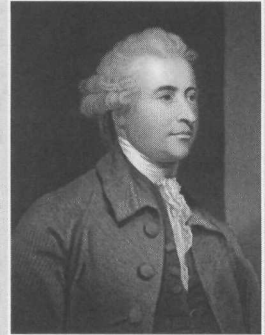


### Edmund Burke (1729–97)

Dublin-born UK statesman and political theorist who is often seen as the father of the Anglo-American conservative tradition. Burke's enduring reputation is based on a series of works, notably *Reflections on the Revolution in France* ([1790] 1968), that were critical of the French Revolution. Though sympathetic to the American Revolution, Burke was deeply critical of the attempt to recast French politics in accordance with abstract principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity, arguing that

wisdom resided largely in experience, tradition and history. Nevertheless, he held that the French monarchy was in part responsible for its own fate since it had obstinately refused to 'change in order to conserve'. Burke had a gloomy view of government, recognizing that it could prevent evil but rarely promote good. He regarded market forces as 'natural law'.



continental Europe, a form of conservatism emerged that was characterized by the work of thinkers such as Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). This conservatism was starkly autocratic and reactionary, rejecting out of hand any idea of reform. A more cautious, more flexible, and ultimately more successful form of conservatism nevertheless developed in the UK and the USA that was characterized by Edmund Burke's belief in 'change in order to conserve'. This stance enabled conservatives in the nineteenth century to embrace the cause of social reform under the paternalistic banner of 'One Nation'. The high point of this tradition in the UK came in the 1950s as the Conservative Party came to accept the postwar settlement and espouse its own version of Keynesian social democracy. However, such ideas increasingly came under pressure from the 1970s onwards as a result of the emergence of the New Right. The New Right's radically antistatist and antipaternalist brand of conservatism draws heavily on classical liberal themes and values.

## Elements of conservatism

- **Tradition:** The central theme of conservative thought, 'the desire to conserve', is closely linked to the perceived virtues of tradition, respect for established customs, and institutions that have endured through time. In this view, tradition reflects the accumulated wisdom of the past, and institutions and practices that have been 'tested by time', and it should be preserved for the benefit of the living and for generations yet to come. Tradition also has the virtue of promoting stability and security, giving individuals a sense of social and historical belonging.
- **Pragmatism:** Conservatives have traditionally emphasized the limitations of human rationality, which arise from the infinite complexity of the world in which we live. Abstract principles and systems of thought are therefore distrusted, and instead faith is placed in experience, history and, above all, pragmatism: the belief that action should be shaped by practical circumstances and practical goals, that is, by 'what works'. Conservatives have thus preferred to describe their own beliefs as an 'attitude of mind' or an 'approach to life', rather than as an ideology, although they reject the idea that this amounts to unprincipled opportunism.
- **Human imperfection:** The conservative view of human nature is broadly pessimistic. In this view, human beings are limited, dependent, and security-seeking

creatures, drawn to the familiar and the tried and tested, and needing to live in stable and orderly communities. In addition, individuals are morally corrupt: they are tainted by selfishness, greed and the thirst for power. The roots of crime and disorder therefore reside within the human individual rather than in society. The maintenance of order (see p. 389) therefore requires a strong state, the enforcement of strict laws, and stiff penalties.

- **Organicism:** Instead of seeing society as an artefact that is a product of human ingenuity, conservatives have traditionally viewed society as an organic whole, or living entity. Society is thus structured by natural necessity, with its various institutions, or the 'fabric of society' (families, local communities, the nation and so on), contributing to the health and stability of society. The whole is more than a collection of its individual parts. Shared (often 'traditional') values and a common culture are also seen as being vital to the maintenance of the community (see p. 172) and social cohesion.

- **Hierarchy:** In the conservative view, gradations of social position and status are natural and inevitable in an organic society. These reflect the differing roles and responsibilities of, for example, employers and workers, teachers and pupils, and parents and children. Nevertheless, in this view, hierarchy and inequality do not give rise to conflict, because society is bound together by mutual obligations and reciprocal duties. Indeed, as a person's 'station in life' is determined largely by luck and the accident of birth, the prosperous and privileged acquire a particular responsibility of care for the less fortunate.

- **Authority:** Conservatives hold that, to some degree, authority is always exercised 'from above', providing leadership (see p. 348), guidance and support for those who lack the knowledge, experience or education to act wisely in their own interests (an example being the authority of parents over children). Although the idea of a **natural aristocracy** was once influential, authority and leadership are now more commonly seen as resulting from experience and training. The virtue of authority is that it is a source of social cohesion, giving people a clear sense of who they are and what is expected of them. Freedom must therefore coexist with responsibility; it therefore consists largely of a willing acceptance of obligations and duties.

- **Property:** Conservatives see property ownership as being vital because it gives people security and a measure of independence from government, and it encourages them to respect the law and the property of others. Property is also an exteriorization of people's personalities, in that they 'see' themselves in what they own: their houses, their cars, and so on. However, property ownership involves duties as well as rights. In this view, we are, in a sense, merely custodians of property that has either been inherited from past generations ('the family silver'), or may be of value to future ones.

## Paternalistic conservatism

The paternalistic strand in conservative thought is entirely consistent with principles such as organicism, hierarchy and duty, and it can therefore be seen as an outgrowth of traditional conservatism. Often traced back to the early writings of Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81), paternalism draws upon a combination of prudence and principle. In warning of the danger of the UK being divided into 'two nations: the Rich and the Poor', Disraeli articulated a widespread fear of social revolution. This warning amounted to an

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**Natural aristocracy:** The idea that talent and leadership are innate or inbred qualities that cannot be acquired through effort or self-advancement.

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appeal to the self-interest of the privileged, who needed to recognize that 'reform from above' was preferable to 'revolution from below'. This message was underpinned by an appeal to the principles of duty and social obligation rooted in neofeudal ideas such as *noblesse oblige*. In effect, in this view, duty is the price of privilege; the powerful and propertied inherit a responsibility to look after the less well-off in the broader interests of social cohesion and unity. The resulting one-nation principle, the cornerstone of what can properly be termed a **Tory** position, reflects not so much the ideal of social equality as the vision of organic balance, a cohesive and stable hierarchy.

The one-nation tradition embodies not only a disposition towards social reform, but also an essentially pragmatic attitude towards economic policy. This is clearly seen in the 'middle way' approach adopted in the 1950s by UK Conservatives such as Harold Macmillan (1894-1986), R. A. Butler (1902-82) and Iain MacLeod (1913-70). This approach eschewed the two ideological models of economic organization: *laissez-faire* capitalism on the one hand, and state socialism and central planning on the other. The former was rejected on the grounds that it results in a free for all, which makes social cohesion impossible, and penalizes the weak and vulnerable. The latter was dismissed because it produces a state monolith and crushes all forms of independence and enterprise. The solution therefore lies in a blend of market competition and government regulation ('private enterprise without selfishness' (H. Macmillan)), within which the balance between the state and the individual can be adjusted pragmatically according to 'what works'. Very similar conclusions were drawn after 1945 by continental European conservatives, who embraced the principles of Christian Democracy, most rigorously developed in the 'social market' philosophy (see p. 182) of the German Christian Democrats (the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU)). This philosophy embraces a *market* strategy insofar as it highlights the virtues of private enterprise and competition, but it is *social* in that it believes that the prosperity so gained should be employed for the broader benefit of society.

## The New Right

The New Right represents a departure in conservative thought that amounted to a kind of counter-revolution against both the post-1945 drift towards state intervention and the spread of liberal or progressive social values. New Right ideas can be traced back to the 1970s and the conjunction between the apparent failure of Keynesian social democracy, signalled by the end of the postwar boom, and growing concern about social breakdown and the decline of authority. Such ideas had their greatest impact in the UK and the USA, where they were articulated in the 1980s in the form of Thatcherism and Reaganism, respectively. They have also had a wider, even worldwide, influence in bringing about a general shift from state- to market-orientated forms of organization. However, the New Right does not so much constitute a coherent and systematic philosophy as attempt to marry two distinct traditions, usually termed 'neoliberalism' and 'neoconservatism'. Although there is political and ideological tension between these two, they can be combined in support of the goal of a strong but minimal state: in Andrew Gamble's (1981) words, 'the free economy and the strong state'.

## Neoliberalism

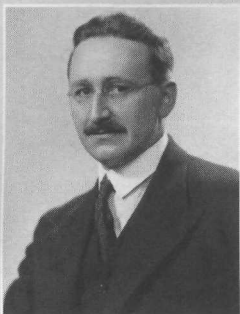
Neoliberalism is an updated version of classical political economy that was developed in the writings of free-market economists such as Friedrich Hayek and

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**Noblesse oblige:** (*French*)  
Literally, the obligations of the nobility; in general terms, the responsibility to guide or protect those less fortunate or less privileged.

