

Ideological Voices

An Anthology in Modern Political Ideas

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Preface

During the past two centuries, political, economic and social life has been strongly influenced by ideologies, and there is every reason to believe that the quality of our lives in the twenty-first century will reflect the ideological perspectives that are gaining dominance today. Some ideologies, such as traditional conservatism and communism, are waning in importance. Other outlooks, such as environmentalism and feminism, appear to be emerging as full-fledged ideologies that command increasing support around the globe. Still other perspectives are being reborn in new guises; thus, the ideas of classical liberalism are being reasserted in a modified form as libertarianism, and the ideas of nazism are reappearing in current right-wing movements. To retain their political relevance into the next century, contemporary liberals and contemporary conservatives are reexamining and revising their beliefs and principles, a process that may lead to their significant transformation. In order to understand the changes and differences in political life that have occurred during the past two centuries and in order to anticipate future political changes, we need to study political ideologies.

There are many ways to expose students to ideologies and, by extension, to political theory. One method is to assign a few classic works in political philosophy that have become "sacred texts" within particular ideological traditions. Students can surely gain much insight into classical liberalism by reading John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and they can learn much about traditional conservatism by reading Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. But these sacred texts can also present material that is theoretically complex, contextually specific, and linguistically impenetrable, at least for students being introduced to political theory for the first time. Typically,

only a few such texts can be assigned in a course, leaving students with limited exposure both to the many ideologies that compete for our allegiance and to the breath of voices that contribute to each ideological tradition.

A contrasting method for exposing students to ideologies, one designed to circumvent the difficulties of reading only a few "great books," is to assign a textbook in which the authors summarize the basic ideas of several ideologies. We have developed a text, *Great Ideas/Grand Schemes: Political Ideologies in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, that we think can inform students about the main ideas of twelve distinct ideologies in a rigorous, well-organized, and accessible manner. This text describes the theoretical issues that all ideologies address, the contexts in which various ideologies evolved, the philosophical foundations on which they are based, the beliefs about political reality that they hold, and the principles concerning the political ideals that they seek to achieve. However, all textbooks, including ours, provide the authors' own understandings of the writings that have contributed to the development of various ideologies. A method that relies on textbooks alone deprives students of the opportunity to read the original sources, puzzle over ambiguous meanings, and develop their own interpretations of what is important.

A reader in political ideologies and theories is often the best compromise between assigning a few classics and assigning a text. Because readers are a compromise, they are often disparaged by those who insist that depth of learning can occur only by encountering the primary texts. Criticizing readers because they contain only snippets of larger works is justified if the purpose of a course is to enter fully into the complexity of authors' arguments, or if the authors' ideas have been seriously distorted by the editors. However, we believe that before students are inclined to study entire primary texts in depth, and before they can appreciate their philosophical, theoretical, and contextual subtleties, they should first have a broad overview of the ideological and theoretical landscape. We believe that a reader (along with a good text) can help provide this. We also believe that a careful selection of readings within various ideological traditions and a careful editing of these selections can not only limit distortions of the author's ideas, but also can positively enhance the student's appreciation of various authors' contributions to an important political/ideological perspective.

In assembling this reader, we have sought first and foremost to capture the ideological diversity that has prevailed throughout the past two centuries. Whereas most existing readers contain sections on liberalism and conservatism, we provide separate chapters on classical liberalism and contemporary liberalism and on traditional conservatism and contemporary conservatism because liberalism and conservatism have both evolved in ways that make their contemporary principles quite distinct from those of their historical predecessors. Whereas most readers provide a section on socialist ideologies, we provide separate chapters on anarchism, Marxism, communism, and democratic socialism, because these perspectives each have their own distinct ideas, histories, and literatures. Whereas most

readers provide a section on a “new voice” in the ideological landscape—typically either environmentalism or feminism—we believe that both of these nascent ideologies (and fundamentalism, too) are sufficiently interesting and important to warrant separate chapters.

Second, we have sought to focus on a few major contributors and works within each ideological tradition. We have omitted the contributions of Bentham to classical liberalism, Proudhon to anarchism, Hayek to contemporary conservatism, and many others. We have ignored *Das Kapital* when choosing among Marx’s writings. Rather than provide an extract from *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls’ seminal work in political philosophy, we have selected a short article he wrote to convey his contemporary liberal principles of justice to a broader audience. Although we regret such compromises, we believe that the selections we provide are either more important or more accessible than the omissions. To provide more breath would necessitate the kind of ruthless editing that would inevitably reduce all selections to mere snippets.

