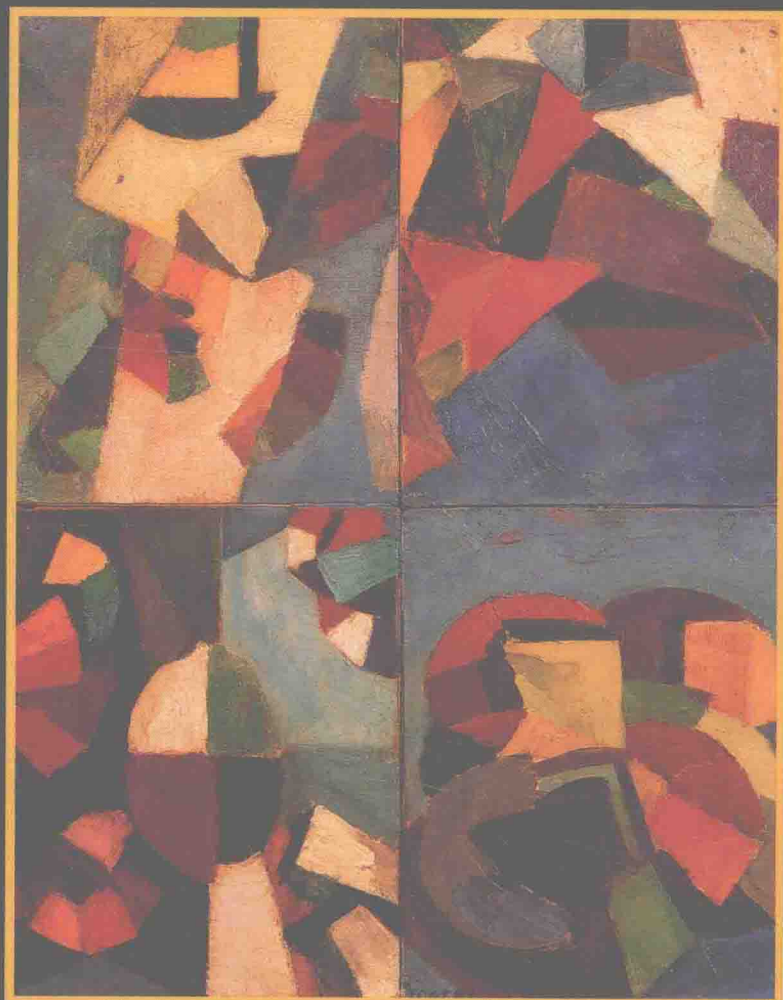


CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

movements and regimes

Roy C. Macridis



fifth edition

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FIFTH EDITION

ROY C. MACRIDIS

Brandeis University



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*This book is dedicated to the memory of
my late son, Peter.*

*One person with a belief is a social power
equal to ninety-nine who have only interests.*

JOHN STUART MILL

Preface

The fifth edition of this book, the first appeared in 1979, is an indication of the vitality of political ideologies and the interest they hold for students. Without ideology, we are almost without a conscience, without law and order, without an anchor and a port. Without ideology, we can have no vision of other worlds we want to sail to. Ideologies fashion our motivations, our attitudes, and the political regimes under which we live. They not only shape and consolidate values; they also command change and movement.

This new edition is prompted by recent ideological changes that seem to be profoundly affecting the political landscape of our world. I have expanded my discussion of economic liberalism, capitalism if you will, and at the same time have tried to discuss as objectively as possible the demise of communism both as an ideology and a system of governance. In discussing what I call the "religious impulse," I have added a section on religious fundamentalism, Muslim and Evangelical. I have also greatly expanded my discussion of nationalism and nationalist movements. It is something of an irony that two of the most common ideological staples, religion and nationalism, are regaining militancy and prominence. I expanded my chapter on feminism (is it an ideology?) and added a new chapter on environmentalism (is it likely to become one?). In my conclusion, I raise the question that has been put forth time and again: Are ideologies on the decline? Have we reached a stage at which the basic ideological precepts of democratic liberalism, freedom, equality, and brotherhood, have been realized? Have we reached a stage at which basic rights on which there is a broad consensus can be implemented and safeguarded through social legislation? I do not think ideologies are on the decline; they are very much alive, providing a vision and demanding redress of grievances. As in previous editions, I try to present various points of view as objectively as one can and, as in the previous editions, I try with each and every topic to focus on central questions that will challenge the students.

