l'a souligné davantage que Sartre depuis son premier roman, *La Nausée*, jusqu'à sa dernière pièce, *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*. Mais Marx considère l'individualisme comme une théorie chimérique et soutient que la véritable nature de l'homme est sociale.

Sartre ne se dérobe pas devant ces contradictions. Il croit qu'elles peuvent être résolues. Il suggère que la difficulté réside dans le fait que le marxisme orthodoxe est devenu dogmatique et plein de préjugés; et puisque le marxisme a perdu le contact avec l'humanité, l'existentialisme peut l'aider à le rénover, en l'humanisant. Sartre poursuit en faisant une prédiction curieuse. Je la cite:

'A partir du jour où la recherche marxiste prendra la dimension humaine (c'est-à-dire le projet existentiel) comme le fondement du



Savoir anthropologique, l'existentialisme n'aura plus de raison d'être, absorbé, dépassé et conservé par le mouvement totalisant de la philosophie, il cessera d'être une enquête particulière pour devenir le fondement de toute enquête<sup>2</sup>.

Sartre insiste sur le fait que sa querelle l'oppose aux marxistes et non à Marx. En effet, il donne une interprétation de l'essai de Marx sur le 18 Brumaire qui suggère que Marx, lui-même, dans ses moments les plus inspirés, était existentialiste sans s'en rendre compte. Sartre se plaint que les marxistes sont trop paresseux. Ils sont tantôt trop métaphysiques et tantôt trop positivistes. Leur pensée souvent ne constitue même pas une pensée mais une soumission aveugle à l'autorité.

Nombre des critiques de Sartre sur les marxistes orthodoxes sont très pertinentes. Il démontre, par exemple, combien est creux le jugement de ces critiques littéraires marxistes qui éconduisent par exemple, Paul Valéry comme un "petit bourgeois intellectuel", mais le fait important est que "tous les petits bourgeois intellectuels ne sont pas des Valéry"! Sartre démontre aussi l'absurdité de l'habitude des marxistes qui groupent sous la même étiquette des écrivains aussi divers que Proust, Bergson et Gide en les qualifiant de 'subjectifs'; par ailleurs, Sartre montre que cette catégorie du subjectif n'est pas viable empiriquement; elle ne procède pas de l'expérience; elle n'est pas basée sur l'étude et l'observation d'hommes véritables.

Les 'marxistes paresseux', dit Sartre, révèlent leur paresse non seulement dans l'utilisation irréfléchie des catégories, mais dans leur tendance à constituer le vrai *a priori*. De même les politiciens du Parti Communiste utilisent ces méthodes pour prouver que ce qui arriva devait arriver, les intellectuels marxistes les utilisent pour prouver que toute chose est telle qu'elle devait être. Et ceci, observe Sartre, avec perspicacité, n'est qu'une méthode 'd'exposition' qui ne nous apprend rien. Elle est tautologique; elle ne peut rien nous enseigner car elle connaît d'avance ce qu'elle va découvrir. D'où le besoin de donner au marxisme une méthode nouvelle.

Sartre décrit cette nouvelle méthode que l'existentialisme offre au marxisme comme 'heuristique'; c'est une méthode qui sert à découvrir la vérité: elle est aussi, dit-il, 'dialectique'. Sartre affirme que lorsque les marxistes paresseux sont confrontés avec un problème ils se réfèrent immédiatement à des principes abstraits. Par contraste, Sartre prétend que sa nouvelle méthode ne fonctionne pas autrement qu'au moyen de va-et-vient, à l'intérieur du mouvement de flux et de



reflux dans le monde réel. Par exemple, la méthode de Sartre chercherait à expliquer la biographie des individus par une double étude approfondie de l'époque qui forme l'individu et de l'individu qui forme l'époque. Il appelle ceci la méthode progressive-régressive. Elle est progressive parce qu'elle recherche une partie de l'explication dans les buts des êtres conscients; elle est régressive parce qu'elle observe les conditions historiques et sociales dans lesquelles chaque être conscient poursuit ses objectifs: les gens doivent être compris à l'aide, à la fois, de leurs propres recherches de finalité et des circonstances dans lesquelles ils formulent et cherchent à réaliser leurs buts. On peut se demander si cette perspective est marxiste; elle a toujours été celle de Sartre lui-même.

Prenons l'exemple de sa pièce *Huis Clos* déjà publiée en quarante-trois. Dans cette pièce, le protagoniste, Garcin prétend avoir une nature noble et courageuse bien qu'il ait accompli des actes de lâcheté. Alors la farouche Inès, au franc-parler, dit à Garcin qu'un homme n'a d'autre nature que celle de ses actions, que ses actions le définissent; ce qui fait qu'un homme, dont la conduite est lâche, est un lâche. Le cadre de la pièce est représenté par un enfer modernisé qui se situe au-delà de la tombe.

Garcin demande à Inès: 'Est-ce possible qu'on soit un lâche quand on a choisi les chemins les plus dangereux? Peut-on juger une vie sur un seul acte?'

Inès: 'Pourquoi pas? Tu as rêvé trente ans que tu avais un coeur, et tu te passais mille petites faiblesses parce que tout est permis aux héros. Comme c'était commode! Et puis, à l'heure du danger, on t'a mis au pied du mur et... tu as pris le train pour Mexico'.

Garcin: 'Je n'ai pas rêvé cet héroïsme. Je l'ai choisi. On est ce qu'on veut'.

Inès: 'Prouve-le. Prouve que ce n'était pas un rêve. Seuls les actes décident de ce qu'on a voulu'.

Garcin: 'Je suis mort trop tôt. On ne m'a pas laissé le temps de faire mes actes'.

Inès: 'On meurt toujours trop tôt ou trop tard. Et cependant la vie est là, terminée; le trait est tiré, il faut faire la somme. Tu n'es rien d'autre que ta vie'<sup>3</sup>.

Garcin est un exemple de ce que Sartre appelle 'mauvaise foi'. Et Garcin, dans sa mauvaise foi invoque le mensonge (tel que Sartre le voit) de l'essentialisme pour soutenir que, quoiqu'il ait commis des actes de lâcheté, il a une nature, une âme, une essence courageuse.



C'est la mission d'Inès de lui enseigner le douloureux message existentialiste, qu'un homme *est* ce qu'il *fait* et pas plus. Garcin n'a pas une nature ou une essence à être courageux. C'est un lâche parce que ses actes sont lâches. Il ne faut pas oublier toutefois, un aspect d'*Huis Clos* – trop souvent négligé par les critiques de Sartre – c'est que les personnages de cette pièce sont *morts*. Leur vie est terminée et ainsi, quoiqu'ils n'aient pas d'essence, ils ont des biographies complètes. Autrement dit, ils n'ont pas de futur, et ils ne peuvent plus avoir de liberté. Garcin est ainsi damné en ce sens que toute possibilité lui est refusée de cesser ses actes de lâcheté et de commencer des actes de courage, et donc de cesser d'être lâche, de devenir un homme courageux. Puisqu'il est mort, il est, dit Inès, *trop tard*. Il ne peut plus devenir un homme courageux. La mort a fermé son compte. Donc lorsque Sartre situe *Huis Clos* en enfer ce n'est pas simplement un moyen théâtral. *Huis Clos* est justement placé en enfer parce que le thème central de la pièce est la damnation. De cette façon, Sartre explore l'autre aspect du sujet de salut qui est examiné dans son premier roman, *La Nausée*.

Dans sa *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Sartre revient à son thème préféré. Il répète que notre nature seule est notre histoire, nous sommes ce que nous *faisons*, et ce que nous faisons est ce que nous avons choisi de faire. Nous sommes totalement responsables de nos actions, puisqu'en tant qu'hommes condamnés à être libres nous aurions pu, si nous l'avions choisi, agir différemment.

Dans la *Critique*, Sartre parle de 'l'arrachement de soi-même vers l'existence' et par l'existence, il ajoute, 'nous n'entendons pas une substance stable qui se repose en elle-même, mais un déséquilibre perpétuel, un arrachement à soi de tout le corps. Comme cet élan vers l'objectivation prend des formes diverses selon les individus, comme il nous projette à travers un champ de possibilités dont nous réalisons certaines à l'exclusion des autres, nous le nommons aussi Choix ou Liberté' <sup>4</sup>.

Je crois qu'il est clair, même d'après cette citation, que Sartre a retenu le principe existentialiste de liberté et d'aucune manière assimilé la théorie marxiste de la nécessité. Donc malgré tout ce que Sartre a dit au début, que le marxisme est une véritable philosophie et l'existentialisme une simple idéologie, il est évident qu'une partie cruciale d'une soi-disant intégration entre les deux comportera la reddition par les marxistes, et non par les existentialistes, de la moindre croyance fondamentale.



Alors nous pourrions considérer un autre sujet sur lequel l'existentialisme et le marxisme sont en désaccord: l'individualisme. L'existentialisme, comme il est généralement compris, et certainement comme il est exposé par Sartre lui-même, comprend une forme extrême d'individualisme alors que le marxisme n'a pas de trait plus voyant que son rejet de l'individualisme — sa croyance que l'homme doit être vu en fonction de sa totalité sociale ou de sa commune humanité. Sartre a essayé de résoudre cette antithèse en établissant dans sa *Critique* une théorie qu'il prétend être marxiste et existentialiste de la société. Jusqu'à quel point peut-on dire qu'il ait réussi?

Une fois encore Sartre utilise librement l'espèce de langage technique qui est en vogue chez les marxistes. D'abord il invoque la notion d'aliénation. Mais Sartre a sur l'aliénation une théorie différente de celle de Marx. Alors que Marx voyait l'aliénation comme le résultat de l'exploitation d'un homme par un autre, Sartre voit l'aliénation comme un trait inaltérable du prédicament humain. En effet, la notion sartrienne d'aliénation ne peut être comprise avec des termes purement marxistes. Les mots que Sartre partage avec Marx sont des mots que tout deux ont empruntés à Hegel, mais chez Sartre la théorie est hegelienne, et non seulement le langage. Son aliénation, déjà expliquée dans *L'Être et le Néant*, est métaphysique. Néanmoins, il n'oublie pas que son sujet ici est la sociologie ou l'anthropologie par opposition à l'ontologie. Donc Sartre accepte qu'il doit donner une raison spécifiquement sociologique, et, en quelque sorte, inédite, pour ce qu'il a toujours considéré comme la caractéristique fondamentale des rapports humains — l'antagonisme mutuel.

Cette théorie est développée dans les parties les plus frappantes de la *Critique*. Le principe que Sartre introduit à ce moment là est celui de la rareté. Sartre dit que toute l'histoire humaine, du moins toute l'histoire humaine jusqu'ici — a été une histoire de la pénurie et un combat amer contre cette pénurie. Il n'y a pas assez dans ce monde pour en faire le tour, et il n'y a jamais eu assez. Et c'est cette rareté, d'après la *Critique*, qui rend les rapports humains intelligibles. Cette rareté est la clef pour comprendre l'attitude des hommes les uns envers les autres et pour comprendre les structures sociales que les hommes ont édifiées durant leur vie sur terre. La rareté, dit Sartre, unit les hommes et les divise à la fois, parce que chacun de nous sait que ce n'est qu'en raison de l'existence des autres qu'il n'y a pas d'abondance pour soi-même.



La rareté est 'le moteur de l'histoire'. Les hommes ne peuvent pas éliminer tout à fait la rareté. En ce sens, les hommes sont impuissants ou paralysés. Le mieux que puisse faire chaque homme est d'essayer de surmonter la rareté en collaborant avec les autres. Mais une telle collaboration est en elle-même paradoxale car chacun des collaborateurs réalise que c'est l'existence des autres qui provoque la rareté. Je suis votre rival et vous êtes mon rival. Lorsque je travaille avec d'autres pour lutter contre la rareté, je travaille avec ceux dont l'existence rend ce travail nécessaire, et par mon travail je nourris mes concurrents et rivaux. La rareté façonne alors, non seulement notre mentalité envers le monde naturel, mais la façonne aussi envers nos voisins. La rareté nous rend tous rivaux et, malgré cela nous contraind à collaborer avec nos rivaux; car seuls nous sommes paralysés, nous ne pouvons lutter efficacement contre la rareté que par le partage du travail et d'autres efforts communs.