**Toryism:** An ideological stance within conservatism characterized by a belief in hierarchy, an emphasis on tradition, and support for duty and organicism.

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### Friedrich von Hayek (1899–1992)

Austrian economist and political philosopher. An academic who taught at the London School of Economics and the Universities of Chicago, Freiburg and Salzburg, Hayek was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1974. As an exponent of the so-called Austrian School, he was a firm believer in individualism and market order, and an implacable critic of socialism. *The Road to Serfdom* (1948) was a pioneering work that attacked economic

interventionism; later works such as *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) and *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (1979) developed themes in political philosophy. Hayek's writings had a considerable impact on the emergent New Right.

Milton Friedman (see p. 185) and philosophers such as Robert Nozick (see p. 96). The central pillars of neoliberalism are the market and the individual. The principal neoliberal goal is to 'roll back the frontiers of the state', in the belief that unregulated market capitalism will deliver efficiency, growth and widespread prosperity. In this view, the 'dead hand' of the state saps initiative and discourages enterprise; government, however well intentioned, invariably has a damaging effect upon human affairs. This is reflected in the liberal New Right's concern with the politics of ownership, and its preference for private enterprise over state enterprise or nationalization: in short, 'private, good; public, bad'. Such ideas are associated with a form of rugged individualism, expressed in Margaret Thatcher's famous assertion that 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families'. The **nanny state** is seen to breed a culture of dependence and to undermine freedom, which is understood as freedom of choice in the marketplace. Instead, faith is placed in self-help, individual responsibility and entrepreneurialism. Such ideas are widely seen to be advanced through the process of globalization (see p. 138), viewed by some as neoliberal globalization.

### Neoconservatism

Neoconservatism reasserts nineteenth-century conservative social principles. The conservative New Right wishes, above all, to restore authority and return to traditional values, notably those linked to the family, religion and the nation. Authority is seen as guaranteeing social stability, on the basis that it generates discipline and respect, while shared values and a common culture are believed to generate social cohesion and make civilized existence possible. The enemies of neoconservatism are therefore **permissiveness**, the cult of the self and 'doing one's own thing', thought of as the values of the 1960s. Indeed, many of those who style themselves neoconservatives in the USA are former liberals who grew disillusioned with the progressive reforms of the Kennedy-Johnson era. Another aspect of neoconservatism is the tendency to view the emergence of multicultural and multireligious societies with concern, on the basis that they are conflict-ridden and inherently unstable. This position also tends to be linked to an insular form of nationalism that is sceptical about both multiculturalism (see p. 119) and the growing influence of supranational bodies such as the United Nations and the European Union.

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**Nanny state:** A state with extensive social responsibilities; the term implies that welfare programmes are unwarranted and demeaning to the individual.

**Permissiveness:** The willingness to allow people to make their own moral choices. Permissiveness suggests that there are no authoritative values.

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## Socialism

Although socialist ideas can be traced back to the Levellers and Diggers of the seventeenth century, or to Thomas More's *Utopia* ([1516] 1965), or even Plato's *Republic*, socialism did not take shape as a political creed until the early nineteenth century. It developed as a reaction against the emergence of industrial capitalism. Socialism first articulated the interests of artisans and craftsmen threatened by the spread of factory production, but it was soon being linked to the growing industrial working class, the 'factory fodder' of early industrialization. In its earliest forms, socialism tended to have a fundamentalist (see p. 63), Utopian and revolutionary character. Its goal was to abolish a capitalist economy based on market exchange, and replace it with a qualitatively different socialist society, usually to be constructed on the principle of common ownership. The most influential representative of this brand of socialism was Karl Marx, whose ideas provided the foundations for twentieth-century communism.

From the late nineteenth century onwards, however, a reformist socialist tradition emerged that reflected the gradual integration of the working classes into capitalist society through an improvement in working conditions and wages and the growth of trade unions and socialist political parties. This brand of socialism proclaimed the possibility of a peaceful, gradual and legal transition to socialism, brought about through the adoption of the 'parliamentary road'. Reformist socialism drew upon two sources. The first was a humanist tradition of ethical socialism, linked to thinkers such as Robert Owen (1771-1858), Charles Fourier (1772-1837) and William Morris (1854-96). The second was a form of **revisionist** Marxism developed primarily by Eduard Bernstein (see p. 57).

During much of the twentieth century, the socialist movement was thus divided into two rival camps. Revolutionary socialists, following the example of Lenin (see p. 77) and the Bolsheviks, called themselves communists, while reformist socialists, who practised a form of constitutional politics, embraced what increasingly came to be called social democracy. This rivalry focused not only on the most appropriate means of achieving socialism, but also on the nature of the socialist goal itself. Social democrats turned their backs upon fundamentalist principles such as common ownership and planning, and recast socialism in terms of welfare, redistribution and economic management. Both forms of socialism, however, experienced crises in the late twentieth century that encouraged some to proclaim the 'death of socialism' and the emergence of a postsocialist society. The most dramatic event in this process was the collapse of communism brought about by the eastern European revolutions of 1989-91, but there was also a continued retreat of social democracy from traditional principles, making it, some would argue, indistinguishable from modern liberalism.

### Elements of socialism

- **Community:** The core of socialism is the vision of human beings as social creatures linked by the existence of a common humanity. As the poet John Donne put it, 'no man is an Island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main'. This refers to the importance of community (see p. 172), and it highlights the degree to which individual identity is fashioned by social interaction and membership of social groups and collective bodies. Socialists are inclined to

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**Revisionism:** The modification of original or established beliefs; revisionism can imply the abandonment of principle or a loss of conviction.

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emphasize nurture over nature, and to explain individual behaviour mainly in terms of social factors rather than innate qualities.

- **Fraternity:** As human beings share a common humanity, they are bound together by a sense of comradeship or fraternity (literally meaning 'brotherhood', but broadened in this context to embrace all humans). This encourages socialists to prefer cooperation to competition, and to favour collectivism over individualism (see p. 190). In this view, cooperation enables people to harness their collective energies and strengthens **the** bonds of community, while competition pits individuals against each other, breeding resentment, conflict and hostility.
- **Social equality:** Equality (see p. 414) is the central value of socialism. Socialism is sometimes portrayed as a form of egalitarianism, the belief in the primacy of equality over other values. In particular, socialists emphasize the importance of social equality, an equality of outcome as opposed to equality of opportunity. They believe that a measure of social equality is the essential guarantee of social stability and cohesion, encouraging individuals to identify with their fellow human beings. It also provides the basis for the exercise of legal and political rights.
- **Need:** Sympathy for equality also reflects the socialist belief that material benefits should be distributed on the basis of need, rather than simply on the basis of merit or work. The classic formulation of this principle is found in Marx's communist principle of distribution: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'. This reflects the belief that the satisfaction of basic needs (hunger, thirst, shelter, health, personal security and so on) is a prerequisite for a worthwhile human existence and participation in social life. Clearly, however, distribution according to need requires people to be motivated by moral incentives, rather than just material ones.
- **Social class:** Socialism has often been associated with a form of class politics. First, socialists have tended to analyse society in terms of the distribution of income or wealth, and they have thus seen class as a significant (usually the most significant) social cleavage. Second, socialism has traditionally been associated with the interests of an oppressed and exploited working class (however defined), and it has traditionally regarded the working class as an agent of social change, even social revolution (see p. 215). Nevertheless, class divisions are remediable: the socialist goal is either the eradication of economic and social inequalities or their substantial reduction.
- **Common ownership:** The relationship between socialism and common ownership has been deeply controversial. Some see it as the *end* of socialism itself, and others see it instead as simply a *means* of generating broader equality. The socialist case for common ownership (in the form of either Soviet-style state collectivization, or selective nationalization (a 'mixed economy')) is that it is a means of harnessing material resources to the common good, with private property being seen to promote selfishness, acquisitiveness and social division. Modern socialism, however, has moved away from this narrow concern with the politics of ownership.