So many colleagues commented on the previous editions that the list is as long as my debt to all of them is great. For this last edition, special thanks are due to three colleagues who commented extensively on the outline of this edition. Professor David Syfert, Professor Bertil Hanson, and Professor Merlin Gustafson provided me with extensive comments on the manuscript, and I thank both warmly. Professor David Schmitt of Northeastern University again gave me his detailed comments on this edition, as he did for all previous ones,

and merits special thanks. Many thanks also to Professor Jonathan Sarna of the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University for his helpful suggestions. Lastly, my colleague Donald Hindley was of constant help with suggestions and advice, invariably drawing my attention to errors of commission and omission.

Professor Brian Weinstein of Howard University wrote to me about my section on black separatism, giving me the reaction of his students and his own critical evaluation. Kevin L. Parker, one of the students, and some of his classmates wrote me directly and gave me the benefit of their own reactions. I thank them all and, of course, more particularly the students who took the trouble to write to me.

As in the past, I was helped by a number of graduate students. Elizabeth Wingrove, who is now completing her doctoral thesis, helped me again with the chapter on feminism; Alan Minsk, who is now completing his law degree at Georgetown, continued to send me data on the Evangelicals and on the American conservatives. Amy Higer and Michael Gumpert provided me with data and materials, the first on nationalist movements and the second on environmentalism. And again, as in the past, my warmest thanks go to Geraldyn Spaulding for typing and retyping and putting the manuscript in a readable form. Finally, I want to thank Lauren Silverman, the political science editor of HarperCollins, and her assistant Richard Smith for their help and support. Special thanks also to Robert Cooper of HarperCollins for overseeing the production of the manuscript and to Joan Bossert for the excellent copy-editing.

This book is dedicated to my late son, Peter, who turned out to have been the only "ideologue" in the family. He drowned in the Columbia River on March 11, 1978, while trying to realize a youthful dream with his friend, Tim Black, crossing the United States from West to East by canoe.

Roy C. Macridis

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Chapter 1

Political Ideologies

Introduction

*Olympian bards who sung
Divine ideas . . .
Which always find us young
And always keep us so*

Ralph Waldo Emerson
The Poet

Whether we know it or not, all of us have an ideology, even those who claim openly that they do not. We all believe in certain things. We all value something—property, friends, the law, freedom, or authority. We all have prejudices, even those who claim to be free of them. We all look at the world in one way or another—we have “ideas” about it—and we try to make sense out of what is going on in it. Quite a few of us are unhappy, discontented, critical of what we see around us as compared to what we would like to see. Some become alienated—rejecting the society and its values, sulking into their separate and private tents but ready to spring forth into action.

People with the same ideas about the world, our society, and its values band together. We are attracted by those with similar values and ideas, who like the same things we do, who have prejudices similar to ours, and who, in general, view the world in the same way we do. We talk of “like-minded” people, individuals who share certain beliefs and tend to congregate—in clubs, churches, political parties, movements, various associations, and so on. No matter how independent we claim to be, we all are influenced by ideas. We are sensitive to appeals made to us—to our honor, patriotism, family, religion, pocketbook, race, or class—and we can all be manipulated and aroused. We are creators and creatures of ideas, of ideologies, and through them we manipulate others or are ourselves manipulated.

Ideologies are very much a part of our lives; they are not dead and they are not on the decline anywhere, as some authors have argued.

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a Heaven for?

wrote Browning in 1885. Almost a century later, a strong upsurge in ideological and utopian movements made powerful governments totter as many sought their own vision of heaven on earth. "Be rational; think of the impossible" was one of the slogans of intellectuals and students in the late 1960s.

Not only are ideologies surviving, their all-embracing importance is again being recognized. "Neo-Marxists" now agree that a drastic revolutionary overhaul of the society, if there is to be one, must be above all a moral and intellectual revolution: a revolution in the *ideology* of society. It must create its own "counterconsciousness," its own "counterculture"—a new set of beliefs and values and a new style of life that will eat, like a worm, into the core of prevailing liberal-capitalist orthodoxy. Only with its ideological core gone can the old society be changed and replaced.