La nature, néanmoins, est 'inerte' et indifférente au bien-être des hommes. L'univers que nous occupons est, en partie, le monde de la nature, et en partie le monde qui a été créé par nos aïeux au cours de leur longue lutte contre la rareté. Sartre appelle cela le monde du *practico-inerte*. Le monde est un monde de *praxis* pour autant que c'est un monde réglé par le travail et les projets de ses habitants, passés et actuels. Ceci est le monde dans la mesure où il est fait par l'homme. Mais le monde est également le monde de la nature passive et inerte sur lequel l'homme a eu à travailler. Ironiquement, beaucoup de choses que les hommes ont faites dans le but de rendre le monde supportable, en diminuant la rareté, ont eu pour effet, non pas d'améliorer le monde, mais de le rendre plus mauvais. Sartre donne l'exemple des paysans chinois qui, en coupant leur bois pour faire du feu et pour construire, ont ce faisant, déboisé leur pays s'exposant ainsi au risque d'inondations constantes. Les hommes sont tourmentés par leurs propres inventions dans le monde du *Practico-inerte*.

Donc, dans un univers hostile, défini par la rareté, tous les hommes deviennent les ennemis à mort. Dans une phrase qui lui ressemble, Sartre dit que l'homme devient un contre-homme. Et dans un paragraphe dont l'intonation est suffisamment dramatique pour devenir un discours dans une de ses pièces, Sartre écrit:

'Rien, en effet – ni les grands fauves, ni les microbes – ne peut être plus terrible pour l'homme qu'une espèce intelligente, carnassière, cruelle, qui saurait comprendre et déjouer l'intelligence hu-



maine et dont la fin serait précisément la destruction de l'homme. Cette espèce, c'est évidemment la nôtre se saisissant par tout homme chez les autres dans le milieu de la rareté'.

Les conflits entre l'homme et l'homme reçoivent ainsi une explication *économique* dans la *Critique* de Sartre. Nous arrivons ensuite à un morceau de "dialectique". Le conflit est une réciprocité négative, mais cette négation elle-même est réfutée par la collaboration entre voisins, qui est nécessaire afin de vaincre la rareté. Ceci est la théorie dialectique de Sartre sur l'origine de la société.

Il distingue deux espèces de structures sociales; une qu'il nomme la série, l'autre le groupe. Les deux diffèrent de façon radicale. Une série est une assemblée de gens qui sont unis seulement par une proximité extérieure. Elle n'existe pas en tant que totalité 'à l'intérieur' d'aucun de ses membres. L'exemple que Sartre donne d'une série est une file d'attente devant l'autobus. Ceci est un rassemblement ou une assemblée de gens que l'on peut observer. On peut le voir, compter le nombre de personnes présentes. Tout le monde est là pour la 'même' raison, mais ces gens n'ont pas de but *commun*. Personne ne s'intéresse à l'autre. A cause de la rareté des sièges dans l'autobus chacun souhaite que les autres ne soient pas là. Chacun est superflu, chacun est de trop. Mais, parce que chacun *sait* qu'il est un de trop pour les autres, de la même façon que chacun des autres est un de trop pour lui, tous acceptent de prendre leur tour pour monter dans l'autobus lorsqu'il arrivera. Ils forment une série ordonnée afin d'éviter une querelle sur la plateforme de l'autobus. La formation d'une série ordonnée comme une file d'attente est ainsi un rapport réciproque négatif qui est la négation de l'antagonisme; elle est la négation d'elle-même.

Les gens dans la file d'attente devant l'autobus forme une pluralité de solitudes. Et Sartre soutient que toute la vie sociale de l'humanité est imprégnée par des séries de cette sorte. Une ville est une série de séries. La bourgeoisie est une série de séries, chaque membre respectant la solitude des autres. Mais dans la société des hommes, il existe une autre sorte de rassemblement ou d'assemblée que Sartre reconnaît et c'est ce qu'il nomme le *groupe*.

Un groupe est une assemblée de gens qui, contrairement à ceux de la série, *ont* un objectif commun ou une fin commune. Sartre donne en exemple une équipe de rugby. La différence entre un groupe et une série est interne. De l'extérieur on ne peut pas voir la différence. Un groupe est constitué du fait que chaque membre s'est



engagé à agir comme membre de ce groupe. Le groupe est maintenu ensemble et ainsi constitué par engagement. Chaque membre, comme Sartre l'explique, a converti sa propre *praxis* dans une *praxis* sociale. La Classe ouvrière devient un groupe lorsque ses membres s'engagent dans le socialisme. Un groupe peut réaliser quelque chose, tandis qu'une série est paralysée, puisque chaque membre ne poursuit que sa *praxis* personnelle. Et, en effet, c'est précisément parce que la série est paralysée que le groupe est constitué en premier lieu. L'origine du groupe, suggère Sartre, peut être résumée dans la découverte que 'nous devons, soit vivre en travaillant ensemble, soit mourir en se combattant'.

La rareté est à nouveau l'idée force, puisque c'est la rareté, et la rareté seule, qui oblige les hommes à travailler ensemble dans un but commun. La rareté est vue ainsi comme l'origine du groupe. Et, en développant cette pensée, Sartre introduit trois notions pittoresques: le *serment*, la violence et la Terreur. Sartre explique que le groupe prend corps lorsque chaque individu prête serment de devenir un membre du groupe et de ne pas désertir ou trahir le groupe. Un groupe est ainsi défini comme un groupe lié par serment.

Mais le serment doit être renforcé et les membres doivent être assurés qu'il le sera. C'est ici qu'interviennent la violence et la Terreur. C'est la crainte de la violence qui pousse les hommes en premier lieu à former des groupes. C'est cette crainte qui les maintient dans ces groupes. La crainte qui maintient les hommes dans leur groupe est la Terreur. En effet, le serment lui-même, dit Sartre, est une invitation pour que la violence se retourne contre soi-même si l'on manque à sa propre parole. Et l'existence de la Terreur est une assurance que la violence sera utilisée contre quiconque tentera de rompre son serment.

Tous les groupes, dit Sartre, sont en danger constant de se dissoudre et de devenir une série. Chacun est conscient de la menace de dispersion qui existe en lui-même et chez les autres. Donc, Sartre peut dire que 'La Terreur est la garantie établie, librement réclamée, que personne ne retombera au stade de la série'. La Terreur, en effet, est plus que cela: c'est une 'sollicitude mortelle' car c'est grâce à la Terreur que l'homme devient un être social, créé par lui-même et par les autres. La Terreur est la violence qui réfute la violence. En effet, Sartre va encore plus loin pour dire que la Terreur est fraternité. Car la Terreur est la garantie que mon voisin demeurera mon frère, mon voisin m'est lié par la grande menace de la violence que



la Terreur utilisera contre lui s'il ose se conduire d'une façon 'non-fraternelle'.

L'exemple le plus important du groupe que donne Sartre est l'Etat. L'Etat, dit-il, est le groupe qui se reconstitue sans cesse et modifie sa composition par un renouvellement partiel – discontinu ou continu – de ses membres. Sartre dit que le groupe en fusion rejette ses chefs; ensuite, le groupe se perpétue en fondant des institutions. Ceci est la base de la souveraineté. L'autorité est liée à la Terreur en ce sens que le souverain est l'homme qui est autorisé à exercer la Terreur. Dans une société faite de 'séries', j'obéis parce que je dois obéir. Mais dans un Etat, j'obéis moi-même parce que c'est moi, par mon serment, qui me suis fondu dans le groupe et qui ai autorisé le souverain à commander. Naturellement, Sartre ne pense pas que chaque membre d'un Etat ait réellement prêté serment; il a prêté serment par procuration, mais le serment n'en est pas moins un serment.

La Terreur, selon Sartre, est non seulement fraternité, elle est également liberté. Car je fonde librement mon projet individuel dans le projet commun lorsque je prête serment moi-même (ou par procuration) à l'Etat, et lorsque le souverain, fortifié par la Terreur, me commande, de la part de l'Etat, il me rend ma liberté.

Telle est la théorie de Sartre sur les structures sociales. Jusqu'à quel point peut-on la considérer comme une théorie marxiste? Il n'y a guère de doute que c'est une théorie très propre à Sartre, une théorie qui s'harmonise complètement avec la doctrine des rapports humains émise en 1943 dans son oeuvre maîtresse sur l'existentialisme, *L'Etre et le Néant*. Cette pensée est très bien résumée par un personnage de sa pièce *Huis Clos*, avec la remarque 'l'Enfer, c'est les autres'. Cette théorie est, brièvement, la suivante: Si je parle, je m'objective en mots. Ces mots, une fois dits et entendus par d'autres personnes appartiennent au monde extérieur. D'autres personnes peuvent les entendre, y réfléchir, en parler. Mes mots font partie de l'ameublement de leur monde.

Sartre dit alors, que les rapports entre les personnes sont inévitablement sujets à des tensions mutuelles puisque chaque individu, agissant envers les autres comme *Autre*, capable, à son tour, 'd'objectiver', vole aux autres leur liberté. C'est ce qui conduit Sartre dans *L'Etre et le Néant* à dire que tous les rapports entre hommes sont des formes de conflit métaphysique qui tendent, soit vers le sadisme, soit vers le masochisme. L'unité, l'harmonie, l'amour, *le Mit-*



*sein* est impossible; tous les rapports entre les hommes sont des rapports de conflit.

Dans la *Critique*, Sartre donne une nouvelle raison pour ce conflit, mais la conclusion est la même. Il soutient encore que chaque individu est en guerre avec tous les autres, et quoique des groupes sociaux soient formés, ces groupes sont maintenus seulement par le serment et la Terreur. Ils sont en danger constant de rechuter dans la condition individualiste de la série. Mais il y a une grande différence. Le conflit n'est plus envisagé par Sartre comme une partie *nécessaire* de la condition humaine. Le conflit est contingent, en tant qu'il est le résultat de la rareté. Enlevez la rareté, et vous éliminez les circonstances qui ont fait de l'homme un contre-homme. Et Sartre croit qu'une révolution socialiste se portant à la conquête de la rareté pourrait provoquer une telle transformation.

A l'occasion de la publication de la *Critique* de Sartre, mon ami Umberto Campagnolo, dans une brève critique de cet ouvrage, a dit, à juste titre, les mots suivants:

'On ne peut lier la liberté à la nécessité si cela signifie lier deux réalités structurellement différentes, telles le sujet et l'histoire. Sartre a conscience de la vanité de son effort, car son retour insistant sur l'obstacle ne peut signifier autre chose que son insatisfaction. Il demeure sur ce point antihégélien et antimarxiste en même temps. Il n'accepte ni la réduction de l'être à la pensée ni la réduction de la pensée à la matière. Il cherche une synthèse qui respecte le dualisme originel. *Credo quia absurdum*; au fond, le véritable inspirateur de Sartre reste Kierkegaard' <sup>5</sup>.

Campagnolo, dans ce paragraphe, cite un nom le nom de Kierkegaard, tiré du dix-neuvième siècle; je voudrais citer deux autres noms, deux noms britanniques, ceux de Thomas Hobbes et de David Hume, un nom tiré du dix-septième siècle, l'autre du dix-huitième. C'est paradoxal que Sartre, tout en essayant de 'moderniser' la pensée marxiste nous amène de plus en plus dans le passé.

Le langage de Sartre se rapproche beaucoup du langage de certains orateurs de la grande révolution française, notamment Robespierre et St. Just; certaines phrases, comme par exemple, 'La liberté, c'est la Terreur' ou 'La Terreur, c'est la fraternité' — sont des phrases qui appartiennent à la rhétorique de la guillotine.

Mais la pensée de Sartre a une provenance plus ancienne. Si sa métaphysique reste existentialiste et kierkegaardienne; ce qu'il appelle son anthropologie est basée sur une doctrine du contrat social



qui est précisément celle du philosophe anglais Thomas Hobbes, qui a publié son chef d'oeuvre *Léviathan* il y a plus de trois cents ans. D'après la théorie de Thomas Hobbes, l'égoïsme des hommes dans leur état naturel conduit à la guerre de tous contre tous, et cette guerre ne peut être arrêtée que par une sorte de pacte social, un serment pris par tous les hommes afin d'accorder un pouvoir illimité au souverain qui gouverne l'état.