## Marxism

As a theoretical system, Marxism has constituted the principal alternative to the liberal rationalism that has dominated western culture and intellectual enquiry in the modern period. As a political force, in the form of the international communist

### Karl Marx (1818–83)

German philosopher, economist and political thinker, usually portrayed as the father of twentieth-century communism. After a brief career as a university teacher, Marx took up journalism and became increasingly involved with the socialist movement. He moved to Paris in 1843. He finally settled in London after being expelled from Prussia, and worked for the rest of his life as an active revolutionary and writer supported by his friend and

lifelong collaborator Friedrich Engels. In 1864 Marx helped to found the First International, which collapsed in 1871 because of growing antagonism between Marx's supporters and anarchists led by Bakunin. Although much of his voluminous writings remained unpublished at his death, Marx's classic work was the three-volume *Capital* ([1867, 1885, 1894] 1970). His best-known and most accessible work is the *Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1967).



movement, Marxism has also been seen as the major enemy of western capitalism, at least in the period 1917-91. This highlights a central difficulty in dealing with Marxism: the difference between Marxism as a social philosophy derived from the classic writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), and the phenomenon of twentieth-century communism, which in many ways departed from and revised classical principles. Thus the collapse of communism at the end of the twentieth century need not betoken the death of Marxism as a political ideology; indeed, it may give Marxism, now divorced from the vestiges of Leninism and Stalinism, a fresh lease of life.

To some extent, the problem stems from the wide range and complex nature of Marx's own writings, which have allowed him to be interpreted by some as an economic determinist, but by others as a humanist socialist. A distinction has also been drawn between the character of his early writings and that of his late writings. This is often portrayed as the distinction between the 'young Marx' and the 'mature Marx'. What is clear, however, is that Marx believed that he had developed a new brand of socialism that was scientific, in the sense that it was concerned primarily with disclosing the nature of social and historical development rather than with advancing an essentially ethical critique of capitalism. Marx's ideas and theories reached a wider audience after his death, largely through the writings of his lifelong collaborator Engels, the German socialist leader Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), and the Russian theoretician Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918). A form of orthodox Marxism, usually termed **dialectical materialism** (a term coined by Plekhanov, not Marx), came into existence that was later used as the basis for Soviet communism. This 'vulgar' Marxism undoubtedly placed a heavier stress on mechanistic theories and historical determinism than did Marx's own writings.

### Elements of Marxism

- **Historical materialism:** The cornerstone of Marxist philosophy is what Engels called 'the materialist conception of history'. This highlighted the importance of economic life and the conditions under which people produce and reproduce their means of subsistence. Marx held that the economic 'base', consisting essentially of the 'mode of production', or economic system, conditions or determines the ideological and political 'superstructure'. This suggests that social and historical development can be explained in terms of economic and class factors. Later Marxists

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**Dialectical materialism:** The crude and deterministic form of Marxism that dominated intellectual life in orthodox communist states.

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portrayed this as a mechanical relationship, implying that immutable economic 'laws' drive history forwards regardless of the human agent.

- **Dialectical change:** Following Hegel (see p. 86), Marx believed that the driving force of historical change was the dialectic, a process of interaction between competing forces that results in a higher stage of development. In its materialist version, this model implies that historical change is a consequence of internal contradictions within a 'mode of production' reflected in class antagonism. Orthodox Marxism ('dialectical materialism') portrayed the dialectic as an impersonal force shaping both natural and human processes.

- **Alienation:** **Alienation** was a central principle of Marx's early writings. It is the process whereby, under capitalism, labour is reduced to being a mere commodity, and work becomes a depersonalized activity. In this view, workers are alienated from the product of their labour, from the process of labour, from fellow workers, and, ultimately, from themselves as creative and social beings. Unalienated labour is thus an essential source of human fulfilment and self-realization.

- **Class struggle:** The central contradiction within a capitalist society arises from the existence of private property. This creates a division between the bourgeoisie or capitalist class, the owners of the 'means of production', and the proletariat, who do not own property and thus subsist through selling their labour (literally 'wage slaves'). The bourgeoisie is a 'ruling class'. It not only has economic power through the ownership of wealth, but also exercises political power through the agency of the state and possesses ideological power because its ideas are the 'ruling ideas' of the age.

- **Surplus value:** The relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is one of irreconcilable conflict, reflecting the fact that the proletariat is necessarily and systematically exploited under capitalism. Marx believed that all value derives from the labour expended in the production of goods. This means that the quest for profit forces capitalist enterprises to extract 'surplus value' from their workers by paying them less than the value of their labour. Capitalism is therefore inherently unstable, because the proletariat cannot be permanently reconciled to exploitation and oppression.

- **Proletarian revolution:** Marx believed that capitalism was doomed, and that the proletariat was its 'grave digger'. According to his analysis, capitalism would pass through a series of increasingly serious crises of overproduction. This would bring the proletariat to revolutionary **class consciousness**. Marx proclaimed that proletarian revolution was inevitable, and predicted that it would occur through a spontaneous uprising aimed at seizing control of the means of production. In his later years, however, he speculated about the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism.

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**Alienation:** A state or process of depersonalization; separation from one's genuine or essential nature.

**Class consciousness:** A Marxist term, denoting an accurate awareness of class interests and a willingness to pursue them; a class-conscious class is a class for itself (see p. 216).

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- **Communism:** Marx predicted that proletarian revolution would usher in a transitional 'socialist' period during which a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would be required to contain a counter-revolution mounted by the dispossessed bourgeoisie. However, as class antagonism faded and a fully communist society came into existence, this proletarian state would simply 'wither away'. A communist (see p. 35) society would be classless in the sense that wealth would be owned in common by all, and the system of 'commodity production' would be replaced by one of 'production for use' geared to the satisfaction of genuine human needs. With this, the 'prehistory of man' would come to an end, allowing human beings for the first time to shape



### Joseph Stalin (1879–1953)

USSR political leader 1924–53. Stalin (an adopted name) was a member of the Politburo

by an elaborate cult of personality. His

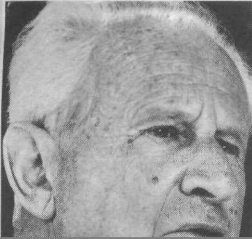


their own destinies and realize their full potential ('the free development of each : the precondition for the free development of all' (Marx)).

### Orthodox communism

Marxism in practice is inextricably linked to the experience of Soviet communism, and especially to the contribution of the first two Soviet leaders, V. I. Lenin (see p. 77) and Joseph Stalin. Indeed, twentieth-century communism is best understood as a form of Marxism-Leninism: that is, as orthodox Marxism modified by a set of Leninist theories and doctrines. Lenin's central contribution to Marxism was his theory of the revolutionary or vanguard party. This reflected Lenin's fear that the proletariat, deluded by bourgeois ideas and beliefs, would not realize its revolutionary potential because it could not develop beyond 'trade-union consciousness': a desire to improve working and living conditions rather than to overthrow capitalism. A revolutionary party, armed with Marxism, was therefore needed to serve as the 'vanguard of the working class'. This was to be a party of a new kind: not a mass party, but a tightly knit party of professional and dedicated revolutionaries capable of exercising ideological leadership. Its organization was to be based on the principle of democratic centralism, a belief in freedom of debate married to unity of action. Thus, when Lenin's Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917, they did so as a vanguard party, claiming to act in the interests of the proletarian class. The dictatorship of the proletariat therefore became, in practice, a dictatorship of the Communist Party (the Bolshevik party was renamed the Communist Party in 1918), which acted as the 'leading and guiding force' within the Soviet one-party state.

The USSR was, however, more profoundly affected by Stalin's 'second revolution' in the 1930s than it had been by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. In reshaping Soviet society, Stalin created a model of orthodox communism that was followed in the post-1945 period by states such as China, North Korea and Cuba, and throughout eastern Europe. Stalin's changes stemmed largely from his most important ideological innovation, the doctrine of 'Socialism in One Country', which proclaimed that the USSR could 'build socialism' without the need for an international revolution. What can be called economic Stalinism was initiated with the launch in 1928 of the first Five Year Plan, which brought about the swift and total eradication of private enterprise. This was followed in 1929 by the collectivization of agriculture. All resources were brought under the control of the state, and a system of central



### Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979)

German political philosopher and social theorist, and cofounder of the Frankfurt School. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, Marcuse lived in the USA from 1934. He developed a form of neo-Marxism that drew heavily upon Hegel and Freud. Marcuse came to prominence in the 1960s as a leading thinker of the New Left and a 'guru' of the

opposition. His hopes rested not with the proletariat, but with marginalized groups such as students, ethnic minorities, women, and the countries of the Third World. His most important works include *Reason and Revolution* (1941), *Eros and Civilization* (1958) and *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*.

planning dominated by the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) was established.

