The Politics of the Modern World

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In order to understand the politics of today we need to appreciate the trends of the last century (1920-2020), but to do in terms that reflect contemporary categories and issues and the way in which developments since 1990 have called into question earlier assertions.

Secular ideologies in the twentieth century tended to depend on the notion of progress and the improvability of mankind, and thus rejected the Christian lapsarian view of human existence with its emphasis on sin and on mankind's fallible nature. Although they varied in their political, economic, social and cultural analyses and prescriptions, such ideologies shared a belief that it is possible and necessary to improve the human condition, and that such a goal gives meaning to politics and society. In short, reform was seen as a goal in itself, and progress as attainable. There was only limited support for continuity and stability, as opposed to reform, as public goals; and for an institution or government to pledge itself to inaction was unthinkable. Instead, as, very differently, with Islamic and Christian fundamentalism, conservative policies were primarily propounded in terms of a return to an earlier situation (true or mythical), and thus as reform through reaction against a perception of the present, rather than as a static maintenance of the present position.

The sway of reform reflected the major role of the state in the economy and social welfare, and its power. All of these factors increased in most countries during the century, even where the authority of the dynasties that had ruled at the beginning of the century was replaced by governments that could be removed by the electorate. Commitment to change rested on prudential considerations, especially the need to modernise in order to compete successfully on the international scale, but also, generally far less prudently, on powerful ideological currents. Reform, as a means and goal, was the foremost secular ideology of the century, and one that was shared by governments of very different political outlook, and there is no sign that this will change.

However, across the world, reform meant very different attitudes and policies, and focused both on improving and on abandoning the past. This was true not only of domestic policies but also of those abroad, both foreign policies and imperialism. Thus reform could entail the development of empires, but also their dissolution. Like freedom, liberty, and justice, reform was a value-laden term. Reform could mean both more and less government intervention, and this helped to contribute to controversy. The general thrust during the century was for more intervention. From the 1920s, and, even more, 1930s, until the advance of neo-liberalism in the late 1970s and 1980s, state intervention in the economy was conventionally seen in terms of reform. Planning reflected a strong current of collectivism.

Prior to World War One, the liberal (ie. progressive) reform movements that had been so important in the late-nineteenth century had enjoyed a fresh activist burst, with the 'New Liberalism' in power in Britain from 1905 and the consequent enactment of social welfare reforms, and with the Progressive Era in the USA. However, there was an ambiguous relationship between liberalism and the socialism that was becoming increasingly influential among the working classes of the developed world.

World War One put a brake on progressivism, although, for the combatants, it led to a major extension of state power and enabled governments to circumvent many of the constraints and exigencies of pre-war politics. The war was followed by a conservative reaction, not least in the USA, that reflected hostility to socialism and concern about the example of the Russian Revolution. As a consequence, the 1920s, especially in the USA, saw an emphasis on a non-interventionist role by the state, although such a bland remark does not do justice to the depths of social tension in 1919-22 that included a very heavy level of labour conflict that had wider political and ethnic resonances.

Egalitarianism

Across most of the world, the combination of the 1930s Depression and World War Two put paid to the *laissez-faire* state and to self-help in social welfare. More generally, both in the 1930s and throughout the century, 'welfare' in part represented the apparent triumph of human agencies in society over spiritual responses to life. Expressed through a variety of political systems, egalitarianism - the belief that all people should have equal shares in society's rights, benefits and duties - encouraged planning in order to offset what was seen as the less equal character of liberal (ie. capitalist) economies, as well as to counteract the problems that they encountered.

The belief that people are equal and should be treated equally was classically associated with the left. In societies that had 'mixed economies', with much of industry outside state control, this created the problem of how best to manage the relationship between socialism and capitalism. It proved difficult to turn the rhetoric of egalitarianism on the left into reality. Indeed, it can be argued that a belief in equality of opportunity was employed, on both left and right, to justify inequality in the name of meritocracy, with the assumption that meritocracy would lessen the social costs of inequality.

Egalitarianism as a goal or rhetorical strategy was not restricted to the left. Right-wing populists, with their talk of the people or nation, advocated a notion of community. Paternalist conservatives were inspired by a number of views, including a sense that a nation has an organic character (is like a body), and, therefore, that the health of one was the health of all. Other conservatives stressed the need for opportunity for all. This led to a 'Social Darwinism', seen strongly in American attitudes, in which the possibility of social mobility was regarded as providing judgement on, and the excuse for, very different levels of material success, and employed to deny any need for redistributive state action. Some other right-wing groups advocated policies of simple class interest or a reactionary opposition to change, particularly in the first half of the century.