Hobbes dit que 'l'homme est un loup pour l'homme'; et Sartre dans sa *Critique de la raison dialectique* dit exactement la même chose. Hobbes n'utilise pas le mot 'violence'; il parle de la 'guerre entre les hommes'; il ne parle pas de la 'Terreur', il parle de la 'Peur'; mais, comme Sartre, il emploie le mot 'souverain', et Hobbes nous présente son souverain comme 'l'homme qui maintient la paix parmi les hommes, à travers leur peur'. Les deux philosophes parlent également du 'serment', du 'pacte', de 'l'état'.

Cette nouvelle philosophie politique que Sartre nous a promise est évidemment beaucoup plus hobbiste que marxiste. Et si cette philosophie politique diffère de temps en temps de celle de Hobbes, elle se rapproche de celle d'un autre britannique, David Hume. Hobbes a peu parlé de la rareté; Hume en a beaucoup parlé. Dans un paragraphe célèbre de son chef-d'oeuvre, *A Treatise of Nature*, David Hume écrit:

'De tous les animaux dont ce monde est peuplé, il n'en est aucun envers lequel la nature semble, à première vue, avoir exercé plus de cruautés qu'envers l'homme, quand on voit les besoins et les désirs innombrables dont elle l'a accablé et les modestes ressources qu'elle offre pour remédier à cette situation...'

Non seulement sa nourriture, qui est nécessaire à sa subsistance, le pousse à la recherche, ou au moins requiert son travail pour être produite, mais encore il doit posséder des vêtements et une habitation, afin de se protéger contre les caprices du temps; pourtant, si l'on ne considère que lui, tout seul il n'est pourvu ni de bras, ni d'une force, ni des autres dons naturels qui pourraient plus ou moins répondre à tous ces besoins. C'est seulement grâce à la société qu'il peut surmonter ses déficiences' <sup>6</sup>.

David Hume dit que la rareté est à l'origine de la société parmi les hommes. Mais il rejette l'idée hobbiste d'un état de nature qui est une guerre continuelle de tous contre tous et l'idée d'une société civile basée sur un pacte social. Selon Hume l'état de nature est une fiction philosophique à peu près aussi réelle que la fiction poétique



de l'âge d'or. David Hume estime que la société humaine est aussi vieille que la race humaine. Dans un certain sens, Hume est beaucoup plus optimiste que Sartre; selon Hume l'expérience de la rareté ne déforme pas l'homme; au contraire, pour Hume, l'expérience de la rareté est une école de morale; grâce à la rareté, l'homme commence à comprendre l'idée de justice. Hume écrit:

'Supposons que la nature eut accordé au genre humain les commodités et les avantages extérieurs en si grande abondance que sans crainte pour l'avenir, sans soin ni industrie de notre part, chaque individu se trouvât amplement pourvu de tout ce que l'imagination la plus ardente et les appétits les plus démesurés pourraient lui faire désirer. Supposons que sa beauté soit au-dessus de tous les embellissements de l'art; que la douceur perpétuelle des saisons lui rende les vêtements inutiles; que les plantes lui fournissent les mets les plus délicieux; que les eaux limpides des fontaines lui présentent le breuvage le plus exquis; qu'il n'ait besoin d'aucune occupation laborieuse; qu'il ne connaisse ni l'agriculture, ni la navigation. La musique, la poésie et la contemplation seront son unique occupation; la conversation, la gaieté et l'amitié seront ses seuls amusements.

Il paraît évident que dans cet état heureux... jamais il ne serait question de cette vertu jalouse et défiante qu'on nomme justice' 7.

David Hume tire de cette réflexion la conclusion suivante: que dans le monde réel, la nature ne nous accorde qu'un petit nombre de biens; l'art, le travail et l'industrie nous fournissent les moyens de les augmenter. Dès lors, les idées de propriété deviennent nécessaires dans toute société civile; la justice en dérive son utilité pour le public, son mérite et l'obligation morale qu'elle impose.

Voilà le contraste entre Hume et Sartre: selon Hume, grâce à la rareté, l'homme, devient un être moral; selon Sartre, à cause de la rareté, l'homme devient un contre-homme. On peut se demander qui est le plus proche de Marx?

Mais si Marx n'accepte pas la pensée de David Hume, il est beaucoup plus opposé à la pensée de Thomas Hobbes, il est surtout opposé aux idées hobbistes que fait revivre Sartre: l'idée du pacte social, l'idée de la guerre de tous contre tous, et l'idée fondamentale de l'individualisme est tout ce que ça implique.

Donc, nous arrivons à la question qu'est-ce qui reste du marxisme dans la philosophie de Sartre? Il y a au moins une idée — une idée clef — tirée du marxisme: c'est l'idée de la révolution. Selon Marx, comme vous le savez, le processus de l'histoire, après avoir



conduit l'humanité de l'esclavage au régime féodal puis au capitalisme, la conduira au communisme; et Marx insiste que le passage d'une période à une autre ne se fait pas sans une révolution. Pour Sartre, cette idée de la 'révolution' est fort importante. Après les événements de '68 en France, il a publié un opuscule sous le titre '*Les Communistes ont peur de la révolution*', où il accuse en effet le Parti Communiste Français d'avoir trahi le mouvement révolutionnaire de ce printemps-là.

Cet opuscule de Sartre nous donne l'impression qu'il regarde la révolution non seulement comme un moyen vers une fin, mais plutôt comme une fin en soi. Et je crois que nous devons voir cette idée de 'révolution' chez Sartre comme le développement d'une autre idée qui était au coeur de ses premiers ouvrages, l'idée de la conversion. La conversion est le salut de l'individu par le moyen d'un changement intérieur radical. La révolution est le salut de la société toute entière au moyen d'un changement radical de tout le système. Donc l'idée marxiste de révolution chez Sartre est en quelque sorte une transformation de l'idée calviniste de conversion.

Dans ses mémoires, l'historique de sa jeunesse, *Les Mots*, Sartre confesse que la passion de la connaissance métaphysique s'empara de lui très jeune. Son père mourut alors que Sartre n'avait que deux ans, et Sartre était un enfant solitaire. Mais à partir du moment où il sut lire, les livres emplirent sa vie, et donnèrent à cet enfant sans compagnon un moyen de vivre par l'imagination. Et ce fut dans les livres que Sartre découvrit le monde. Mais bien sûr, comme lui-même le fait remarquer, le monde que l'on apprend à travers les livres est un monde ordonné, assimilé, systématique. Le fait d'avoir appris le monde de cette façon fut la cause, pense Sartre, de cet 'idéalisme' dont il mit trente ans à se départir. Nous pouvons voir là, clairement, le lien avec son premier roman, *La Nausée*, où le personnage principal aspire à un univers parfaitement harmonieux et aussi valable que l'univers de Descartes, de Leibniz ou de Newton. Le héros de Sartre est littéralement dégoûté de l'univers empirique et visible qui n'est que contingence. Ce n'est qu'à la fin du livre que le héros trouvera le chemin qui lui permettra de se réconcilier avec le monde tel qu'il est. Le héros trouve son salut dans la création artistique.

Beaucoup de ce que Sartre nous révèle sur lui-même dans ses mémoires est exprimé dans un langage tiré de la religion. Tout ce qu'il nous raconte de sa désaffection pour ses semblables, pour la vie



et pour le monde visible ressemble à la première partie de la biographie d'un homme qui trouverait ensuite son accomplissement dans la contemplation du monde invisible.

Le premier existentialiste, Kierkegaard, était un chrétien passionné et le but de son existentialisme était de suggérer que l'on ne pouvait jamais faire dériver la preuve de l'enseignement chrétien d'arguments rationnels sur la création, mais que dans son angoisse solitaire le pécheur séparé de Dieu en faisait quelquefois l'expérience. Sartre est un athée qui comprend la soif de Dieu qu'éprouvent les hommes, et il leur enseigne qu'ils doivent apprendre à vivre sans jamais la satisfaire.

J'ai toujours trouvé une certaine signification au fait que Sartre soit le cousin du grand missionnaire alsacien Albert Schweitzer. En effet, c'est un peu la même importance de l'idée du salut, le même sentiment intense du devoir social, le même mépris pour les biens matériels, la même droiture brutale, honnête, — que l'on trouve chez Sartre. Je pense que Sartre peut être appelé puritain à cause de cette austérité, de ce grand sérieux moral, et parce que son oeuvre a toujours été marquée par un profond dégoût pour l'homme réel, pour la race humaine comme elle est.

S'il est humaniste, son humanisme proclame la mort de Dieu plutôt que la naissance de l'homme. Même en tant qu'athée, Sartre se rapproche beaucoup de Thomas Hobbes. Mais si je répète que Sartre est hobbiste, il faut bien noter une différence profonde entre les deux philosophes. Hobbes était une espèce de pacifiste. Il a toujours préféré le despotisme à la guerre. David Hume aussi, d'un point de vue plus conservateur, s'est rigoureusement opposé à la violence.

Mais Sartre nous donne l'impression qu'il aime la violence. Lorsqu'il demande la révolution, c'est une révolution violente qu'il exige. Il y a quelques années, Sartre a écrit une préface pour ce livre remarquable de Franz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre*. Dans son texte, Fanon prend la défense de la violence sous la forme de lutte armée de colonisés contre le régime colonial. Sartre, dans sa préface, pousse cet argument à l'outrance en introduisant un élément sadique qui est entièrement absent du texte de Fanon. Sartre écrit:

'Le colonisé se guérit de la névrose coloniale en chassant le colon par les armes. Quand sa rage éclate, il retrouve sa transparence perdue, il se connaît dans la mesure où il se fait... Il faut rester terrifié ou devenir terrible... Quand les paysans touchent les fusils,



les vieux mythes pâlisent, les interdits sont un à un renversés: l'arme d'un combattant, c'est son humanité. Car, en le premier temps de la révolte, il faut tuer; abattre un Européen, c'est faire d'une pierre deux coups, supprimer en même temps un oppresseur et un opprimé; restent un homme mort et un homme libre<sup>8</sup>.

Vers la fin de sa préface, Sartre ajoute:

'La France, autrefois, c'était un nom de pays; prenons garde que ce ne soit aujourd'hui le nom d'une névrose'.

'Guérirons-nous? Oui. La violence, comme la lance d'Achille, peut cicatriser les blessures qu'elle a faites'<sup>9</sup>.

Deux questions se posent. Est-ce vrai que la violence cicatrise les blessures qu'elle a faites? Je pense que non. Toute l'expérience de l'histoire nous démontre le contraire. Deuxièmement, est-ce que Marx a cru que la violence cicatrise les blessures qu'elle a faites? De nouveau, je pense que non. Si j'ai bien compris la doctrine de Marx, il a pensé que les blessures resteraient, et que nous devons accepter cette réalité dure et triste comme inévitable.

Sartre, en essayant de défendre Fanon contre ses critiques, nous dit que nous ne devons pas croire, à propos de Fanon, 'qu'un sang trop vif lui ait donné pour la violence je ne sais quel goût singulier'. En effet, aucun lecteur de Fanon ne serait tenté de lui attribuer ce goût. Pour Fanon, comme pour Marx, la violence est nécessité et non passion, délire, vertige... c'est au sujet de Sartre lui-même que le lecteur est tenté de soupçonner un goût singulier pour la violence.

Dans une interview publiée dans un journal il y a quelques années, Sartre a dit 'Pour moi, le problème essentiel est de rejeter la théorie d'après laquelle la gauche ne devrait pas répondre à la violence par la violence'. Il est intéressant qu'il ait présenté cela comme 'le problème *essentiel*'. Je ne crois pas qu'on peut accepter cette analyse comme vraiment marxiste. L'idée de la révolution est marxiste, bien sûr; ce qui est mis en question ici c'est la perspective sartrienne de la révolution. Quant à moi, je crois qu'en donnant à la violence un caractère essentiel, un caractère fondamental, dans le concept marxiste de révolution, Sartre a déformé ce concept d'une façon subtile, afin de le rendre plus sartrien.

De nouveau, il est évident que la fusion du marxisme et de l'existentialisme comportera la reddition par les marxistes et non par les existentialistes d'une partie de leur théorie. Mais enfin il me semble que toute cette fusion que nous offre Sartre est une déception. Sa philosophie politique reste existentialiste, très fidèle aux idées mo-



rales et métaphysiques de ses premiers ouvrages. Je ne sais pas si le marxisme et l'existentialisme ne se prêtent à aucune espèce de fusion; mais je suis persuadé que la tentative de Sartre est en fin de compte une faillite.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Critique*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *Huis Clos* (Appleton Century, N. Y., 1962), pp. 87-88.