Stalin's political changes were no less dramatic. During the 1930s Stalin transformed the USSR into a personal dictatorship through a series of purges that eradicated all vestiges of opposition and debate from the Communist Party, the state bureaucracy and the military. In effect, Stalin turned the USSR into a totalitarian dictatorship, operating through systematic intimidation, repression and terror. Although the more brutal features of orthodox communism did not survive Stalin's death in 1953, the core principles of the Leninist party (hierarchical organization and discipline) and of economic Stalinism (state collectivization and central planning) stubbornly resisted pressure for reform. This was highlighted by Gorbachev's **perestroika** reform process (1985-91), which merely succeeded in exposing the failings of the planning system, and in releasing long-suppressed political forces. These eventually consigned Soviet communism to what Trotsky (see p. 361) had, in very different circumstances, called 'the dustbin of history'.

### Modern Marxism

A more complex and subtle form of Marxism developed in western Europe. By contrast with the mechanistic and avowedly scientific notions of Soviet Marxism, western Marxism tended to be influenced by Hegelian ideas and by the stress upon 'Man the creator' found in Marx's early writings. In other words, human beings were seen as makers of history, and not simply as puppets controlled by impersonal material forces. By insisting that there was an interplay between economics and politics, between the material circumstances of life and the capacity of human beings to shape their own destinies, western Marxists were able to break free from the rigid 'base-superstructure' straightjacket. Their ideas have therefore sometimes been termed neo-Marxist (see p. 92). This indicates an unwillingness to treat the class struggle as the beginning and end of social analysis.

The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács (1885-1971) was one of the first to present Marxism as a humanistic philosophy. He emphasized the process of 'reification', through which capitalism dehumanizes workers by reducing them to passive objects or marketable commodities. In his *Prison Notebooks*, written in 1929-35, Antonio Gramsci (see p. 203) emphasized the degree to which capitalism was maintained not merely by economic domination, but also by political and cultural factors. He called this ideological 'hegemony'. A more overtly Hegelian brand of Marxism was

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**Perestroika:** (Russian)  
Literally, restructuring; a slogan that refers to the attempt to liberalize and democratize the Soviet system within a communist framework.

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## Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932)

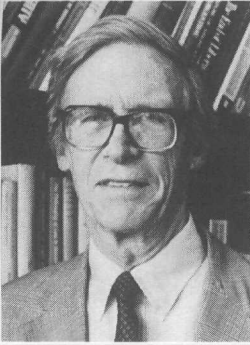
German socialist politician and theorist. An important proponent of revisionist Marxism.

developed by the so-called Frankfurt School, the leading members of which were Theodor Adorno (1903-69), Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Herbert Marcuse. Frankfurt theorists developed what was called 'critical theory', a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology, which had a considerable impact upon the New Left in the 1960s. A later generation of Frankfurt members included Jurgen Habermas (see p. 214).

## Social democracy

Social democracy lacks the theoretical coherence of, say, classical liberalism or fundamentalist socialism. Whereas the former is ideologically committed to the market, and the latter champions the cause of common ownership, social democracy stands for a balance between the market and the state, a balance between the individual and the community. At the heart of social democracy there is a compromise between, on the one hand, an acceptance of capitalism as the only reliable mechanism for generating wealth and, on the other, a desire to distribute wealth in accordance with moral, rather than market, principles. For socialists, this conversion to the market was a difficult, and at times painful, process that was dictated more by practical circumstances and electoral advantage than by ideological conviction. In the early twentieth century, this process could be seen at work in the reformist drift of, for example, the German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD)), especially under the influence of revisionist Marxists such as Eduard Bernstein. At its 1959 Bad Godesburg congress, the SPD formally abandoned Marxism and accepted the principle 'competition where possible, planning where necessary'. A similar process took place within ethical or 'utopian' socialist parties that had never been anchored in the certainties of Marxism. For example, the UK Labour Party, committed from the outset to a belief in 'the inevitability of gradualism', had, by the 1950s, recast its socialism in terms of equality rather than nationalization (Crosland, 1956).

The chief characteristic of modern social democratic thought is a concern for the underdog in society, the weak and vulnerable. There is a sense, however, in which social democracy cannot simply be confined to the socialist tradition. It may draw on a socialist belief in compassion and a common humanity, a liberal commitment to positive freedom and equal opportunities, or, for that matter, a conservative sense of paternal duty and care. Whatever its source, it has usually been articulated on the



### John Rawls (born 1921)

US academic and political philosopher. His major work, *A Theory of Justice* (1970), is regarded as the most important work of political philosophy written in English since the Second World War. It has influenced modern liberals and social democrats alike. Rawls proposed a theory of 'justice as fairness' that is based on the belief that social inequality can be justified only if it is of benefit to the least advantaged (in that it provides them with an incentive to work). This presumption in favour of equality is

rooted in Rawls's belief that most people deprived of knowledge about their own talents and abilities would choose to live in an egalitarian society, rather than an inegalitarian one. As, for most people, the fear of being poor will outweigh the desire to be rich, redistribution and welfare can be defended on grounds of fairness. The universalist presumptions of his early work were modified to a certain degree in *Political Liberalism* (1993).

basis of principles such as welfarism, redistribution and social justice. In the form of Keynesian social democracy, which was widely accepted in the early period after the Second World War, it was associated with a clear desire to 'humanize' capitalism through state intervention. It was believed that Keynesian economic policies would secure full employment, a mixed economy would help government to regulate economic activity, and comprehensive welfare provision funded via progressive taxation would narrow the gap between rich and poor. However, declining economic growth and the emergence in advanced industrial societies at least of a 'contented majority' (Galbraith, 1992), have brought about a further process of revision.

To some extent, the socialist character of social democracy has long been questioned. Some socialists, for instance, used 'social democracy' as a term of abuse, implying unprincipled compromise or even betrayal. Others, such as Anthony Crosland (1918-77), argued that socialists had to come to terms with changing historical realities, and were thus happy to draw on the ideas of liberal theorists such as John Rawls. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, social democracy more obviously moved into retreat. This occurred for a variety of reasons. In the first place, changes in the class structure, and particularly the growth of professional and clerical occupations, meant that social-democratic policies orientated around the interests of the traditional working class were no longer electorally viable. Second, globalization (see p. 138) appeared to render all specifically national forms of economic management, such as Keynesianism, redundant. Third, nationalized industries and economic planning proved to be inefficient, at least in developed states. Fourth, the collapse of communism undermined the intellectual and ideological credibility not just of state collectivization but of all 'top-down' socialist models. In this context it became increasingly fashionable for politicians and political thinkers to embrace the idea of an ideological 'third way'.

## Third way

The term 'third way' is imprecise and subject to a variety of interpretations. This occurs because third-way politics draws on various ideological traditions, including modern liberalism, one-nation conservatism and modernized social democracy. Different third-way projects have also developed in different countries, including those associated with the New Democrats and Bill Clinton in the USA and New

Labour and Tony Blair in the UK, as well as those that have emerged in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and New Zealand. Certain characteristic third-way themes can nevertheless be identified. The first of these is the belief that socialism, at least in the form of 'top-down' state intervention, is dead: there is no alternative to what Clause 4 of the UK Labour Party's constitution, rewritten in 1995, refers to as 'a dynamic market economy'. With this goes a general acceptance of globalization and the belief that capitalism has mutated into a 'knowledge economy', which places a premium on information technology, individual skills and both labour and business flexibility. The second feature of third-way politics is that, by contrast with neoliberalism, government is recognized as having a vital economic and social role. However, this role is a more focused one, concentrating on the promotion of international competitiveness by building up education and skills, and the strengthening of communities and civil society to contain the pressure generated by market capitalism. In this sense, the third-way stance is a form of liberal Communitarianism (see p. 173); its 'new individualism' calls for a balance between rights and **entrepreneurialism**, on the one hand, and social duty and moral responsibility on the other.

The final feature of third-way politics is that it has broken with socialist egalitarianism (which is seen as a form of 'levelling') and embraces instead the liberal ideas of equality of opportunity and meritocracy. Third-way politicians typically endorse welfare reform. They reject both the neoliberal emphasis on 'standing on your own two feet' and the social-democratic commitment to 'cradle to grave' welfare in favour of an essentially modern liberal belief in 'help people to help themselves', or as Clinton put it, giving people 'a hand up, not a hand out'. This has led to support for what has been called a 'workfare state', in which government support in terms of benefits or education is conditional on individuals seeking work and becoming self-reliant. Critics of the third way, on the other hand, argue either that it is contradictory, in that it simultaneously endorses the dynamism of the market and warns against its tendency to social disintegration, or that, far from being a centre-left project, it amounts to a shift to the right. It has, for instance, been condemned for accepting the framework of neoliberalism, particularly by endorsing global capitalism, and for supporting creeping authoritarianism in echoing communitarian calls for the strengthening of the family and in backing 'tough' law and order policies.