Third, we have tried to make selections that allow particular “great issues” of politics to be addressed from competing ideological perspectives. In *Great Ideas/Grand Schemes*, we argue that ideologies address twelve such great issues. Space limitations will not allow us to select readings for this reader addressing each of these issues from each ideological perspective, so our selections tend to focus on two such issues: What role should governmental authority play in a good society and what is the just distribution of such social goods as income and wealth? Although our selections tend to focus on these issues, the other great issues are not ignored, however, because ideologies are interrelated sets of beliefs and values. Thus, ideas about authority and justice are tied to other big political issues such as Who should rule? How should the political economy be structured? What should be the rights and obligations of citizens? How should change be pursued? Furthermore, ideas about authority and justice are based on philosophical matters concerning epistemology and ontology and on assumptions about human nature and the basis of social life. Hence, our readings focus on ideological debates about governmental authority and justice, but they bring to view a broader array of political and philosophical issues.

Fourth, we have tried to provide readings that point to the continuing importance of each ideology. It is sometimes claimed that certain ideologies are “dead.” Some ideologies have lost their former potency, but we think that all ideologies contain at least certain ideas that merit our respect or that retain the allegiance of enough people that they should still be feared. Thus, for “dated” ideologies, we provide at least one more-recent selection highlighting their current attractions. For example, an excerpt from Robert Nozick’s *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* shows how current libertarian thinking draws on Lockean liberalism. And selections by leaders in the Aryan Nations movement show the neo-nazi foundations of ideas that are prominent among militia groups of the radical right in contemporary America.

Fifth, we provide a few readings dealing with broader issues about the nature of ideology and political theory, issues that transcend any particular ideological perspective. Thus, in the first chapter, we include a reading by Judith Shklar on the historical development of ideologies. In the last chapter, we include Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" as representative of the idea that ideological conflict is ending and that a worldwide consensus has developed for answering the great issues of politics. However, we juxtapose it with more postmodern perspectives claiming that final political truth will always elude us.

Finally, we provide students with a short introduction to each ideology as a whole and to the particular readings. The introduction for each ideology gives a brief summary of its historical development and central ideas. The introduction for each reading provides background about the author, the concrete issues that motivated his or her writing, and the theoretical and philosophical issues that he or she addressed in a manner that commands our continuing attention.

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Ideologies in Political Life

Some people believe that citizens and their elected representatives are the ultimate rulers of democratic communities. Others believe that, even in democracies, the real rulers are actors such as big business, governmental bureaucrats, special interests, white supremacists, male chauvinists, or—in neo-nazi conspiracy theories—Jews. Some people believe that what occurs in political life can be explained by reference to power and money and how these resources are applied on behalf of the narrow interests of the powerful and rich. Others believe that what occurs in political life is best explained by the ideas—the goals, values, and ways of thinking about social problems—that dominate a culture and a civilization. Some people believe that governments should play an active role in a good society, solving social problems, helping the disadvantaged, and providing a broad array of public goods and services for all citizens. Others think that government should be much more restrained, that the free market can satisfy most human needs, and that individual initiative must be emphasized. When people make such generalized descriptions and explanations about how people live in communities and govern these communities, they are engaged in political theorizing. When they provide such generalized prescriptions about how people ought to live in communities and how they ought to govern these communities, they are also acting as (at least rudimentary) political theorists.

Because most people have some ideas about politics and social life, everyone is a political the-

orist to some degree, but more reflective people are concerned with the bases, validity, comprehensiveness, and coherence of their political ideas. When people reflect on the *bases* of their political ideas, they inquire into the social sources and underlying assumptions of their beliefs. They may ask, "Who taught me to believe this idea?" and "Is this a reliable source on which to base my beliefs?" They may also query the philosophical foundations of their values, asking questions such as "Am I assuming that humans and society are perfectible?" or "Should I assume that humans are inherently flawed beings and that social problems are inevitable in human life?" When people reflect on the *validity* of their political ideas, they seek empirical evidence that might undermine their beliefs about existing political life, and they also ponder counterarguments that might undercut their prescriptions regarding a preferred political future. When people reflect on the *comprehensiveness* of their political ideas, they seek "the big picture" about politics, remembering, for example, that their ideas about the rulers of society must be reconciled with ideas about citizens, that their ideas about what is efficient and effective must be reconciled with ideas about what is just and fair, and that their ideas about individual freedom must be reconciled with ideas about social order and political authority. When people reflect on the *coherence* of their political ideas, they seek to ensure that their basic philosophical assumptions, their many empirical propositions about political life, and their

normative principles about political ideals are logically consistent, that their political ideas form a well-organized, internally coherent belief system.