<sup>4</sup> *Critique*, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Comprendre*, Venise, No. 23-24, pp. 205-205.

<sup>6</sup> *Treatise III*, 2, ii.

<sup>7</sup> *Oeuvres Philosophiques* (Amsterdam, 1755), Vol. 5, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Paris, 1961), p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 26.







*Leszek Kolakowski*

## WHY AN IDEOLOGY IS ALWAYS RIGHT

In this paper I shall leave aside the various proposals about how the word 'ideology' should be employed. Rather, I shall try to pick up its meaning as it looms up from everyday use and from journalistic (rather than sociological) habits and ask whether this use identifies a separate phenomenon. It is easily noted that in everyday speech the meaning of the word 'ideology' is restricted when compared to what most of sociological tradition, starting with Marx, would recommend. In common usage we do not normally apply the word to religious beliefs: we do not speak of, for example, 'baptist ideology', and if 'Islamic ideology' seems to us admissible this is because we think of it as a peculiar political rather than religious entity. Nor does the word sound appropriate when it refers to particular doctrines or utopias having no significant social appeal. Philosophical creeds, when limited to specialists', circles are not typically being spoken of as 'ideologies' except when we wish to stress our disparaging opinion; to say 'positivism is an ideology' amounts to suggestions that, far from matching up to its scientific claims, positivist philosophy involves arbitrary value judgments.

The custom of ordinary language increasingly tends to reserve the word to systems of ideas displaying the following characteristics:

*a)* they express and articulate goals and principles of mass movements/political organisms or of movements aspiring to mass following;

*b)* they provide these movements or organisations with justifications for their claims to power — already kept or longed for; more often than not the target is power which will be shared with no one else;



c) they assert and supply all the dynamic, aggressive and violent aspects of these movements or organisations (including states) with doctrinal forms;

d) they tend, with changing degrees of consistency, to achieve a complete or 'global' character. In other words, they purport to offer solutions not only to particular social issues or particular grievances, but to answer all the important questions of human life, including religious or metaphysical ones, i.e. they purport to be allembicing *Weltanschauungen*.

Briefly, what common usage tends to imply most frequently is that the social function of 'ideologies' is to furnish an existing power system (or aspirations to power) a legitimacy which is based on the possession of absolute and all-encompassing truth.

As such, the typical examples of ideologies so conceived are the doctrinal aspects of such movements as communism (in all its variants), nazism, fascism, panarabism, zionism, various aggressive nationalist or racial activities, as well as imperial or imperialist ideas whether or not they are based on an appeal to ethnic bonds. Conversely, the noun seems less fitting when associated with adjectives like 'liberal', 'pacifist' and 'conservative'.

Of course the question is not which meaning – broader or restricted – is more proper; any meaning can be suitable if it is reasonably well clarified. Rather the point is to ask whether the narrow meaning grasps a phenomenon which deserves separate attention not only in to-day's political terms, but also in the taxonomy of ideas. And if it does, it is proper to ask how far we can justify the frequent analogies with religious movements and ideas. This distinction seems to me of importance, and in my subsequent remarks I will try to explain why the popular opinion which either equates ideology with religion or sees the former as 'substitute' for, or a 'modern version' of the latter might be true only in a strongly qualified sense. However I focus my attention only on one side of this distinction, viz. on the 'epistemological' aspect of ideology. While it is plausible to argue that ideologies produce some cognitive rules of their own or some manners of perception and that these rules to a certain extent are similar to those typical of religious life, nevertheless they are distinct in other aspects. Thus I will stress this distinction without denying the obvious fact that various religious movements have played or do play an eminently political function, and



that there are many hybrid forms which mix up traditional religious tenets with aggressive political aspirations.

What is common to both ideological and religious belief systems is that they both purport to impose an *a priori* meaning on all aspects of human life and on all the contingent events, and that they are both built in such a way that no imaginable, let alone real, facts could refute the established doctrine. I refer here to the classic Popperian frame of interpretation. Religious and ideological doctrines are both immune to empirical falsifications and they are able to absorb all the facts while surviving intact. If I strongly believe in the eye of Providence watching over all the details of my life, I do not need to fear that any event could throw doubt on the omnipresence of the divine wisdom. Whatever happens to me will fit into the framework: if fate favours me, it displays God's benevolence and it is to be seen as a reward, an encouragement or an act of grace. If it turns against my aspirations and frustrates my hopes, the same Providence is certainly at work: all the adversities have to be explained as punishment or warning; human life being unavoidably ambiguous there is no moment in my life when I would not deserve to be both rewarded and chastised, when both Mercy and Justice would not be justly applied to me. Thus it is certain in advance that whatever happens happens rightly and confirms God's infallible wisdom, the details of which in any case escape my limited understanding.

It seems at first glance that ideologies enjoy the same privilege of immunity to facts and the same proficiency in absorbing them, since the frame of meaning they give to human destiny is as unfalsifiable as the meaningful order of the world in the believer's perception. If I decide that the whole of history consists of acts of class struggle and that all human aspirations and actions are to be explained in terms of this struggle, then there is no way in which this principle could be conceivably refuted. Since everything in the empirical world is connected in one way or the other, once we state that class interests comprise all the aspects of social life, then there is no need to stretch excessively one's imagination to find confirmation of the Marxist philosophy of history in every possible event. Once a certain society is defined as 'capitalist' and thereby *ex defintone* ruled by the bourgeoisie, no conceivable actions of the government can fail to validate this verdict. If for any reason the life of the country is deteriorating in some aspects, the doctrine is borne out in the knowledge that the exploiters are oppressing the toiling masses in order to



seek profit; if, on the contrary, everything is clearly improving, and workers' living standards increase, the doctrine's truth is as well proven: the exploiters, terrified by the prospects of revolution, try to bribe the toiling masses in order to put them to sleep. If the government is liberal in sexual matters and tolerant to pornography, it clearly wants to divert the workers' attention from burning social issues and to channel the interests of masses into a harmless direction; if, on the contrary, it is more or less puritanical and curbs pornography, it oppresses the movement toward liberation and prevents people from wasting energy which might otherwise be used to generate profit. Once you are classified as the devil, you cannot behave in any way which would fail to corroborate this assessment. Needless to say, once you decide that world history is defined by the struggle between Jews and Aryans, your interpretation will be as infallibly verified by all the facts as is the theory stating that whatever people do is 'ultimately' reducible to class interest, or that stating that all the events, both natural and man-made, reveal the divine guidance of the Universe. The intellectual attraction of an ideology with universalistic pretensions is precisely that it is so easy. Once you learn it, which you can always do in no time and with no effort, everything is given sense and you are the happy owner of a key which unlocks all the secrets of the world.

This analogy, though, provides only half the story. Religious beliefs do not normally need to present themselves as rational hypotheses carrying explanatory value for empirical facts in the same sense as is required for scientific hypotheses. To be sure, attempts to rationalize religious beliefs and to convert faith into a sort of knowledge are not exceptional in the history of theology. Yet in the dominant form of religious self-understanding there is no demand for such a legitimacy. The act of belonging to a community which identifies itself by the primordial revelation normally holds priority over the intellectual enlightenment which most religious claim to offer. The faith is interpreted as, and effectively is a condition of a world view within which empirical facts appear as that many manifestations of the hidden spiritual meaning; in other words, the principle *credo ut intelligam* is usually included in the way in which the believers see their own act of believing. This is not the case with ideologies. These live on bad faith in that they pretend to offer an explanation of the world in the very acts of bigotry and fanaticism. They want the facts to confirm them in the same way that scientific hypotheses are con-



firmed, being thereby compelled to distort and conceal unfavourable facts. They are supposed to possess absolute truth and to be testable at the same time. While religions have often had recourse to lying, this is not an inherent part of their cognitive status, since their content is essentially unverifiable; ideologies, on the other hand, carry a built-in necessity of lying and cannot survive otherwise. Unlike religions, ideologies are not beyond science, they are positively anti-scientific.

Thus the prowess of each to absorb all the possible facts is different. Ideologies are not only bound to devise techniques of lying, but when the facts cannot be concealed they also need a special psychological technique which prevents believers from seeing these facts, or which shapes a peculiar form of double consciousness within which facts may be not only dismissed as irrelevant but also actually denied.

A friend of mine told me the story of his daughter, then 3 or 4 years old, racing with another girl in a park. The girl who ran slower, always shouted loudly from her position of defeat 'I run faster, I run faster!' After a while the girl who was ahead burst into tears and rushed to her mother crying 'I do not want her to run faster than me!'. This is a simple example of how the human mind can be blinded to the most obvious facts when subject to noisy propaganda – even to the person's own disfavour. In short, wishful thinking is not the only mechanism of cognitive distortion. However, ideologies must have at their disposal a slightly more complicated mechanism which involves a specific concept of truth, and its task is to confuse or even to abolish the distinction between factual statements and assertions about the 'essence' of things.

To be sure, an analogy with religious cognition might again be suggested at this point, yet once more it turns out to be misleading. In religious cognition the descriptive and normative contents are not separated, rather they are perceived in one single act of belief. And, since God's authority confers validity to both, there is no reason why they should be valid in two different senses, as is the case with 'secular' knowledge. Yet in ideologies the distinction between the normative and factual utterances is blurred in such a fashion that ostensibly descriptive judgments disguise normative rules which the believers are supposed to accept in their descriptive meaning.

Examples of how this confusion operates can be taken from many well known sources. Communist ideology, however, or rather



the ideology of the communist state, is more suitable than any other, since it has achieved an unsurpassed degree of codification and displays an impressive consistency in its self-contradictory character.

Let us take a most unsophisticated example. When a priest says: 'a Christian does not steal', he is simply saying that a Christian ought not to steal and that whoever steals is not a good Christian. In other words, he is offering a normative definition of a respectable Christian. Meanwhile, when we read in a Soviet catechism that 'a Soviet man does not steal', the meaning of this saying is much richer. It might seem a common precept grammatically expressed, as is often the case, in the indicative mood. Yet it is not supposed to be simply precept. It tells us something about the essence of the Soviet man as he 'really' is, as well as about real people who actually embody this essence. A believer is expected to take for granted not only that nonstealing is part of the 'essence' of Soviet man as normatively defined, but also that Soviet people do not actually steal. The task of education consists in moulding human minds in such a way that people are prevented from seeing what they do see, i.e. universal stealing as an inherent and necessary element of everyday life. That they are really ready to admit that the theft, if it appears at all, is an insignificant marginal phenomenon seems hardly worth mentioning. Thus the virtue of ideology is not only that it produces verbal hybrids mixing up facts, commandments and assertions about the 'essence', but also that it makes it possible to infer facts from commandments, to deduce what is from what ought to be and that, if efficient, it produces people capable of performing precisely the miraculous transubstantiation involved in seeing facts as prescribed by norms.

Certainly we have now left behind the period when this ideology worked efficiently, and when people actually acquired this talent of believing a doctrine which each day was unmistakably and glaringly disproved in all its details by all the common facts of daily life. That ideology was able to achieve this perfection – even for a certain historical period – gives testimony to its independent power in social life.

Ilya Erenburg's 'The Thaw' depicts a discussion meeting where people criticise a certain Soviet novel. One of the characters objects to the untruth of an extra-marital love story in the novel, and seems to believe sincerely that the book is false in the sense of portraying un-Soviet conduct (a Soviet man does not have extra-marital affairs)



until, a moment later, after the meeting, he suddenly realizes that he himself is exactly in the same situation in his real life. This is precisely the moment of 'thaw', the melting of the ideology. Once people become aware that the ideology they have been professing is contrary to obvious facts, it ceases to be an ideology. Rather, it is converted into simply a lie. While still repeated, taught and obeyed under coercion, nevertheless an ideology which is perceived and known as mendacious has lost its natural ability to produce double consciousness.