But "ideologies" are resilient; they persist. The core is far more resistant to change than most people had thought. Established ideas and values cannot be pulled out like a rotten tooth. They have deep roots in the soil in which they grew. While there has been so much emphasis and discussion on ideologies that either brought about change or command change, little attention has been given to the complex of values, habits, and practices that resist change—to the phenomenon that may be called *ideological conservation*. The family, the church, attachment to property and nationalisms continued to defy, as we have seen recently in the break up of Communist regimes, the Communist-revealed and imposed truths. Ideological "formation" has been continuously in conflict with ideological "preservation."

WHAT IS AN IDEOLOGY?

Ideology has been defined as "a set of closely related beliefs, or ideas, or even attitudes, characteristic of a group or community."¹ Similarly, a *political* ideology is "a set of ideas and beliefs" that people hold about their political regime and its institutions and about their own position and role in it. Political ideology accordingly appears synonymous with "political culture" or "political tradition." The British or the Americans or the French or the Russians pattern their political life on the basis of different sets of interrelated ideas, beliefs, and attitudes.

Various groups, however, within one and the same political community may, and often do, at given times and under given conditions, challenge the prevailing ideology. Interests, classes, and various political and religious associations may develop a "counter-ideology" that questions the status quo and attempts to modify it. They advocate change rather than order; they criticize or reject the political regime and the existing social and economic arrangements;

¹John Plamenatz, *Ideology*, p. 15.

they advance schemes for the restructuring and reordering of the society; and they spawn political movements in order to gain enough power to bring about the changes they advocate. In this sense, a political ideology moves people into action. It motivates them to demand changes in their way of life and to modify the existing political, social, and economic relations, or it mobilizes them on how to preserve what they value. In discussing ideologies—all ideologies—we must always bear in mind these two all-important characteristics: a given political ideology rationalizes the status quo, whereas other, competing ideologies and movements challenge it.

Philosophy, Theory, and Ideology

A distinction should be made between philosophy or theory on the one hand, and ideology on the other. *Philosophy* literally means love of wisdom—the detached and often solitary contemplation and search for truth. In the strictest meaning of the terms, *theory* is the formulation of propositions that causally link variables to account for or explain a phenomenon, and such linkages should be empirically verifiable. This is, of course, true for natural scientists. They operate within a clearly defined framework of rules accepted by them all. However, in the social sciences there is not as yet an accepted framework of rules, and it is very difficult to come up with empirical verifications.

What separates theory or philosophy from ideology is that, while the first two involve contemplation, organization of ideas, and whenever possible, demonstration, ideology shapes beliefs that incite people into action. Men and women organize to *impose* certain philosophies or theories and to realize them in a given society. Ideology thus involves action and collective effort. Even when they originate (as they often do) in philosophy or theory, ideologies are inevitably highly simplified, and even distorted, versions of the original doctrines. It is always interesting to know the philosophy or the theory from which an ideology originates. But it is just as important to understand ideology as a distinct and separate entity to be studied in terms of its own logic and dynamics rather than in terms of the theory from which it stems or of how closely it resembles that theory.

It is difficult to understand when and under what circumstances a theory or a philosophy becomes transformed into an ideology—that is, into an action-oriented movement. Important theories and philosophic doctrines remain unnoticed and untouched for generations before they are “discovered.” The well-known German sociologist Max Weber makes the point by indicating that theories or philosophies are “selected” to become transformed into ideologies without, however, explaining precisely how, when, and why. History may be compared to a freezer where ideas and theories are stored for use at a later time. Different works of Plato, for example, have been at various times the origin of different ideological movements. Similarly, whereas a powerful ideological movement developed from the major works of Karl Marx, it is his early works—the “early Marx” or the “young Marx”—that have been adapted to suit

some contemporary movements and tastes. The same is the case with powerful religious or nationalist movements that pick and choose from different parts of the Bible or the Koran. There is a dialectic between ideas, as such, and social needs; both are indispensable in order to have an ideology. Heartfelt demands arising from the social body may fail for the lack of ideas; and ideas may go begging for a long time for the lack of relevance to social needs.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY: THE BUILDING BLOCKS

The debt most political ideologies owe to political speculation and philosophy is quite obvious when we look at some of the major themes that political ideologies address: (1) the role and the nature of the individual (human nature); (2) the nature of truth and how it can be discovered; (3) the relationship between the individual and the group, be it the tribe, the small city-state, or the contemporary state as we know it; (4) the characteristics of political authority—its source and its limits, if any; (5) the goals and the mechanics of economic organization and the much-debated issue of material and economic equality as it relates to individual freedom. Normative judgments about each of these themes and many more are the very “stuff” of contemporary political ideologies. Some have been hotly debated over many centuries and will continue to be debated.