## Concept

### Third way

The 'third way' encapsulates the idea of an alternative to both capitalism and socialism. It draws attention to an ideological position that has attracted political thinkers from various traditions, including fascism, social democracy and, most recently, post-socialism. In its modern form, the 'third way' is an alternative to old-style social democracy and neoliberalism. The former is rejected because it is wedded to statist structures that are inappropriate to the modern knowledge-based and market-orientated economy. The latter is rejected because it generates a free-for-all that undermines the moral foundations of society. The key third-way values are opportunity, responsibility and community. Although the third way is sometime portrayed as 'new' or modernized social democracy, opponents suggest that it has entirely disengaged from the socialist tradition by embracing market and private-sector solutions.

## Other ideological traditions

### Fascism

Whereas liberalism, conservatism and socialism are nineteenth-century ideologies, fascism is a child of the twentieth century. Some would say that it is specifically an interwar phenomenon. Although fascist beliefs can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, they were fused together and shaped by the First World War and its aftermath, and in particular by the potent mixture of war and revolution that characterized the period. The two principal manifestations of fascism were Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship in Italy in 1922-43, and Hitler's Nazi dictatorship in Germany in 1933-45. Forms of neofascism and neo-Nazism also resurfaced in the final years of the twentieth century that took advantage of the combination of economic crisis and political instability that followed the collapse of communism.

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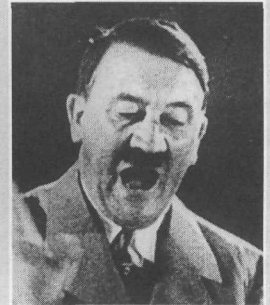
**Entrepreneurialism:** Values or practices associated with commercial risk-taking and profit-orientated business activity.

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### Adolf Hitler (1889–1945)

German Nazi dictator. Hitler was the son of an Austrian customs official. He joined the German Worker's Party (later the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), or Nazi Party) in 1919, becoming its leader in 1921. He was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933, and declared himself Führer (Leader) the following year, by which time he had established a one-party dictatorship. The

central feature of Hitler's world view, outlined in *Mein Kampf* ([1925] 1969), was his attempt to fuse expansionist German nationalism and virulent anti-Semitism into a theory of history in which there was an endless battle between the Germans and the Jews, who represented, respectively, the forces of good and evil. Hitler's policies contributed decisively to both the outbreak of the Second World War and the Holocaust.



In many respects, fascism constituted a revolt against the ideas and values that had dominated western political thought since the French Revolution: in the words of the Italian Fascist slogan, '1789 is dead'. Values such as rationalism, progress, freedom and equality were thus overturned in the name of struggle, leadership, power, heroism and war. In this sense, fascism has an 'anticharacter'. It is defined largely by what it opposes: it is a form of anticapitalism, antiliberalism, anti-individualism, anticommunism, and so on. A core theme that nevertheless runs throughout fascism is the image of an organically unified national community. This is reflected in a belief in 'strength through unity'. The individual, in a literal sense, is nothing; individual identity must be absorbed entirely into that of the community or social group. The fascist ideal is that of the 'new man', a hero, motivated by duty, honour and self-sacrifice, prepared to dedicate his life to the glory of his nation or race, and to give unquestioning obedience to a supreme leader.

Not all fascists, however, think alike. Italian Fascism was essentially an extreme form of Statism (see p. 98) that was based on unquestioning respect and absolute loyalty towards a 'totalitarian' state. As the Fascist philosopher Gentile (1875-1944) put it, 'everything for the state; nothing against the state; nothing outside the state'. German National Socialism, on the other hand, was constructed largely on the basis of racialism (see p. 116). Its two core theories were Aryanism (the belief that the German people constitute a 'master race' and are destined for world domination), and a virulent form of anti-Semitism (see p. 117) that portrayed the Jews as inherently evil, and aimed at their eradication. This latter belief found expression in the 'Final Solution'.

## Anarchism

Anarchism is unusual amongst political ideologies in that no anarchist party has ever succeeded in winning power, at least at national level. Nevertheless, anarchist movements were powerful in, for example, Spain, France, Russia and Mexico through to the early twentieth century, and anarchist ideas continue to fertilize political debate by challenging the conventional belief that law, government and the state are either wholesome or indispensable. The central theme within anarchism is the belief that political authority in all its forms, and especially in the form of the state, is both evil and unnecessary (anarchy literally means 'without rule'). Nevertheless, the anarchist preference for a stateless society in which free individuals manage their own affairs

### Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97)

UK social theorist and feminist. Deeply influenced by the democratic radicalism of Rousseau, Wollstonecraft developed the first systematic feminist critique some 50 years before the emergence of the female-suffrage movement. Her most important work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* ([1792] 1985), was influenced by Lockian liberalism, and it stressed the equal rights of women, especially the right to education, on the basis of the notion of 'personhood'.

However, the work developed a more complex analysis of womanhood itself that is relevant to the concerns of contemporary feminism. Wollstonecraft was married to the anarchist William Godwin, and she was the mother of Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*.



through voluntary agreement and cooperation has been developed on the basis of two rival traditions: liberal individualism, and socialist Communitarianism. Anarchism can thus be thought of as a point of intersection between liberalism and socialism: a form of both 'ultraliberalism' and 'ultrasocialism'.

The liberal case against the state is based on individualism and the desire to maximize liberty and choice. Unlike liberals, individualist anarchists such as William Godwin (1756-1836) believed that free and rational human beings would be able to manage their affairs peacefully and spontaneously, government being merely a form of unwanted coercion. Modern individualists have usually looked to the market to explain how society would be regulated in the absence of state authority, developing a form of anarchocapitalism, an extreme form of free-market economics. The more widely recognized anarchist tradition, however, draws upon socialist ideas such as community, cooperation, equality and common ownership. Collectivist anarchists therefore stress the human capacity for social solidarity that arises from our sociable, gregarious and essentially cooperative natures. On this basis, the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (see p. 160), for instance, developed what he called mutualism, the belief that small communities of independent peasants, craftsmen and artisans could manage their lives using a system of fair and equitable exchange, avoiding the injustices and exploitation of capitalism. Other anarchists, such as the Russian Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), advanced a form of anarcho-communism, the central principles of which were common ownership, decentralization and self-management.

## Feminism

Although feminist aspirations have been expressed in societies dating back to Ancient China, they were not underpinned by a developed political theory until the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* ([1792] 1985). Indeed, it was not until the emergence of the women's suffrage movement in the 1840s and 1850s that feminist ideas reached a wider audience, in the form of so-called 'first-wave feminism'. The achievement of female suffrage in most western countries in the early twentieth century deprived the women's movement of its central goal and organizing principle. 'Second-wave feminism', however, emerged in the 1960s. This expressed the more radical, and sometimes revolutionary, demands of the growing Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). Feminist theories and

## Concept

### Ecology, ecologism

Ecology (from the Greek *oikos* and *logos*, and meaning 'study of the home') is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their environment. It thus draws attention to the network of relationships that sustain all forms of life, and highlights the interconnectedness of nature. Ecology (a term first used by Ernst Haeckel in 1873) can be regarded as a science, a descriptive principle, or even a moral value. Ecologism is a political doctrine or ideology that is constructed on the basis of ecological assumptions, notably about the essential link between humankind and the natural world: humans are part of nature, not its 'masters'. Ecologism is sometimes distinguished from environmentalism, in that the former implies the adoption of a biocentric or *ecocentric perspective*, while the latter is concerned with protecting nature, ultimately for human benefit.

doctrines are diverse, but their unifying feature is a common desire to enhance, through whatever means, the social role of women. The underlying themes of feminism are therefore, first, that society is characterized by sexual or gender inequality and, second, that this structure of male power can and should be overturned.

At least three contrasting feminist traditions can be identified. Liberal feminists, such as Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan (see p. 286), have tended to understand female subordination in terms of the unequal distribution of rights and opportunities in society. This 'equal-rights feminism' is essentially reformist. It is concerned more with the reform of the 'public' sphere, that is, with enhancing the legal and political status of women and improving their educational and career prospects, than with reordering 'private' or domestic life. In contrast, socialist feminists typically highlight the links between female subordination and the capitalist mode of production, drawing attention to the economic significance of women being confined to a family or domestic life where they, for example, relieve male workers of the burden of domestic labour, rear and help to educate the next generation of capitalist workers, and act as a reserve army of labour.