Leninist-Stalinist Marxism expressly justified, at least to a certain extent, the curious epistemology of this apparently impossible phenomenon – sincere mendaciousness. Lukács, among others, was its codifier. The relevant part of his theory states that truth can be seen only from the particular standpoint of the progressive class, viz. the proletariat, that the proletariat's superior wisdom is stored in the communist party (and not, of course, in what any empirical proletariat thinks or believes) and that this wisdom emerges in acts of practical commitment rather than in 'contemplative' investigation. Thus what produces the truth is the political action of the communist party. In other words, by definition, the party is never wrong, since it is the only mechanism generating the criteria of cognitive validity. Facts are important when confronted with the 'totality' as perceived from this privileged standpoint (or rather praxis-point). Lukács even repeated in this connection, at least once, the Fichtean saying 'the worse to the facts', and he meant it.

This theory of knowledge in which the all-engulfing 'praxis' replaces and ousts all intellectual (and moral) criteria was applied in a somewhat less sophisticated way in communist political consciousness. It became a psychological device which made it possible to obscure or even to abrogate the distinction between what is politically expedient to say and what is true in the ordinary sense. This distinction is admitted as a matter of course in political activities, and indeed in everyday life, and to cancel it appears quite an achievement. Yet communist ideology seems to have produced this result fairly efficiently, albeit only for a certain period. It turned out that strongly committed people were able to believe in lies they themselves had created or helped to create. It was possible that some political leaders fabricated politically useful dogmas, obviously contrary to their experience, and that they somehow believed them to be true.



It is no doubt a long way from the Marxian concept of ideology to the manner in which progressive and scientific ideology actually worked in the communist states. Long as it might have been, such a route is not very twisted however, and it can be retraced. In Marx's vocabulary, 'ideology' or false consciousness was defined not by its falsity in the ordinary sense but by the fact that the believers were incapable of realizing the fact that their thinking was determined by social, rather than logical forces. In other words, both the producers and the consumers of ideological commodities fell prey to a delusion concerning the real motivations and causes of their beliefs. They imagined themselves as rational beings guided by intellectual criteria in accepting or rejecting various ingredients of their worldview, and meanwhile they unconsciously followed the vested interests of the class with which they identified themselves. Liberation from ideological self-mystification consists, correspondingly, not in restoring the full vigour of intellectual criteria independent of social values – as such criteria are themselves figments of false consciousness – but in realizing the real motive forces behind one's own thinking. However this cannot be done within the consciousness of privileged classes since such consciousness is inevitably compelled to disguise itself from itself: people cannot produce universal, religious, metaphysical, social or scientific ideas and at the same time be well aware of the fact that these ideas are just devices to perpetuate their privileges. Having no privileges to defend, the proletariat can not only get rid of all these self-deceiving instruments, but indeed it cannot successfully defend its own particular interest without having actually shed them off. In other words, Lukács did not need to tamper excessively with Marx's legacy to obtain his miraculous result: the truth of Marxism is not to be measured by 'external' criteria as laid down by scientific philosophy but by the fact that this doctrine expresses the movement of the proletariat, the latter being able, alone, to grasp the 'totality' of the society (this ability in its turn being established on the basis of marxist analysis). That the proletariat is possessor of truth *de iure naturali* we learn from marxist theory, and that marxist theory is true we know from the fact that it embodies the class consciousness of the proletariat. This admirable reasoning is applicable only if we add that the truth reveals itself not from the purely theoretical standpoint, but also within political 'praxis', which amounts to saying that political commitment generates truth. Since the consciousness of the proletariat, as we



otherwise know from the Leninist doctrine, achieves its genuine shape only in the party ideology, the communist party reaches the enviable position of being *par excellence* the bearer of truth.

This, needless to say, is not the way in which politicians or simple believers express their ideological self-assurance; this is rather the implicit epistemological background to their almost spontaneous manner of mental behaviour. In no other ideology, to my knowledge, has this ingenious contrivance been made so explicit and its rules set up with so much clarity by theorists as is the case of communist doctrine. The resultant inability to distinguish the truth in common sense from political expediency, and the ability to discard all empirical facts as irrelevant to one's own cognitive superiority are both perfectly validated within this self-supporting ideology.

It should be added nonetheless that I have tried to describe the ideology in its perfect schizophrenic form as achieved within the Stalinist world. Since then we have observed an increasing deterioration of the ideological efficiency of communism. The basic material component might have remained untouched, as might have the aspirations to administer people's world perception. These aspirations cannot be satisfied, however, at least not in those European countries which are under communist power. However indispensable as a principle of legitimacy, the ideology is almost universally perceived as being simply mendacious; moreover the long habit of completely discarding empirical evidence and of assuming that anything, no matter how absurd, can be believed by ideologically trained people, has made the ideology extremely clumsy and incapable of coping with the new situation. Meanwhile the ideology which is simply imposed by coercion and which is clearly seen as a mere lie by the consumers has lost the cognitive status of ideology. In this qualified sense we may speak of the 'end of ideology' in the communist world.



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Arne Naess

## IDEOLOGY AND RATIONALITY

### I. NEUTRAL AND NEGATIVE DEFINITIONS OF IDEOLOGY

Definitions of the term 'ideology' may be grouped in two main classes, those which imply a negative evaluation, such as 'there is something rotten about any and every ideology', and those which are roughly neutral. The first class, which treats 'ideology' as a dyslogism, may be further subdivided into two subclasses: definitions which stress illusion, preconception, fanaticism, mistakes or narrowness, but *not* insincerity, and those which *do* refer to insincerity, bad faith, rationalizations in a Freudian sense, distortion, concealed interests or naked power orientations. Most of the couple of hundred definitions provided in a previous work<sup>1</sup> conform to such a classification into neutral or negative definitions.

However, rather than starting out with a dyslogistic normative definition of the terms 'ideology' and 'ideological', I define 'political ideology' in a roughly neutral way, as for instance has been done by F. Gross: 'A political ideology is a system of political, economic, and social values and ideas from which objectives are derived. These objectives form the nucleus of a political program'<sup>2</sup>.

Perhaps the term 'system' in this definition might be dropped in favour of 'aggregate' or 'conglomeration', since 'system' suggests a rigid rather than a loose connection between parts of the ideology.

Political ideologies are predominantly rational and objective in various senses. Intersubjectively and interculturably testable, *sachlich*, their ideas may be true or false, valid or invalid. In principle, a scientific theory may be a mass of mistakes, as in the case of modern cosmology, but it is nevertheless objective. The same applies to



testable ideas in general. However, ideologies are only *predominantly* rational: there are degrees and there are exceptions<sup>3</sup>. But the more or less controversial exceptions should not colour the metatheory of political ideologies. As metatheorists, conducting *descriptive research on political ideologies*, we influence political life in different directions according to how we speak and write about political ideologies. This present paper is thus partly motivated by a desire to contribute to the partial rehabilitation of political ideologies from derogatory pronouncements made by political scientists and other groups of 'intellectuals'.

## II. EMPIRICAL TESTS OF RATIONALITY

The rationalist and objectivist thesis has an empirical foundation. Widely known material in support of the thesis was collected by UNESCO in 1948-1949, when – with the superb collaboration of Stein Rokkan – I led its project on the ideological controversies between East and West concerning democracy. I shall have to describe the project in order to illustrate what might be called successive approximations to rationality through debate.

UNESCO invited about 400 political scientists and well known defenders of political creeds to describe their views on ideological and controversial issues at the beginning of the Cold War. A long and complicated questionnaire was duly answered, sometimes in the form of carefully written articles. Excerpts from 33 answers<sup>4</sup>, together with an analytical survey, were subsequently published. The resulting book was immediately sold out and never reissued.

I shall now convey a crucial lesson of the project. Each answer was mimeographed and sent to the other participants. Critical and polemical sections were commented upon, and in some cases we were able to organize a series of dialogues between fierce ideological opponents. The contact sponsored by UNESCO led to successive clarifications of disagreements and to the elimination of misunderstandings and unnecessary rhetoric. While the dialogue sharpened some of the disagreement, and while contrasts became more sharply defined, nevertheless the whole process served to increase the level of rationality and objectivity. When one unambiguously stated opinion contradicts another, both cannot be true. But mistakes do not



automatically reduce rationality. Otherwise science would have to be classed as irrational.

Accusations of *Unsachlichkeit*, of motivational distortion and of all the other features which push political ideologies into cognitive disrepute were weakened or tended to disappear. On the whole, the sharp disagreement concerned *testable hypotheses*. This holds true if we do not suggest more severe requirements of testability than are adopted by sociology, history or cosmology.

Whereas much of the UNESCO material is published in some form, my second batch of empirical material is largely unpublished, or only accessible for those who read Scandinavian languages. In short, it is the formulation of, and the debate concerning what has been called 'green political ideology'. It is not a very definite group of ideas, rather it is a family of related and very broad views which fit exceptionally well Gross's definition of ideology.

### III. DEEP VALUE PRIORITIES IN IDEOLOGY

In political ideologies, political objectives and programs are derived both from deep-seated value priorities and from hypotheses about the world. For instance, a decrease or freezing in the material standard of living in the rich industrial countries is proposed as an expression of world solidarity, not just for reasons of resources or in order to avoid North-South confrontations, or because the recent increase in the material standard of living does not seem to have increased the well-being of the average man. This proposal is *in part* motivated by adherence to 'universal solidarity' as a deep value priority, and to its realization as a hypothesis through politics.

A second example can also be drawn from green ideologies: concepts relating to an increase in the quality of life are advocated on fairly philosophical grounds in order to supersede those related to the standard of living. From this new value priority, new objectives are derived which are in contrast to traditional social-democratic views. Indeed, the social democratic government in Norway has been provoked to put forth a political program for 1978-1981 which takes notice of the value debate. Eight main goals of its policy are formulated, and its concrete political proposals are worked out as a consequence of the value priorities acting as normative guidelines.



A third example concerns how the higher regard for the needs of future generations – resources, clean oceans, diversity of cultures and ecosystems – clashes with prevalent priorities. The justification for this new approach requires depth of argument, and touches the levels of philosophy.

Of course there are many other examples from many parts of the world which show the vigour of political ideologies operating on a fairly high level of rationality combined with deep value orientation. 'Deep' in this context refers to chains of argument: 'Why A? Because B. Why B? Because C. Why C? Because D ...', and so on. The further such chains extend, the 'deeper' are the questions and the answers.

A major question remains concerning the intersubjective and intercultural testability of value priorities. How can a *proposal* for increased global solidarity be tested for goodness or validity? This depends upon the arguments for the proposal. It is largely an empirical question as to which arguments actually are used by those who defend an ideology, and it turns out, on the whole, that the weight and relevance of the arguments are testable. In the present case, for instance, while it may be difficult to test some of the arguments concerning a decrease in North-South confrontations, it is nevertheless not impossible. The argument that overconsumption in one part of the world in the face of hunger in other parts of the world contradicts the ethics which most of the consumers wish to practice, is itself testable. This argument does not proclaim the validity of an ethic, but the ideology is, after all, a political one, and not a complete system comprising ethics. The argument is testable as a hypothesis about wishes and consumers.

Value-oriented arguments against Norway joining EEC were based upon highly testable prediction, as were the arguments for EEC entry. Both sets of predictions, in the form they were stated in the mass media, have now been tested and, on the whole, unconfirmed. Some of the more carefully worded predictions remain still either untested or confirmed. In any case, it is not warranted to complain about an essential lack of testability in such value-oriented arguments.

In short, a proposal is good in relation to its value statement, and the value statement is tested by asking what the value is supposed to be valuable for. There are hierarchies of aims and goals, and therefore of rules, of norms and of values. In ideologies, as in scientific



research, rules and values have no definite ultimate foundation. Or if they do have, such as with the basic rules of inference in a system of logic, there are limits to testability. But without trying to take up the philosophical problems encountered here, I contend that such a limitation does not justify a denial of rationality.

But, as already indicated, ideologies do differ in this regard. A distortion of problems may take place for instance, as is ably argued by Raymond Aron: "Sometimes the (ideological) debates truly reflect the problems which a nation must seek to solve, sometimes they distort or transform them in order to fit them into would-be universal patterns" <sup>5</sup>. The *intercultural* testability is realized in so far as the special conditions within one nation or culture can be described in a way which is roughly comprehensible to outsiders. In other words, there is no difference in principle which makes 'foreign' political ideologies inaccessible to research on ideology.