The Individual

Political ideologies are addressed to each one of us; they all begin with one pre-conception or another about us—about human nature. Some believe that we are the creatures of history and the environment, that our nature and characteristics are interwoven with the material conditions of life and ultimately shaped by them. Human nature is plastic and ever-changing and with the proper “social engineering”—another term for education—it can be shaped into a pattern. Many ideologies assume that, with the proper changes in our environment and the proper inculcation of new values, “new” men and women can be created. There is nothing sacrosanct, therefore, in our present institutions and values; on the contrary, some of them are downright bad.

On the other hand, many well-known philosophers, especially those in the period of the Enlightenment and in the nineteenth century, have presented a different notion of human nature. People have some innate characteristics: we are born with traits of sociability, goodness, and rationality. We are also endowed with rights, such as life, liberty, and property. Institutions are but a reflection of these human traits and rights, and a political organization must respect them; indeed, it must provide the best means for protecting them. Therefore, the state that protects these rights cannot invade them—the state is limited. Finally, other political philosophers have argued that human nature is “greedy,” “selfish,” and “bellicose” and that it is the duty of the state to curb our ignoble drives. Political power and coercion are what make social life possible and safe.



Plato (c. 427–347 B.C.)

The Greek philosopher Plato was a disciple of Socrates and the founder of philosophic idealism, according to which ideas exist in themselves and by themselves, forming a perfect and harmonious universe. As a political philosopher, Plato wrote *The Republic*, a work describing an ideal state with a strict class structure ruled by philosopher-kings who divested themselves of property and family ties in order to rule for the common good.

Of particular interest are psychological theories of individual motivation, generally associated with economic liberalism, which we examine in Chapter 2. Rejecting the notion of natural rights, British philosophers and economists postulated an individual driven by desire who seeks only the gratification of pleasure. Each and all of us are motivated by the pursuit of pleasure and the only constraints are external—the pleasures and drives of others. Competition in a free market provides such constraints. Similar notions about the “political man,” thirsty for power and glory, led to the formulation of theories of checks and balances—each power checking the other to provide for a balance that preserved the freedom of all. It was because of the depravity of human nature that James Madison, one of the authors of *The Federalist Papers* and our fourth president, considered government to be necessary.

The Nature of Truth

Is there one truth? Or is truth progressively discovered as many ideas and points of view compete with each other—every generation adding something to it? The notion that there is one truth revealed only to some or perceived authoritatively by them requires us to submit to it. We must hew as closely as possible to what is given, and obey those who speak for it. Human beings are thus deprived of the freedom to seek truth, to experiment with new ideas, to confront each other with different points of view, and to live in a system that tolerates different ways.

On the other hand, there are those for whom a constant exploration of the universe by human beings and a constant inquiry into the foundations and conditions of life are the only ways to discover truth. “Such is the nature of the understanding that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outside force,” wrote John Locke. People who hold this view favor competition of ideas, advocate tolerance for all points of view, and want to assure the conditions of freedom that are indispensable for ongoing inquiry. This is what we call *pluralism*. If one Absolute Truth did exist, pluralists would have none of it for fear that it would deprive human beings of the challenge of discovering it!

The Individual and Society

For some social scientists there is no such entity as an “individual.” The individuals are perceived as part of a herd or a group whose protection and survival require cooperation. The individual is considered helpless outside the group or the state. The group or the state then makes the rules of conduct and establishes the relationship between rulers and ruled. The individual is a “social being”—first and last!

The other point of view stresses the opposite—the primacy of individuals. They are perceived as having originally lived in the state of nature and endowed with reason and natural rights. To protect themselves and their belongings,