However, the distinctive flavour of second-wave feminism results mainly from the emergence of a feminist critique that is not rooted in conventional political doctrines, namely radical feminism. Radical feminists believe that gender divisions are the most fundamental and politically significant cleavages in society. In their view, all societies, historical and contemporary, are characterized by patriarchy (see p. 94), the institution whereby, as Kate Millett (1969) put it, 'that half of the population which is female is controlled by that half which is male'. Radical feminists therefore proclaim the need for a sexual revolution, a revolution that will, in particular, restructure personal, domestic and family life. The characteristic slogan of radical feminism is thus 'the personal is the political'. Only in its extreme form, however, does radical feminism portray men as 'the enemy', and proclaim the need for women to withdraw from male society, a stance sometimes expressed in the form of political lesbianism.

## Environmentalism

Although environmentalism is usually seen as a new ideology that is linked to the emergence of the ecological, or Green, movement in the late twentieth century, its roots can be traced back to the nineteenth-century revolt against industrialization. Environmentalism therefore reflects concern about the damage done to the natural world by the increasing pace of economic development (exacerbated in the second half of the twentieth century by the advent of nuclear technology, acid rain, ozone depletion, global warming and so on), and anxiety about the declining quality of human existence and, ultimately, the survival of the human species. Such concerns are sometimes expressed through the vehicle of conventional ideologies. For instance, ecosocialism explains environmental destruction in terms of capitalism's rapacious desire for profit. Ecoconservatism links the cause of conservation to the desire to preserve traditional values and established institutions. And ecofeminism locates the origins of the ecological crisis in the system of male power, reflecting the fact that men are less sensitive than women to natural processes and the natural world.

However, what gives environmentalism its radical edge is the fact that it offers an alternative to the **anthropocentric** or human-centred stance adopted by all other ideologies; it does not see the natural world simply as a convenient resource available

**Anthropocentrism:** The belief that human needs and interests are of overriding moral and philosophical importance; the opposite of ecocentrism.



## Concept

### Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism (from the Latin *fundamentum*, meaning 'base') is a style of thought in which certain principles are recognized as essential 'truths' that have unchallengeable and overriding authority, regardless of their content. Substantive fundamentalisms therefore have little or nothing in common, except that their supporters tend to evince an earnestness or fervour born out of doctrinal certainty. Although it is usually associated with religion and the literal truth of sacred texts, fundamentalism can also be found in political creeds. Even liberal scepticism can be said to incorporate the fundamental belief that all theories should be doubted (except for itself). Although the term is often used pejoratively to imply inflexibility, dogmatism and authoritarianism, fundamentalism may also give expression to selflessness and a devotion to principle.

to satisfy human needs. By highlighting the importance of ecology, environmentalism or, as some of its proponents would prefer to call it, ecologism develops an ecocentric world view that portrays the human species as merely part of nature. One of the most influential theories in this field is the Gaia hypothesis, advanced by James Lovelock (1979). This portrays the planet Earth as a living organism that is primarily concerned with its own survival. Others have expressed sympathy for Eastern religions that emphasize the oneness of life, such as Taoism and Zen Buddhism (Capra, 1983). 'Shallow' ecologists, or 'light Greens', such as those in some environmental pressure groups, believe that an appeal to self-interest and common sense will persuade humankind to adopt ecologically sound policies and lifestyles. 'Deep' ecologists, or 'dark Greens', on the other hand, insist that nothing short of a fundamental reordering of political priorities, and a willingness to place the interests of the ecosystem before those of any individual species, will ultimately secure planetary and human survival. Members of both groups can be found in the 'antiparty' Green parties that have sprung up in Germany, Austria and elsewhere in Europe since the 1970s.

### Religious fundamentalism

Religion and politics overlap at a number of points, not least in the development of the major ideological traditions. Ethical socialism, for instance, has been grounded in a variety of religious creeds, giving rise to forms of Christian socialism, Islamic socialism and so on. Protestantism helped to shape the ideas of self-striving and individual responsibility that gained political expression in classical liberalism. Religious fundamentalism, however, is different, in that it views politics (and indeed all aspects of personal and social existence) as being secondary to the 'revealed truth' of religious doctrine. From this perspective, political and social life should be organized on the basis of what are seen as essential or original religious principles, commonly supported by a belief in the literal truth of sacred texts. As it is possible to develop such principles into a comprehensive world view, religious fundamentalism can be treated as an ideology in its own right.

Where does religious fundamentalism come from, and what explains its resurgence at the end of the twentieth century? Two contrasting explanations have been advanced. One views fundamentalism as essentially an aberration, a symptom of the adjustment that societies make as they become accustomed to a modern and secularized culture. The second suggests that fundamentalism is of enduring signifi-

cance, and believes that it is a consequence of the failure of **secularism** to satisfy the abiding human desire for 'higher' or spiritual truth.

Forms of religious fundamentalism have arisen in various parts of the world. The significance of Christian fundamentalism, for example, has increased in the USA since the 1970s as a result of the emergence of the 'New Christian Right', which campaigns against abortion, and for the introduction of prayers in US schools and a return to traditional family values. In Israel, Jewish fundamentalism, long represented by a collection of small religious parties, has grown in importance as a result of attempts to prevent parts of what are seen as the Jewish homeland being seceded to an emerging Palestinian state. Hindu fundamentalism in India has developed to resist the spread of western secularism, and to combat the influence of rival creeds such as Sikhism and Islam.

The most politically significant of modern fundamentalisms is undoubtedly Islamic fundamentalism. This was brought to prominence by the Iranian revolution of 1979, which led to the founding of the world's first Islamic state, under Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-89). It has subsequently spread throughout the Middle East, across North Africa, and into parts of Asia. Although the Shi'ite fundamentalism of Iran has generated the fiercest commitment and devotion, Islam in general has been a vehicle for expressing antiwesternism, through both antipathy towards the neocolonialism of western powers, and attempts to resist the spread of permissiveness and materialism. This was most clearly reflected in the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, 1997-2001. Islamic fundamentalism has, in particular, succeeded in articulating the aspirations of the urban poor in developing states, who until the 1970s were more likely to be attracted to socialism, in either its Islamic or its Marxist-Leninist form.

## ■ The end of ideology?

Much of the debate about ideology in the late twentieth century focused on predictions of its demise, or at least of its fading relevance. This came to be known as the 'end of ideology' debate. It was initiated in the 1950s, stimulated by the collapse of fascism at the end of the Second World War and the decline of communism in the developed West. In *The End of Ideology?: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the 1950s* (1960), the US sociologist Daniel Bell declared that the stock of political ideas had been exhausted. In his view, ethical and ideological questions had become irrelevant because in most western societies parties competed for power simply by promising higher levels of economic growth and material affluence. In short, economics had triumphed over politics. However, the process to which Bell drew attention was not so much an end of ideology as the emergence of a broad ideological consensus (see p. 10) amongst major parties that led to the suspension of ideological debate. The ideology that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s was a form of welfare capitalism, which in the UK and elsewhere took the form of a Keynesian-welfarist consensus.

A more recent contribution to this debate was made by Francis Fukuyama (see p. 31) in his essay 'The End of History?' (1989). Fukuyama did not suggest that political ideology had become irrelevant, but rather that a single ideology, liberal democracy, had triumphed over all its rivals, and that this triumph was final. This essay was written against the background of the collapse of communism in eastern Europe, which Fukuyama interpreted as indicating the demise of Marxism-Leninism as an ideology

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**Secularism:** The belief that religion should not intrude into secular (worldly) affairs, usually reflected in a desire to separate church from state.

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## Concept

### Postmodernism, postmodernity

Postmodernism is a controversial and confusing term that was first used to describe experimental movements in western arts, architecture and cultural development in general. As a tool of social and political analysis, postmodernism highlights the shift away from societies structured by industrialization and class solidarity to increasingly fragmented and pluralistic information societies (that is, to postmodernity) in which individuals are transformed from producers to consumers, and individualism replaces class, religious and ethnic loyalties. From this perspective, conventional political ideologies such as Marxism and liberalism tend to be rejected as irrelevant 'meta-narratives' that developed out of the process of modernization. Postmodernists argue that there is no such thing as certainty; the idea of absolute and universal truth must be discarded as an arrogant pretence. In this sense, postmodernism is an example of 'anti-foundationalism'. Emphasis is thus placed on the importance of discourse, debate and democracy.

of world-historical importance. Anthony Giddens (1994), by contrast, argued that conventional ideologies of both left and right have become increasingly redundant in a society characterized by globalization, the decline of tradition and the expansion of **social reflexivity**. An alternative way of interpreting these developments, however, is offered by postmodernism, which suggests that the major ideologies, or 'grand narratives', were essentially products of a period of modernization that has now passed. On the other hand, the very assertion of an end of ideology, an end of history, or an end of modernity can be seen as ideological in itself. Rather than heralding the final demise of ideology, such assertions may merely demonstrate that ideological debate is alive and well, and that the evolution of ideology is a continuing and perhaps unending process.