#### IV. THE IRRATIONALITY OF OUR OPPONENTS' IDEOLOGY

There are certain misunderstandings which contribute to the view that political ideologies are either irrational or function irrationally.

a) Violent clashes of will and crude confrontations are taken as proof of the irrationality of the sets of ideas of the combatants. Certainly, if the will to compromise is lost, political confrontation is likely to follow, but this may be taken into account in a rational fashion within the ideologies: 'If they do not accept our proposal, we shall win'. Thus, the fight itself is not part of the ideology.

b) We attribute blindness, partisanship and closed-mindedness to our ideological opponents, and since we do not consider ourselves as ideologists but as being politically open-minded and reasonable, accusations are then turned upon ideology in general.

c) We occasionally tend to identify the ideology of our opponent with his slogans and catchwords, or with the least defensible of its versions, whereas we select carefully what we are willing to identify as the views of our own group or party.

d) The closed-mindedness of our opponent is conceived as being typical of his ideology. But this may be largely due to the fact that he has already heard most of what we tell him. He has already decided that our view is untenable, and therefore he is impatient and



will not listen. The simple explanation of his stubbornness may be unconvincing to us, because we feel sure that *if* he really listened carefully he would change his opinions – or else we have to consider him stupid or dishonest.

e) The alleged fanaticism of our opponent or his stand has a similar genesis. But here a set of rhetorical rules of the political game are relevant. Suppose, for instance, that a policy is *defended* by a dozen of pro-arguments, and by a dozen of arguments against counterarguments (i.e. 'cc-arguments') then the rhetorical game is such that no admission of the slightest relevance or weight of a main counterargument, or a ccc-argument, is acknowledged without immediately proclaiming the superior relevance or weight of a corresponding cc-argument or cccc-argument. So, within the framework of this game, no concessions are given. Given a negative attitude towards the opponent or his stand, the rules of the game are falsely attributed to close-mindedness and/or fanatical beliefs. The negative conclusions are subsequently transformed into derogatory utterances about ideologies.

f) The overwhelming complexity of political considerations makes it necessary for a politician to rely heavily upon intuitions in forming a policy. But the rules of the game demand that, if pressed, he should be able to furnish arguments. It seems that, lacking real arguments, he might resort to anything, however irrelevant or trivial. But the way in which the 'answer' is provided suggests that the policy defended is largely independent of the support of those so-called arguments.

## V. INGROUPS AND OUTGROUPS

An exact comparison of expressed doctrines requires distinctions in terms of ingroups and outgroups. There is an ingroup version made by the adherents of doctrine A describing itself and the doctrine B, and an outgroup version of doctrine A described by the adherents of B. An important job of the researcher is to explore the possibilities of reducing these differences in order to arrive at one single version of each doctrine. This job is essentially the same whether one is comparing trends or schools in social or natural science.



But what if the reduction to one version is impossible without changing the very opinions of the adherents? What if the mutual image, (e.g. the communist image of anticommunism and vice versa) is an essential part of the ideologies?

The conclusion is *not* that there is a kind of basic irrationality at hand, or that there are irreducible perspectives when structuring the world. The conclusion is rather that the argument of one group does not convince the other group. This was a main conclusion of the UNESCO confrontation of the East-West ideological controversies on democracy. Some opinions are changed through dialogue and added information, but in most cases this is not adequate to the task of changing the essential parts of an ideology.

An important ingredient in descriptions of outgroup opinions is the hypothesis that the outgroup says one thing, but means another. The outgroup says that it favours protecting small business against big business, but it really does not mean this. The outgroup answers that it does *really* mean it, and that the ingroup (A), that is its (B's) outgroup, only accuses B of duplicity in order to discredit it. Group A really understands that group B sincerely means to protect small business.

The situation resembles that of the experimental theory of learning in psychology. The different schools, that of E. C. Tolman with Berkeley as a center, and C. L. Hull presiding at Yale, engaged in a debate where one class of disagreements touched the very opinions of the contestants. Tolmanic views about what Hullian theory of learning actually *asserted* differed consistently and permanently from the ingroup view, and vice versa. The disagreements were never resolved. And, while some might say that this shows the irrational character of theories of learning, it should be noted that essentially the same situation holds in debates about the so-called Copenhagen Interpretation in quantum physics.

Clearly any debate carried through in all seriousness may end without any major concessions from either party. But this in itself does not imply irrationality, bad faith or different basic perspectives of the world. There may indeed be honest disagreement, for instance as to the *priority* of protective measures for small business under various circumstances.

The goals or values of a political program are always in conflict with one other, in the sense that maximum satisfaction of one implies less than maximum realization of another.



The maximum *persuasive* power of representation requires the presentation of a program to slur over the mutual conflict of goals and values. The maximum *convincing* power of representation requires difficult, complicated and bulky presentations, unsuitable for mass communication. In practice, one has to meet the politicians in more or less 'closed' sessions to get hold of some of the most satisfactory formulations from the standpoint of descriptive research on ideology. (In this paper I have that kind of research constantly in mind.)

I say 'some of the most satisfactory formulations' because versions which are cognitively less satisfactory, but which are nevertheless more effective are important to the understanding of how an ideology actually functions and also of how the politicians wish that it should function. They do not usually regret the effects of certain misunderstandings due to vagueness, ambiguity or the concealment of conflicts between goals.

## VI. THE END-OF-IDEOLOGY MOVEMENT, IDEOLOGIEKRITIK AND HERMENEUTICS

The reaction against very vague and very general political convictions is sometimes carried too far, as can be seen in the end-of-ideology movement. Raymond Aron, in his justly famous work *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, fought the 'myth of the left' and 'the myth of the revolution', but he did not stress the need for deep, value-oriented ideologies that can cope with deep political, national and global problems. And after his scathing criticisms, what did he then put forth as valid political goals for France?: 'To organize a genuine community between Frenchman and Moslems in North Africa, to unite the nations of Western Europe, so that they are less dependent on American power, to cure the technological backwardness of our economy – such tasks as these might well arouse a clear-sighted and practical enthusiasm' <sup>6</sup>. Today, a political ideology worthy of enthusiasm would have to dig much deeper.

It is an unfortunate misconception that the degree of fanaticism must be in proportion to 'deepness'. But an awareness of the immense distance between ultimate premises and concrete proposals for action in a definite political situation is a protection against



fanaticism. And, in the long term, this awareness is not something that cannot be fostered everywhere.

The *Ideologiekritik* movement in Germany has contributed to the interest in close relations between political views on the one hand, and vested interests, social position, economic system or, more generally, means of production on the other. It has stressed bad faith, distorted communication and other phenomena referred to in negative definitions of ideology. Unfortunately, *Ideologiekritik* has rarely been carried out in research programmes with adequate methodological tools.

The same holds good of hermeneutical and holistic interpretations of ideology, which stress basic differences in the ways of understanding the world and subsequent basic, more or less insuperable differences in political language and views. Here an overreaction against logical positivist views seems to have reduced the interest in plain descriptive comparisons of existing ideological trends.

Doctrines which state that political ideologies are irrational promote irrationality in politics. They tend to have a slightly self-verifying character. In Scandinavia the political philosophy of *Ideologiekritik*, and especially the inclination to look upon social-democratic ideology as a mere reflection of means of production or naked power constellations has made it difficult for young people to take their opponents seriously, and thus led them to favour confrontations rather than serious debate. There can be no sincere debate when the opponent's way of understanding the issues is considered to be determined by his social position.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the views defended in this paper are consistent with a serious concern about the irrational features of present-day political ideologies. Nor do these views imply an overestimation of the causal weight of ideological considerations in shaping the world. The direction of development of the rich industrial societies may be largely independent of what politicians or others are thinking and saying. To a large extent political actions may be considered as minor adjustments to trends which are out of control. Further, in spite of the vastness of governmental organizations, their power over technological trends may be rather modest.



Having made this concession not only to irrational but also to all non-rational factors in political developments, I end with a plea for plain descriptive research on ideology and by repeating that such research tends to confirm the predominantly rational and objective character of ideologies and of ideological debate.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A. Naess et al., *Democracy, Ideology and Objectivity* (Oslo, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> *European Ideologies*, ed. F. Gross, reprint of 1948 edition (New York, 1971), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> The terrifying aspect of a small number of ideologies in Europe in the period 1920-1950 previously led me to underestimate the varieties of non-absolutist ideologies in the world. Therefore I treated as *fairly general* those negative features of ideologies which I would now deem as exceptional, e.g. 'claims on finality and certainty' and 'distorted out-group descriptions'. See 'The Function of Ideological Convictions', in *Tensions That Cause Wars*, ed. H. Cantril (Urbana, 1950), p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> By Charles Bettelheim, M. M. Bober, G. A. Borgese, D. van Dantzig, John Dewey, C. J. Ducasse, G. C. Field, Risieri Frondizi, Barna Horvath, Jørgen Jørgensen, Humayun Kabir, Horace M. Kallen, Henri Lefebvre, C. I. Lewis, Lord Lindsay of Birker, J. H. A. Logemann, Richard McKeon, James Marshall, Emmanuel Mounier, Stanislaus Ossowski, Umberto A. Padovani, Ricardo R. Pascual, Aimé Patri, Chaim Perelman, John Petrov Plamenatz, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Ladislaus Rieger, Wilhelm Röpke, Alf Ross, Rudolf Schlesinger, Paul M. Sweezy, Eric Weil, Quincy Wright. See *Democracy in a World of Tensions*, ed. R. McKeon and S. Rokkan (Chicago, 1951).

<sup>5</sup> *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, tr. Terence Kilmartin (New York, 1957), pp. 239-240.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 317-318.



*Felix Oppenheim*

## IDEOLOGY AND OBJECTIVITY

Ideologies are speech acts. Ideologies are formulated and propounded to influence political behaviour, whether to legitimize or to undermine political authority. The language of any ideology therefore includes some intrinsic normative principle stipulating what kind of political system is intrinsically desirable and what kind of political conduct is morally right.

'Objectivity' as a characteristic of a statement means that the statement is true, and that it can be shown to be true (or false) by virtue of objective criteria, such as those of correct inductive or deductive reasoning. So the question is: Is it possible to demonstrate that a given ideological system is true or false, and are there ideologies which are, in this sense, objective?

There is another possible connection between ideology and objectivity. An ideology serves certain political purposes, which may or may not coincide with its stated goals. Are there objective criteria by which we can determine whether the advocacy of a given ideological system constitutes an effective means to the political ends of those who proclaim it? I shall deal with these two problems in succession.

### I.

Can an ideology be said to be objectively true or false? This problem involves the fundamental metaethical question whether intrinsic value judgments have cognitive status. Here I can do no more than state my own view, without providing arguments. I subscribe to the thesis of value non-cognitivism: intrinsic valuational and norma-



tive principles cannot be supported or refuted by inductive or deductive reasoning, but express subjective valuational commitments. Since such principles constitute the capstone of any ideology, must I not then conclude that 'ideology' and 'objectivity' are contradictory?

I am not driven to such a simple and unqualified answer. Ideologies function as guides to action, and actions can be qualified as being rational or not. It seems to be that the thesis of value non-cognitivism is perfectly compatible with the view that there are objective criteria of rational choice – rational in terms of the actor's own valuational standards. In this sense, a given ideology can surely be said to be objective or not. I shall indicate some ways in which an ideology may fall short of the objective standards of rationality in terms of the intrinsic values expressed by that ideology.

An ideology usually does not merely proclaim some ultimate goal as being intrinsically desirable, but proposes means which should be adopted to achieve it. Recommendation of policies forms an integral part of any ideology. Means-end statements are translatable without loss of meaning into cause-effect assertions, and these can be assessed by the objective criteria of inductive reasoning. To make a rational choice, the actor must base his means-end predictions on the best evidence available to him under the given circumstances. If a war of national liberation is – foreseeably – doomed to failure, it is not rational to be guided by the ideology of national independence, at least not in this particular case.

Criteria of rational choice do not only apply to the choice of means to given ends. Ideologists sometimes advocate normative principles based on mistaken factual assumptions. Racist ideologies often invoke erroneous biological theories. To recommend actions on the basis of mistaken factual beliefs is surely not rational. Furthermore, racists commit the naturalistic fallacy of deriving 'ought' from 'is'. Even if the biological theory of superior races (whatever that means) was true, it still would not follow that racial discrimination is morally right.