Although most people have some political ideas, only a small percentage have belief systems that are comprehensive and coherent. When people have coherently interrelated political ideas that make up a comprehensive political worldview, they usually have an ideology. Ideologues understand and effectively apply abstract concepts that describe, explain, and evaluate most aspects of political life and provide prescriptions for how political communities should be structured and perform in the near future. Ideologies are thus fairly comprehensive and coherent political theories. But many ideologues are not very reflective about the basis and validity of their ideas. Many ideologues are unaware of the social sources and philosophical foundations of their political beliefs, and many ideologues hold tenaciously to their beliefs even when the validity of these ideas is threatened by sound evidence and arguments to the contrary.

This reader is intended to assist your development as a political theorist. It seeks to enhance your command of abstract ideas about politics, social life, and the political economy by exposing you to the main writings of some of the most influential advocates of twelve ideologies that have been prominent during the past two centuries. This reader will expose you to contrasting ideas about who rules and who should rule in political communities. You will consider opposing ideas about the rights and obligations of citizens. You will encounter different views about how governments and the political economy should be structured. You will read stirring calls for revolutionary changes and pleas to retain the status quo. Although political theory and ideologies inevitably address questions about rulers, citizens, political and economic structures, and the desirability of change, this reader particularly focuses on issues of governmental authority and justice. Thus, you will encounter justifications for strong states that extensively intervene in economic life, that play a role in

promoting particular moralities, and that even exercise totalitarian control over all aspects of society. You will also encounter arguments for small (and minimal) states in which governmental authority is restricted to providing national defense and internal security; in the case of anarchism, you will encounter arguments for no state at all. You will read defenses of much more egalitarian distributions of social goods, and you will also be told that such "social justice" is a fraud, that justice requires providing unequal rewards when people deserve unequal treatment. Different ideologies provide a large range of ideas in response to these questions. But within different ideological traditions, there is a great deal of coherence in the ideas that are held, as ideas regarding governmental authority must be logically consistent with ideas about justice (and other political issues). All ideologies seek to provide solid philosophical foundations for their political ideas, prompting contributors to them to deal with questions about human nature and the nature of societies, and even with ontological issues about ultimate reality and the ultimate causal forces in history and epistemological issues about the basis of knowledge and truth.

Although political theory is an ancient enterprise—dating to before Plato's writings that depicted Socrates' search for political knowledge in Athens during the fifth century B.C.E.—the concept of ideology is only two hundred years old. In 1797, a group of philosophers, the Ideologues, led by Destutt de Tracy, launched a critical examination of the traditional ideas and institutions that governed the *ancien régime* of France and other European monarchies. They argued that ideas such as the divine right of kings lacked universal validity and merely represented the biased perceptions and particular experiences of the privileged classes: the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the clergy. In brief, the Ideologues sought to criticize traditional conservatism and establish the ideas of classical liberalism as the new and true science of politics. **Classical liberalism** was initially an attempt to deduce principles of government and economics from the natural rights of individuals and the basic laws of nature. In Chapter 2, the main ideas of

classical liberalism—such as maximizing individual freedom, basing authority on the consent of the governed, establishing representative democracies, providing for free-market economies, and limiting governmental and social interference in private life—are expressed in the writings of John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill. The Ideologues' hope of establishing classical liberalism as a universally accepted set of ideas for political life was resisted by three major ideologies during the nineteenth century. **Traditional conservatives** such as Edmund Burke, whose ideas are presented in Chapter 3, pointed to the deficiencies of liberal science and reason to defend customary social practices and privileges. **Anarchists**, whose ideas are presented in Chapter 4, radicalized liberalism by arguing that even democracies and free-market economies suppressed individual freedom and natural cooperation. They called for the abolition of all governments and many other social institutions such as private property. The most prominent critic of classical liberalism, its democratic government, and its capitalist economy was Karl Marx, who claimed that classical liberal ideas simply reflected the interests of capitalists as the dominant class of the new industrial societies that were emerging in Europe and North America. Marx also provided sciences of history and of the political economy that predicted the demise of democratic capitalism and its liberal ideology and its revolutionary replacement by a socialist economy and, eventually, an anarchist utopia where individual freedom would no longer be restricted by governmental authority. The central writings of Marx and his principle collaborator, Friedrich Engels—the ideology of **Marxism**—are presented in Chapter 5.