## Summary

- Ideology is a controversial political term that has often carried pejorative implications. In the social-scientific sense, a political ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis for organized political action. Its central features are an account of existing power relationships, a model of a desired future, and an outline of how political change can and should be brought about.
- Ideologies link political theory with political practice. On one level, ideologies resemble political philosophies, in that they constitute a collection of values, theories and doctrines: that is, a distinctive world view. On another level, however, they take the form of broad political movements, and are articulated through the activities of political leaders, parties and groups.
- Every ideology can be associated with a characteristic set of principles and ideas. Although these ideas 'hang together' in the sense that they interlock in distinctive ways, they are systematic or coherent only in a relative sense. All ideologies thus embody a range of rival traditions and internal tensions. Conflict within ideologies is thus sometimes more passionate than that between ideologies.
- Ideologies are by no means hermetically sealed and unchanging systems of thought. They overlap with one another at a number of points, and they sometimes have shared concerns and a common vocabulary. They are also always subject to

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**Social reflexivity:** Interaction between people who enjoy a high level of autonomy within a context of reciprocity and interdependence.

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political or intellectual renewal, both because they interact with, and influence the development of, other ideologies, and because they change over time as they are applied to changing historical circumstances.

- The significance of particular ideologies rises and falls in relation to the ideology's relevance to political, social and economic circumstances, and its capacity for theoretical innovation. Ideological conflict in the twentieth century forced major ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism to reexamine their traditional principles, and it fostered the growth of new ideologies, such as feminism, ecologism and religious fundamentalism.
- Debate about the end of ideology has taken a number of forms. In the early post-Second-World-War period, it was linked to the declining appeal of fascism and communism and the view that economic issues had displaced ideological ones. The 'end of history' thesis suggests that liberal democracy has triumphed worldwide. Postmodernism implies that conventional ideologies are irrelevant, as they were intrinsically a product of an earlier period of modernization.

## Questions for discussion

- Why has the concept of ideology so often carried negative associations?
- Is it any longer possible to distinguish between liberalism and socialism?
- To what extent do New Right ideas conflict with those of traditional conservatism?
- Is the 'third way' a meaningful and coherent ideological stance?
- Has Marxism a future?
- What circumstances are most conducive to the rise of fascism?
- Do anarchists demand the impossible?
- Why have feminism, ecologism and fundamentalism grown in significance? Do they have the potential to displace conventional political creeds?
- Is it possible to dispense with ideology?

## Further reading

Heywood, A. *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (2nd ed.) (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave 1997). An accessible, up-to-date and comprehensive guide to the major ideological traditions.

McLellan, D. *Ideology* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). A short and clear yet thorough discussion of this elusive concept.

Good introductions to particular ideologies include the following: Arblaster (1984) on liberalism, O'Sullivan (1976) on conservatism, Wright (1987) on socialism, Giddens (2001) on the third way, Marshall (1991) on anarchism, Laqueur (1979) on fascism, Bryson (1992) on feminism, Dobson (1990) on ecologism, and Marty and Appleby (1993) on religious fundamentalism.

# Democracy

'Democracy is the worst form of government except all the other forms that have been tried from time to time.'

WINSTON CHURCHILL *Speech*, UK House of Commons (1947)

The mass conversion of politicians and political thinkers to the cause of democracy has been one of the most dramatic, and significant, events in political history. Even in Ancient Greece, often thought of as the cradle of the democratic idea, democracy tended to be viewed in negative terms. Thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle, for example, viewed democracy as a system of rule by the masses at the expense of wisdom and property. Well into the nineteenth century, the term continued to have pejorative implications, suggesting a system of 'mob rule'. Now, however, we are all democrats. Liberals, conservatives, socialists, communists, anarchists and even fascists are eager to proclaim the virtues of democracy and to demonstrate their own democratic credentials. Indeed, as the major ideological systems faltered and collapsed in the late twentieth century, the flame of democracy appeared to burn yet more strongly. As the attractions of socialism have faded, and the merits of capitalism have been called into question, democracy emerged as perhaps the only stable and enduring principle in the postmodern political landscape.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

## Key issues

- ▶ How has the term 'democracy' been used?
- ▶ Around what issues has the debate about the nature of democracy revolved?
- ▶ What models of democratic rule have been advanced?
- ▶ What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these models?
- ▶ How do democratic systems operate in practice?

## ■ Defining democracy

The origins of the term democracy can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Like other words ending in 'cracy' (for example, autocracy, aristocracy and bureaucracy), democracy is derived from the Greek word *kratos*, meaning power, or rule. Democracy thus means 'rule by the *demos*' (the *demos* referring to 'the people', although the Greeks originally used this to mean 'the poor' or 'the many'). However, the simple notion of 'rule by the people' does not get us very far. The problem with democracy has been its very popularity, a popularity that has threatened the term's undoing as a meaningful political concept. In being almost universally regarded as a 'good thing', democracy has come to be used as little more than a 'hurrah! word', implying approval of a particular set of ideas or system of rule. In Bernard Crick's (1993) words, 'democracy is perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs'. A term that can mean anything to anyone is in danger of meaning nothing at all. Amongst the meanings that have been attached to the word 'democracy' are the following:

- a system of rule by the poor and disadvantaged
- a form of government in which the people rule themselves directly and continuously, without the need for professional politicians or public officials
- a society based on equal opportunity and individual merit, rather than hierarchy and privilege
- a system of welfare and redistribution aimed at narrowing social inequalities
- a system of decision-making based on the principle of majority rule
- a system of rule that secures the rights and interests of minorities by placing checks upon the power of the majority
- a means of filling public offices through a competitive struggle for the popular vote
- a system of government that serves the interests of the people regardless of their participation in political life.

Perhaps a more helpful starting point from which to consider the nature of democracy is Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered in 1864 at the height of the American Civil War. Lincoln extolled the virtues of what he called 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'. What this makes clear is that democracy links government to the people, but that this link can be forged in a number of ways: government *of*, *by* and *for* the people. The precise nature of democratic rule has been the subject of fierce ideological and political debate. The next main section of this chapter looks at various models of democracy. This section, however, explores the terms of the 'democracy debate'. These boil down to the attempt to answer three central questions:

- Who are the people?
- In what sense should the people rule?
- How far should popular rule extend?

### Who are the people?

One of the core features of democracy is the principle of political equality, the notion that political power should be distributed as widely and as evenly as possible.

However, within what body or group should this power be distributed? In short, who constitutes 'the people'? On the face of it, the answer is simple: 'the *demos*', or 'the people', surely refers to *all* the people, that is, the entire population of the country. In practice, however, every democratic system has restricted political participation, sometime severely.

As noted above, early Greek writers usually used *demos* to refer to 'the many': that is, the disadvantaged and usually propertyless masses. Democracy therefore implied not political equality, but a bias towards the poor. In Greek city-states, political participation was restricted to a tiny proportion of the population, male citizens over the age of 20, thereby excluding all women, slaves and foreigners. Strict restrictions on voting also existed in most western states until well into the twentieth century, usually in the form of a property qualification or the exclusion of women. Universal suffrage was not established in the UK until 1928, when women gained full voting rights. In the USA it was not achieved until the early 1960s, when African-American people in many Southern states were able to vote for the first time, and in Switzerland it was established in 1971 when women were eventually enfranchised. Nevertheless, an important restriction continues to be practised in all democratic systems in the form of the exclusion of children from political participation, although the age of majority ranges from 21 down to as low as 15 (as in Iranian presidential elections). Technical restrictions are also often placed on, for example, the certifiably insane and imprisoned criminals.

Although 'the people' is now accepted as meaning virtually all adult citizens, the term can be construed in a number of different ways. The people, for instance, can be viewed as a single, cohesive body, bound together by a common or collective interest: in this sense, the people are one and indivisible. Such a view tends to generate a model of democracy that, like Rousseau's (see p. 75) theory, examined in the next main section, focuses upon the 'general will' or collective will, rather than the 'private will' of each individual. Alternatively, as division and disagreement exist within all communities, 'the people' may in practice be taken to mean 'the majority'. In this case, democracy comes to mean the strict application of the principle of majority rule, in which the will of the majority or numerically strongest overrides the will of the minority. This can nevertheless mean that democracy degenerates into 'the tyranny of the majority'. Finally, the people can be thought of as a collection of free and equal individuals, each of whom has a right to make autonomous decisions. Not only does this view clearly contradict any form of **majoritarianism**, but it also implies that, in the final analysis, only unanimous decisions can be binding upon the *demos*, and so dramatically restricts the application of democratic principles.