Nor is it rational to espouse utopian ideologies. A goal is utopian if it cannot be implemented by whatever means. If a classless society (in some sense) is an empirical impossibility, then it is not rational to adopt this goal and to be guided by the corresponding ideology.

Adopting incompatible goals is another instance of disregarding the standards of rational choice. Fanatics are not faced with this problem; they are, by definition, committed to a single goal, at what-



ever price. Extremist ideologies cannot be accused of failing to meet the criteria of rationality, and hence of objectivity, on these grounds. However, most political and ethical thinkers are committed to a multiplicity of goals which may come into conflict with one another; e.g., high educational standards *and* equality of educational opportunity, or even of educational results. A rational approach requires the political actor or ideologist to be aware of the dilemma and to ask: how much less of one value should be traded off against how much more of another? But ideologists and propagandists often advocate the unrestricted pursuit of incompatible goals; e.g., welfare and justice.

My decision to act in a certain way may well bring about my chosen goal, but lead to further consequences whose negative value *to me* outweighs the positive value *to me* of the goal itself. If this state of affairs could reasonably have been predicted, then it was not rational for me to embark upon that course of action. Implementing a revolutionary ideology may bring about the revolutionary goal, but lead to more bloodshed first and repression later than is acceptable to the revolutionaries themselves. Did Robespierre or Lenin act rationally from this point of view? The answer depends on how much, or how little, value they attached to human life.

This last example illustrates that a course of action can be said to be rational or not only in terms of the actor's own valuational standards, not mine or yours. Similarly, if we want to determine whether a given ideological system is objective in this sense, we must refer to the intrinsic valuations underlying that particular ideology. Our own normative convictions have no bearing. Nor does it matter in this connection whether or not the ideology under consideration is being propounded by its proponents in good faith. I may well have to conclude that the Red Brigades do act rationally in terms of the ideology which – at least allegedly – underlies their actions, and that the ideology is, in this sense, objective.

## II.

So far, I have made no distinction between the basic values propounded by a given ideological system and the goals which the proponents of that ideology actually pursue. The two may coincide. Political leaders sometimes become prisoners of their own ideology.



But more often than not there is a discrepancy. Political leaders who are out to promote their own interests or the interests of a particular group to which they belong need to enlist the cooperation of others. For that purpose, they proclaim an ideology to the effect that it is morally obligatory for all, or for a large group, to devote themselves to some cause, e.g., to achieve national independence, or to build a socialist society for the benefit of future generations. The proponents of the ideology must convince their potential followers that they themselves are devoted to the cause, and must persuade the latter that they, too, should act unselfishly to bring about the ideological goal. Sometimes there is a happy coincidence between what the ideology advocates and the welfare interests of all; e.g. between the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter and the survival of Great Britain, or between the ideology of preserving French culture in Canada and better jobs for French Canadians. More often, serving a cause requires sacrificing one's own interest. So, the ideologists must deceive those to whom they address themselves. The former make the latter believe that they are acting for the sake of the cause, when in fact they are promoting the interests of the former. The ideology thus creates what Marx has called false consciousness. Authors like Pareto have taken such purposeful distortion of the truth as a defining characteristic of 'ideology'.

In such a case, those who accept the ideology and conform to it behave irrationally, since they act on the basis of mistaken factual beliefs. They are under the illusion of promoting some ideal, and do not realize that they serve the interest of those who propound the ideology. But unlike *acting* according to such an ideology, *propagating* it may constitute a very rational activity. From the point of view of the ideologist's non-ideological goal, the rationality of the ideology depends only on its effectiveness as a means to achieve that goal, and not on the empirical validity or the logical consistency of its statements. It may thus be objectively rational for A to propound an ideology which it is objectively irrational for B to accept.

I am tempted to conclude with a generalization which may be as superficial as it is sweeping. Given man's propensity to think and to act irrationally, at least in the political sphere, the less objective an ideology by the standards of rational choice, the greater its objective usefulness as a political weapon.



*Torben Grage*

‘THE AGE OF IDEOLOGY’  
AND ‘THE AGE OF DEMOCRACY’:

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE QUEST FOR A CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

A survey of the current state of ideology-scholarship does not provide a very promising picture, even if our goal is to search for only a modicum of agreement on definition or characterization. It is true that the ‘end-of-ideology’ debate seemed for a time to produce a rather widespread acknowledgement that there were still certain extant phenomena in Western politics which satisfied some of the criteria of what some would call ideology, and others, using largely the same criteria, would rather call ideals or the like. The pejorative image of ideology still clung tightly.

The latest substantial contributions to the ideology literature again demonstrate the wide differences which exist in the definition, characterization, and interpretation of ideology. In *Ideology and Politics*<sup>1</sup>, Martin Seliger offers a positive view of ideology, using the term to cover rational systems of belief in organized action. On the other hand, in *Ideology and Ideologists*<sup>2</sup>, Lewis Feuer argues an unrelentingly negative view of ideology, allowing intellectual marginals, generational protesters, misfits and fanatics to be the carriers of an inherently irrational type of belief system, and hoping for an end to ideology in a society that has become ‘rational and workoccupied’.

While both these books, and quite a few others on ideology, seek to justify their respective interpretations with great skill and imagination, and while in their separate ways they muster much persuasive testimony, like the overwhelming part of the literature they are too unrestricted in their use of ideology. It will be one of the main objectives of this essay to offer the beginnings of a



more restricted definition. But I shall not pursue this objective through a critique of the works of others, or at least that will only happen incidentally. Rather, I shall dare to try being constructive. Nevertheless I am aware that such an approach does leave me open to the charges that can be levelled at all too many of the treatises on ideology, i.e. of being too subjective, selective, sketchy, and exhortative.

In the overwhelming number of cases ideology is turned into a concept that must carry truly enormous burdens, either in terms of the number of characteristics of which it is said to be constituted, or in terms of the number of phenomena which it purports to explain (sometimes by reference to just one such criterion, such as class). I do not doubt that we are presented with a lot of suggestive ideas, plausible constructions, and 'insights' in this way. My query concerns whether we get much cumulative knowledge in this fashion or, if we do, whether this is only in an accidental fashion.

I would argue that the contention made by Arne Naess et al in their 1956 Unesco study *Democracy, Ideology, and Objectivity* is still valid: 'the term (ideology) has entered into technical terminology too easily. It has not been subjected to close examination, but has been accepted unchallenged over extremely wide fields'<sup>3</sup>. What Naess mainly feared was the carry-over into scholarly research of what is habitually associated with a term which is extremely popular as a vehicle of communication at the vernacular academic level.

Naess was also very critical of the hitherto prevailing modes of research on ideology. Either a particular ideology or a group of ideologies was studied, but such studies were conducted without any explicit guiding principles, and with a resulting vague approach. Alternatively, a research programme may have deliberately concentrated on causal and historical development and explanation. Naess's recommendation was, however, that a third approach should be given priority, the morphological approach, since '... the comparative sophistication of certain causal and historical (diachronic) analyses has revealed that exclusive morphological and synchronic research is necessary to provide a solid basis for attempts at causal explanation. Only strictly morphological investigations can clarify just what it is that one is attempting to explain'<sup>4</sup>.

We still lack such systematic morphological studies of ideologies as language complexes and argumentation patterns. This is also the case with the wider, more ambitious and methodologically much



more difficult type of symbol analysis that, for instance, was advocated by Clifford Geertz, who upbraided social scientists for their clumsiness in the handling of 'ideology as an entity in itself – as an ordered system of cultural symbols rather than in the distinction between its social and psychological context (with respect to which our analytical machinery is very much more refined)', and who suggested that the escape from Mannheim's Paradox would lie in 'the perfection of a conceptual apparatus capable of dealing more adroitly with meaning' <sup>5</sup>.

Notwithstanding my wholehearted agreement with both Naess and Geertz, I still consider that a historically and causally oriented approach may have something to contribute towards a clarification of ideology. Still in the early stages of such an approach, I shall offer some suggestions here in a very tentative manner.

What is of paramount importance is to make a potential concept of ideology which is considerably less than identical or synonymous with one's concept of politics. The explanatory value of ideology is lost entirely if it cannot be contrasted with elements of politics that are non-ideological.

Some examples of such synonymity can be seen in two works that otherwise have many merits. Clifford Geertz writes for example, that 'the agent of his own realization, he (man) creates out of his general capacity for the construction of symbolic models the specific capabilities that define him. Or... it is through the construction of ideologies, schematic images of social order, that man makes himself for better or worse a political animal' <sup>6</sup>. Later, he suggests that 'the function of ideology is to make an autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful, the suasive images by means of which it can be sensibly grasped' <sup>7</sup>. For Martin Seliger, 'ideology is present wherever policy-making is present, and policy-making is the attempt to solve problems – or sidetrack them. ... The debate over which decisions can be justified by what kind of principles and evidence, and how to mobilize support for various standpoints, is the essence of politics' <sup>8</sup>. Further, he argues that 'strictly speaking, politics can become entirely unideological only if they become completely incoherent' <sup>9</sup>. In both cases one or the other of the two terms ideology and politics can be dispensed with without much loss of information.

What is also of decisive importance is to avoid giving ideology too wide a meaning by stretching its historical extentionality. Not a



few authors lend it the character of timelessness. Thus Edward Shils postulates that 'the disposition toward ideological construction is one of the fundamental properties of the human race, once it reaches a certain stage of intellectual development'<sup>10</sup>, and goes on to say that 'an ideology is the product of the need for an intellectually imposed order on the world. The need for an ideology is an intensification of the need for a cognitive and moral map of the universe, which in a less intense and more intermittent form is a fundamental, although unequally distributed, disposition of man'<sup>11</sup>. Martin Seliger affirms that 'if ideology is involved in whatever attitude towards change guides action, it does not in principle matter whether the belief systems are those of tribal, developing or developed societies'<sup>12</sup>, and assumes that '... in their responses to challenges of their time, belief systems attest that some specific problems of human relationship are basically perennial and have evoked similar aspirations for their complete or partial solutions – and similar kinds of controversies about them'<sup>13</sup>.

But by making ideology co-extensive with history, and by using it as what seems to be simply a synonym for ideas or belief systems generally, we are being cut off from asking meaningful questions about the beginning, growth, fluctuations, and possible waning of ideology. It is therefore desirable to look for distinguishing historical and structural dimensions, so we can then raise the question – even if only in a restrictive and tentative sense – of an 'end of ideology'.

The overwhelming majority of the suggestions for a more limited location of ideology in history are inclined towards the 18th and 19th centuries. Nevertheless, proposals for other periods are certainly not lacking in supporters. Eloquent arguments have been mobilized for, among others, rooting the rise of ideology in the Hebrew prophets, Epicurianism and Stoicism, early Christianity, Gnosticism, and various eschatological beliefs in the 16th and 17th centuries. Interestingly enough, there seem to be no bids for the Era of Humanism and the Renaissance.

I have no intention of offering here a verdict on the particular merits of the respective datings or the criteria used for the characterization of the causal factors adduced. It is hard to think of periodizations and classificatory schemes that have no merits whatsoever. I simply want to express a lament that in historical treatments of ideology, as well as in histories of culture and political thought, there is rarely any self-conscious attempt to avoid an indis-



criminate, interchangeable, and universalistic use of such words as: ideology, myth, belief system, creed, outlook, doctrine, ideas, ideals, symbolic model, moral norms, ethics, culture, tenets, conception, etc.

Although attempts to differentiate between such closely related words do have a tendency to look arbitrary and unmanageable in the eyes of those who did not stipulate them, and although we also seem to have experienced how easily the suggested distinctions may once again become blurred and intermingled when used in a confrontation with 'reality' – one illustration that comes readily to my mind is the repeated attempts to distinguish between power, influence, control, and like words – I do, nevertheless, support such endeavours. I find them thought-provoking, sensitizing, and stimulating to a more nuanced thinking. I am not clamouring for a surfeit of technical terms which, for epistemological or material reasons, cannot be handled in a fruitful way. Rather, considerations are of a heuristic kind.