In the twentieth century, the most important challenges to classical liberalism have been from the totalitarian ideologies of communism, nazism, and fascism. **Communism**, which is an applied extension of Marxism, protested the imperialist practices of capitalist societies, supported communist revolutions in underdeveloped nations such as Russia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, and developed principles about how to govern the U.S.S.R., "Red China," and other

"socialist societies" after the revolution. **Nazism** and **fascism**—though having significantly different objectives—criticized the excessive materialism and individualism of liberalism, subordinated individual liberties to the collective interests of the race and nation, and brought such social institutions as schools, churches, businesses, and families under the ultimate, totalitarian control of authoritarian party and state organizations. The ideas of communists, nazis, and fascists are presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

Three democratic ideologies have also been prominent in the twentieth century. **Contemporary liberalism** has evolved from efforts to reform classical liberalism in response to many criticisms made of its shortcomings. While still maintaining the importance of individual liberty and still committed to democratic politics and capitalist economies, contemporary liberals believe that democratic governments can extend individual liberty by solving social and economic problems and by concerning themselves with a more equal distribution of liberty and the social resources that make it possible for individuals to pursue their own choices. **Democratic socialism** evolved from efforts to pursue Marxist and communist goals—a more equal distribution of social goods and greater social cooperation than provided by capitalism—through peaceful, evolutionary, and democratic means. **Contemporary conservatism** emerged in response to disillusionment with the "strong state" approaches evident in the governing practices of liberal and socialist regimes in the latter half of this century. Contemporary conservatives doubt that many human difficulties are social problems that can be solved by governments. They argue that "big government" undermines individual liberty and initiative, strangles the economy, undermines traditional moral values, and imposes unbearable tax burdens on citizens. Leading contributions to contemporary liberalism, democratic socialism, and contemporary conservatism are provided in Chapters 8, 9, and 10.

As we near the twenty-first century, a number of new ideologies are appearing, although these

have not yet achieved the comprehensiveness, coherence, and political potency of the previously mentioned ideologies. **Fundamentalism** has become increasingly prominent among those with extensive faith in God's omniscience and omnipotence and with grave reservations about the secular humanism evident in other ideologies. However, fundamentalists are far from united about their political principles, as Jewish, Christian, and Islamic fundamentalists have quite distinct political ideas. **Environmentalism** appeals to those who question the ability of humans to understand the mysteries of nature and humankind's willingness to exploit natural resources in order to seek ever-increasing economic growth. Many environmentalists question the homocentric perspective, apparent in other ideologies, that places human interests above those of other animals and the earth itself. But environmentalists are deeply divided among more radical "deep ecologists" (the greens), more moderate and reform-minded environmentalists, and relatively conservative conservationists. **Feminism** has become prominent, particularly among women who question the long-standing marginalization of women from public life and political discourse, who seek justice for women in government, business, and private spheres of life such as families, and who seek new, less male-oriented or androcentric approaches to political thinking. Although feminism has become perhaps the most comprehensive, coherent, and philosophically grounded of the nascent ideolo-

gies, it is plagued by deep divisions between liberal, radical, separatist, and postmodern feminists. One reason for these divisions is that feminists have sometimes imported significant portions of their worldview from other ideologies. The voices of various fundamentalists, environmentalists, and feminists are provided in Chapters 11, 12, and 13.

This proliferation of ideologies reveals that the original intent of the Ideologues—to achieve a true science of politics and thus ideological consensus—remains a distant dream. It appears unlikely that any one of these ideologies can be judged to be valid or true, while others are invalid or false. This uncertainty about the validity of alternative ideologies need not be a reason for despair among those engaged in political philosophy and theory. Political philosophy is the search for the best political ideas, but it is not an enterprise where some endpoint is assumed to exist. When one engages in political philosophy, one does not ask, "Is this idea true?" but rather "Is this idea better than competing ideas?" To evaluate the merit of competing ideas, philosophers draw on such criteria as comprehensiveness, coherence, empirical validity, critical insightfulness, and compatibility with various political and ethical ideals. But the process of evaluation is an open-ended and inherently political process that involves thinking deeply about the bases and coherence of one's ideas, making arguments and listening to counterarguments, and reformulating one's deepest beliefs and values.