## How should the people rule?

Most conceptions of democracy are based on the principle of 'government *by* the people'. This implies that, in effect, people govern themselves - that they participate in making the crucial decisions that structure their lives and determine the fate of their society. This participation can take a number of forms, however. In the case of direct democracy, popular participation entails direct and continuous involvement in decision-making, through devices such as referendums, mass meetings, or even interactive television. The alternative and more common form of democratic participation is the act of voting, which is the central feature of what is usually called representative democracy. When citizens vote, they do not so much make the decisions

### Concept

#### Political equality

In broad terms, political equality means an equal distribution of political power and influence. Political equality can thus be thought of as the core principle of democracy, in that it ensures that, however 'the people' is defined, each individual member carries the same weight: all voices are equally loud. This can be understood in two ways. In liberal-democratic theory, political equality implies an equal distribution of political rights: the right to vote, the right to stand for election and so on. This is often summed up as the principle 'one person, one vote; one vote, one value'. In contrast, socialists, amongst others, link political influence to factors such as the control of economic resources and access to the means of mass communication. From this perspective, political equality implies not merely equal voting rights, but also a significant level of social equality.

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**Majoritarianism:** A theory or practice in which priority is accorded to the will of the majority; majoritarianism implies insensitivity towards minorities and individuals.

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## Focus on . . .

### Direct democracy and representative democracy

Direct democracy (sometimes 'participatory democracy') is based on the direct, unmediated and continuous participation of citizens in the tasks of government. Direct democracy thus obliterates the distinction between government and the governed and between the state and civil society; it is a system of popular self-government. It was achieved in ancient Athens through a form of government by mass meeting; its most common modern manifestation is the use of the referendum (see p. 226). The merits of direct democracy include the following:

- It heightens the control that citizens can exercise over their own destinies, as it

that structure their own lives as choose who will make those decisions on their behalf. What gives voting its democratic character, however, is that, provided that the election is competitive, it empowers the public to 'kick the rascals out', and it thus makes politicians publicly accountable.

There are also models of democracy that are built on the principle of 'government for the people', and that allow little scope for public participation of any kind, direct or indirect. The most grotesque example of this was found in the so-called **totalitarian democracies** that developed under fascist dictators such as Mussolini and Hitler. The democratic credentials of such regimes were based on the claim that the 'leader', and the leader alone, articulated the genuine interests of the people, thus implying that a 'true' democracy can be equated with an absolute dictatorship. In such cases,

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**Totalitarian democracy:** An absolute dictatorship that masquerades as a democracy, typically based on the leader's claim to a monopoly of ideological wisdom.

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popular rule meant nothing more than ritualized submission to the will of an all-powerful leader, orchestrated through rallies, marches and demonstrations. This was sometimes portrayed as Plebiscitary democracy. Although totalitarian democracies have proved to be a travesty of the conventional notion of democratic rule, they demonstrate the tension that can exist between 'government *by* the people' (or popular participation), and 'government *for* the people' (rule in the public interest). Advocates of representative democracy, for example, have wished to confine popular participation in politics to the act of voting, precisely because they fear that the general public lack the wisdom, education and experience to rule wisely on their own behalf.

**Concept**

**Plebiscitary democracy**

Plebiscitary democracy is a form of democratic rule that operates through an unmediated link between the rulers and the ruled, established by plebiscites (or referendums). These allow the public to express their views on political issues directly. This is thus a species of direct, or participatory, democracy. However, this type of democracy is often criticized because of the scope it offers for demagoguery (rule by political leaders who manipulate the masses through oratory, and appeal to their prejudices and passions). This type of democracy amounts to little more than a system of mass acclamation that gives dictatorship a populist (see p. 354) gloss. There is, nevertheless, a distinction between plebiscitary democracy and the use of referendums to supplement a system of representative democracy.

**How far should popular rule extend?**

Now that we have decided who the people are, and how they should rule, it is necessary to consider how far their rule should extend. What is the proper realm of democracy? What issues is it right for the people to decide, and what should be left to individual citizens? In many respects, such questions reopen the debate about the proper relationship between the public realm and the private realm that was discussed in Chapter 1. Models of democracy that have been constructed on the basis of liberal individualism have usually proposed that democracy be restricted to political life, with politics being narrowly defined. From this perspective, the purpose of democracy is to establish, through some process of popular participation, a framework of laws within which individuals can conduct their own affairs and pursue their private interests. Democratic solutions, then, are appropriate only for matters that specifically relate to the community; used in other circumstances, democracy amounts to an infringement of liberty. Not uncommonly, this fear of democracy is reflected in a rejection of direct or participatory forms of democracy.

However, an alternative view of democracy is often developed by, for example, socialists and radical democrats. In **radical democracy**, democracy is seen not as a means of laying down a framework within which individuals can go about their own business, but rather as a general principle that is applicable to all areas of social existence. People are seen as having a basic right to participate in the making of *any* decisions that affect their lives, with democracy simply being the collective process through which this is done. This position is evident in socialist demands for the collectivization of wealth and the introduction of workers' self-management, both of which are seen as ways of democratizing economic life. Instead of endorsing mere political democracy, socialists have therefore called for 'social democracy' or 'industrial democracy'. Feminists, similarly, have demanded the democratization of family life, understood as the right of all to participate in the making of decisions in the domestic or private sphere. From this perspective, democracy is regarded as a friend of liberty, not as its enemy. Only when such principles are ignored can oppression and exploitation flourish.

**Models of democracy**

All too frequently, democracy is treated as a single, unambiguous phenomenon. It is often assumed that what passes for democracy in most western societies (a system of regular and competitive elections based on a universal franchise) is the only, or the only legitimate, form of democracy. Sometimes this notion of democracy is qualified

**Radical democracy:** A form of democracy that favours decentralization and participation, the widest possible dispersal of political power.

by the addition of the term 'liberal', turning it into liberal democracy (see p. 30). In reality, however, there are a number of rival theories or models of democracy, each offering its own version of popular rule. This highlights not merely the variety of democratic forms and mechanisms, but also, more fundamentally, the very different grounds on which democratic rule can be justified. Even liberal democracy is a misleading term, as competing liberal views of democratic organization can be identified. Four contrasting models of democracy can be identified as follows:

- classical democracy
- protective democracy
- developmental democracy
- people's democracy.

## Classical democracy

The classical model of democracy is based on the *polis*, or city-state, of Ancient Greece, and particularly on the system of rule that developed in the largest and most powerful Greek city-state, Athens. The form of direct democracy that operated in Athens during the fourth and fifth centuries BCE is often portrayed as the only pure or ideal system of popular participation. Nevertheless, although the model had considerable impact on later thinkers such as Rousseau (see p. 75) and Marx (see p. 53), Athenian democracy developed a very particular kind of direct popular rule, one that has only a very limited application in the modern world. Athenian democracy amounted to a form of government by mass meeting. All major decisions were made by the Assembly, or *Ecclesia*, to which all citizens belonged. This met at least 40 times a year. When full-time public officials were needed, they were chosen on a basis of lot or rota to ensure that they constituted a microcosm of the larger citizenry, and terms of office were typically short to achieve the broadest possible participation. A Council consisting of 500 citizens acted as the executive or steering committee of the Assembly, and a 50-strong Committee, in turn, made proposals to the Council. The President of the Committee held office for only a single day, and no Athenian could hold this honour more than once in his lifetime. The only concession made to the need for training and experience was in the case of the ten military generals, who, unlike other public officials, were eligible for reelection.

What made Athenian democracy so remarkable was the level of political activity of its citizens. Not only did they participate in regular meetings of the Assembly but they were, in large numbers, prepared to shoulder the responsibility of public office and decision-making. The most influential contemporaneous critic of this form of democracy was the philosopher Plato (see p. 13). Plato attacked the principle of political equality on the grounds that the mass of the people possess neither the wisdom nor the experience to rule wisely on their own behalf. His solution, advanced in *The Republic*, was that government be placed in the hands of a class of philosopher kings, the Guardians, whose rule would amount to a kind of enlightened dictatorship. On a practical level, however, the principal drawback of Athenian democracy was that it could operate only by excluding the mass of the population from political activity. Participation was restricted to Athenian-born males who were over 20 years of age. Slaves (the majority of the population), women and foreigners had no political rights whatsoever. Indeed, Athenian citizens were able to devote so much of their lives to politics only because slavery relieved them of the need to engage in