In advocating a concept of ideology that is generic, but not ahistorical and universal, I am following a procedure that is certainly not an unknown one in the study of politics. The concept of political parties, for instance, comes instantly to mind. It aims at being a generic concept, but it seems to be widely recognized that to apply the term to phenomena ante-dating some point in the 18th century is to dilute its explanatory power by dissolving the unity and firmness of its criteria, and thereby to gradually diminish the potentiality for contrasting and giving due weight to prominent particularities. Abstract empiricism is not an epithet completely without foundation in the study of politics. But I hasten to add that I have no doctrinal recipe as to the general proportioning of abstraction and concreteness, generality and particularity.

If we are to have a concept of ideology, I come down firmly in favour of placing the beginnings of ideology in the 18th century, particularly as manifested in the American and French revolutions. There is nothing novel about this, of course. I do not seriously dispute the characterization which is generally offered of the ideologies of this period and over much of which there seems to be widespread agreement. I do agree that there appears to be a close relationship between the rise of ideology and the rise of democracy. I also think there is an intimate connection between some ideologies and the processes of industrialization. I hesitate about too emphatically ascribing to ideology the function of being the lever of social mobili-



zation to achieve modernization. Rather, perhaps, than speaking of the masses being involved, I would prefer the expression broad publics. I do agree that they are secular rather than religious faiths, that they are to a very large extent based on a belief that life here on earth is capable of being perfected by human knowledge and effort, that they have a tendency towards being revolutionary and encouraging the sort of enthusiasm which often borders on extremism, fanaticism and intolerance. I do agree that there may be a tendency in ideologies to move towards holism and 'totalitarianism'. I think there is a temptation in ideology to simplify, undoubtedly because of the historically close connection with action as well as with moving broad publics of widely differing literacy levels and intellectual capacities.

But there is still much dispute as to whether ideology has brought with it consequences which are largely beneficial or harmful. This is constantly reflected in the polar characterizations that we find attributed to the concept. To some, ideology is marked by a syndrome of simplism, irrationality, reductionism, holism, intolerance, extremism, totalitarianism etc., whereas to others it signifies active rationality, orderly symbolic structure, an instrument of orientation in an increasingly complex world, the necessary carrier of change and progress, ethics in action, etc.

Much of this contention stems from the fact that there has been a preoccupation with the ideological wings, or extremes, on the 'left' and 'right'. There has been an excluded middle. The humanist and reformist-revisionist brands of socialism, the moderate varieties of conservatism, and especially liberalism to a very large extent, have all had an uncertain status in the ideological universe.

No doubt the verdict in this complicated case must be based on evidence about the actual conduct of ideologies, and on the empirical relationship between ideologies and socio-political structures and processes in the course of history. And I am under no illusion that we can in any way settle the issue by making reference to the character of the intellectual epoch that preceded the 'age of ideology'. But it seems to me that if there is general agreement that the Enlightenment was the intellectual and emotional matrix of ideology, then there are a number of its features which should not be forgotten.

I shall now make a rapid review of some of the crucial strands of thought that run through the 18th century. On the one hand there



are the strong elements of religion (although often in opposition to traditional Christianity); the transfer of eschatological hope (after the series of disastrous wars that swept over Europe) from an afterlife to the temporal world; the emphasis on the role of sentiment and affections; the spirit of Deism, which was activist, sometimes revolutionary, and intent upon scientific progress; the optimism and confidence in the perfectibility of man by his own endeavours, and the conviction about the inevitability of progress. This is the Faith side of the 18th century. But then, on the other hand, there is the view of science which was held by many Enlightenment thinkers and which was more empiricist than that of the earlier rationalism, where the central contrast was embodied in reasons vs. experience, a contrast which is not present, I think, in the Enlightenment praise of the 'rational'; and there is the critical attitude and opposition to the *esprit de système* of the 17th century, with its elaborate metaphysical systems, and instead an *esprit systématique* is preferred, which could be orderly without being speculatively ambitious. This I would venture to call the Pragmatic side.

Definitions of ideology frequently present it as a system of both ideas and beliefs. As a matter of fact there is a tendency to emphasize the belief (or faith) aspect at the cost of the idea side. The basic distinction suggested is that ideas are supposedly subject to scientific or critical operations (such as testing and verification) whereas beliefs are not. Beliefs imply only a psychological state of acceptance, and belief systems are interrelated sets of notions and attitudes about man and society that are accepted, at least in the larger part, as a matter of habitual reinforcement and routinization.

If it is the case that the ideologies which are held by people consist mainly of beliefs, then it can be argued that the quality of the ideology, the level of the debate, and the degree of openness to different and new ideas will each suffer badly. And those who maintain that ideologies have mostly negative consequences for politics would have a strong case.

The historical record of ideologies is a mixed one. But it seems to me that all ideologies up through the 19th and 20th centuries are marked by the faith (belief)/empiricism dualism, in doses of varying proportions in the respective ideologies, and with proportions differing over time in the same ideology and ideological movement. We find disputes constantly erupting in all kinds of ideologies concerning the extent to which observation, perception, and interpretations



of events in the 'real' world should be allowed to influence the tenets of the ideology and the tactics of the movement.

The extent to which actual changes take place in the content of ideologies (and the behaviour of movements) does not seem to me to be negligible. And for all we know, the flow of people in and out of ideologies, and from one ideology and movement to another, is considerable. That there are such changes in, and movements between ideologies is not surprising, particularly if one accepts the view that ideologies are subject to tensions that are, so to speak, constitutive of the ideology as such and of particular ideologies and their reciprocal relationships. Tensions such as these stem partly from the fact that the 'unit ideas' of ideologies are in themselves complex and heterogeneous universes open to, and indeed inviting, differing interpretations and emphases, partly from the fact that the relationship between 'unit ideas' in the same ideology is in constant tension, and partly because different ideologies share in the same 'unit ideas', although in different versions and combinations.

It can be argued that ideology is intimately tied to modern democracy. One of the core ideas of democracy has been the recognition that the diversity of man necessitates the broadest possible participation in open debate over anything that is declared as proper public matter or as of crucial importance to individual or group interests. This was strengthened by the belief of the Enlightenment in progress, now encompassing progress in the moral and social realm, making man truly the master of his fate and of history. More specifically, it was strengthened by the belief that there are right ideas that can be understood by right reasoning if presented in the right way, i.e. articulately, intensely, repeatedly and publicly to as many people as possible.

But I am concerned with the question of the longer term consequences for democracy of the ideological elan. What I have in mind is, however, something much more modest than an attempt to evaluate the course of democracy over the past 150 years. I shall look mainly at the Scandinavian corner of the world, and in so doing point to the continuing role of the idea, or ideas, of equality, which is the other core idea of democracy besides that of wide and open participation in public debate (if that is not also understood as an aspect of equality).

Writing in 1955, Herbert Tingsten, a political scientist and one of Scandinavia's leading general commentators, noted a direct re-



lationship between economic development and the 'levelling' of party and ideological conflicts in Swedish democracy. Having considered the major areas of ideological cleavage in Swedish politics, he concluded that 'the great (ideological) controversies have... been liquidated in all instances... Liberalism in the old sense is dead, both among the Conservatives and in the Liberal Party; Social Democrat thinking has lost nearly all its traits of doctrinaire Marxism, and the label of Socialism on a specific proposal or a specific reform has hardly any other meaning than the fact that the proposal or reform in question is regarded as attractive'. Noting the emergence of 'a community of values' between widely divergent parties and groups, he stated that the importance of ideology had been reduced to the point where 'one can speak of a movement from politics to administration, from principles to technique'<sup>14</sup>. In other words, the ideologies had done their job. Swedish society had been changed fundamentally, and in the process the ideologies had, if not devoured each other, then certainly taken on a general likeness. And they had exhausted their seemingly finite fund of ideas and ideals.

Yet, only a few years later the political atmosphere seemed transformed in Sweden and the other Nordic countries. It was charged again by more and more comprehensive demands for an extension of equality in the economic structures, the work situation, education and social relations generally. It would seem that principles, or moral considerations, were coming to the fore again. The force of the egalitarian wave had the force of a 'revolution of rising expectations'.

I shall not take Tingsten and the other later advocates of the 'end of ideology' thesis to task with all the more or less soundly based hindsight at my disposal, but I will point to the astonishing degree to which a kind of socio-economic deterministic interpretation would appear to have taken over in the study of politics. In the Scandinavian context it was natural to point to a change from politics to administration, while in the American context Daniel Bell could aver that while ethics was concerned with justice, concrete politics involves 'a power struggle between organized groups to determine the allocation of privilege'<sup>15</sup>.

Let me add, however, that I certainly do not deny that many of the trends adduced to underpin the 'end-of-ideology' thesis were highly plausible. I do agree that such changes as the spread of affluence to large new groups, the changes in the character of the



work force and the concomitant changes in the stratification system, and the improvements in education and career possibilities did also lead to changes in the ideological outlooks of the political parties. But these changes in terms of ideology were not just in the direction of a levelling off in joint exhaustion. They also meant re-thinking and re-tooling principles.

Of course, it might be argued that what is happening in Scandinavia has local historical roots. For example, it could be argued that the Scandinavian societies never lost contact with the ancient peasant and yeoman milieus which were in certain senses egalitarian, or that they never developed feudal, bourgeois, or industrial-capitalist/proletariat stratifications with deep cleavages and differentials between the various groups. There may be some truth in such ways of reasoning.

Nevertheless, I believe that a case can be made for seeing this new egalitarian movement as the 'logical' outcome of the deep tensions and constant confrontations that developed in the course of the 19th century between the ideas of equality and freedom on the one hand, and between equality and 'rational' efficiency on the other. The ideas of freedom were gradually converted into ideas of equality, and the 'unnatural' rationalistically axiomatic idea of equality got the better of the 'natural' pragmatic-empiricist arguments for the organizational necessity of the kinds of differentiations that are widely interpreted as unjust inequalities.

But do the developments in Sweden and some other countries with regard to egalitarianism constitute evidence that far from being weakened, ideology is, in some sense, still strong or perhaps even stronger than ever?

In the Swedish case, while there is often criticism of the practicability and the costs of various egalitarian measures, this is only rarely the expression of a principled opposition, and even then is rather muted. One might get the impression of consensus, if that is understood to mean a general agreement in thought and feeling which tends to produce order where there was disorder; a general agreement that may be accompanied by differences of view on detail.

It is difficult at the moment to consider any of the other core 'unit ideas' of the classical ideologies as effective or vociferous competitors with ideas of equality in the Scandinavian market place of beliefs and passions. This is particularly true in Sweden. If this is so, and if there is a sort of consensus as to equality, does not Sweden



provide a good example, perhaps better than in 1955, for the application of the label 'an end of ideology'? The answer might be yes, if we put the emphasis on the absence of deep and principled strife over crucial and material values. But the answer must be in the negative if a central part of our concept of ideology is that moral ideas should play a leading role in guiding initiatives in the arrangement of society.

Finally, I shall briefly consider the question as to whether there is a politics that could be called non-ideological. There seems to me to be a pre-ideological politics, the constitutive characteristics of which are a preoccupation with the question of the public responsibility and accountability of those in power and authority. Taking constitutionalism in a wide sense, it is the question of procedures and the consideration of means and their consequences. Such considerations spring out of a strong ethical concern. They spring from an anxiety over the possible abuse of power, an anxiety that is seen as vindicated by historical experience.

It seems to me that this kind of politics tends to be squeezed out or appreciably diminished by ideological politics, where there is often the temptation to be more concerned with ends than with means, and where there is a tendency to think in terms of final solutions to socio-political problems. And there is an inclination to believe that the problem of power and authority can be solved finally by social, socio-cultural, or economic measures.

If we are going to have a concept of ideology, I should like to express the wish that not all politics be construed as ideological; that not only ideological politics are motivated by deep moral concern; that not all change presupposes ideological inspiration; that not all ideas need come from or belong to an ideological matrix; and that the concept of ideology can be used for a meaningful discussion of 'a beginning and an end of ideology'.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> London, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> Oslo, 1956, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



<sup>5</sup> 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. D. E. Apter (London, 1964), pp. 47-76. The reference is to p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ideology and Politics, op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>10</sup> *Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays* (Chicago, 1974), p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> *Ideology and Politics, op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164. Seliger uses ideology and belief system as synonymous terms.

<sup>14</sup> 'Stability and Vitality in Swedish Democracy', *Political Quarterly*, 26, April-June 1955, pp. 140-51. The reference is to pp. 145-147.

<sup>15</sup> *The End of Ideology*, revised edition (New York, 1961), p. 297.



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