In the second half of the century, it became more common for all regimes, whatever their character, to proclaim a support for human rights for all. This was even true of dictatorships and limited democracies across the world. Thus, although an Islamic dictatorship, the Sudanese government issued a new constitution in 1999 which promised freedom of religion, expression and association. The Green Book that contained the thoughts of Colonel Qaddafi, leader of Libya from 1969, declared that 'Wealth, weapons and power lie with the people', but there was neither democracy nor free debate in Libya. Hafez Assad, leader of Syria from 1970 (officially President from 1971) until his death in 2000, gained power as a result of a coup and relied heavily on the secret police, but claimed to rule in accordance with the constitution and preserved a parliament. The governing Baath party in Syria was socialist and republican, but the reality of power was a dictatorship. The same was true of post-

Soviet Uzbekistan under Islam Karimov who cancelled the election due in 1996, and of post-Soviet Belarus under Alexander Lukashenka. One-party states claimed that their non-existent democracy represented 'real democracy'. Elections were set aside in the name of progress. The military rulers of Myanmar (Burma) refused to heed the election of 1990 and, as first the State Law and Order Council and, from 1997, the State Peace and Development Council, claimed to secure stability and development. Communist China is a 'people's republic' and holds elections, but there is no alternative to the governing group.

Across the world, countries proclaimed equal justice for all as central to the state-supported rule of law. However, many people lacked access to law. This was true not only of the administration of justice by the agencies of the state, but also of the absence of legally-protected rights to property and other assets. Thus, for much of the world's population across the entire century, the world of law was not that of the state and its agents, who frequently appeared either distant and unwilling, or too close and corruptly self-serving, to help, but really a searching after expedients, especially the help of local kinship networks. This does not conform to the usual formulations of political thought, but the notion of loyalty to kin and connection was a powerful adhesive, not least in the face of hostile public institutions, but not only in response to them.

Individualism

Interacting with these varied positions came the political spectrum from corporatism - the amalgamation of people into blocs, which were then seen as representing them - to libertarianism. In the shape of individualism, the latter was a powerful social current which became more potent from the 1960s, although it was also important earlier. Thus, the notion, among those championing female emancipation, that women did not need to behave in accordance with the dominant behaviour pattern ascribed to them was designed to be liberating. Migration can be seen as another important aspect of individualism, as it represented a rejection of homeland, generally in order to provide opportunity and improve material circumstances, as well, frequently, as to obtain liberty. This was important throughout the century and for all parts of the world, bringing an interdependence that challenged notions of community and politics based on ethnicity, but also placing a major stress on existing ideas of identity.

The most successful countries were able to define a different basis for community and politics to that of ethnicity. Thus, the USA, which took in nearly a million immigrants annually in 1901-14, and approaching double that figure in some years of the 1990s, created an American culture that was more successful than most in overcoming sectoral differences; although this, like immigration, was not without serious difficulties. The position of African Americans/Blacks/Negroes (terms varied during the century, as did their acceptability) was a particular issue for, but American notions of opportunity and inclusion, black separatism and radicalism failed to develop as mass movements, and most black leaders pursued community interests through mainstream politics, particularly the Democratic Party. The fluid character of America was shown in the 2000 census when, thanks to Latino and other immigration, the number of Californians describing themselves as 'white' became a minority. In addition, by 2000, there were at least seven million illegal immigrants in the USA. This demographic shift in the second half of the century led to a multiculturalism that was important to the nature of American political culture.

Libertarianism became more powerful in the West in the 1960s, first as an aspect of lifestyles that were uneasily contained within existing social structures, and eventually as an anti-authoritarian individualism which

helped, in much of the world, in the overthrow of collectivist notions in the 1980s and 1990s. Libertarianism was the cult of self, and was linked with a whole transformation in the language of politics and society away from duties and responsibilities, and towards rights. This was related to the triumph of capitalism in the shape of consumerism, and also reached back to the period before large-scale government intervention in social and economic life.

Participation in Politics

Other variations in the world of ideas included the extent of popular participation in politics and the nature of wealth. Many political systems, but conspicuously not the USA, deliberately sought to restrict popular participation, most obviously by only allowing it under the auspices of a one-party state. Separately, repeatedly, throughout the century, it was notable how active participation in the political process was limited, as many people chose not to vote and even more never belonged to a political party. Indeed, much ideology did not have an impact, in so far as eliciting popular participation and strong enthusiasm is concerned. Religions were more effective under this head, as were political movements, especially Nazism, that were pseudo- or quasi-religions, characterised by messianic fervour, millenarian vision, apocalyptic imagery, and charismatic leadership. It is depressing to note that liberal, free-market, pro-capitalist values generally lacked a strong populist appeal to match the obvious appeal of having 'one's own stuff.'

The nature of wealth in the community was also important to political ideologies. Where capital ownership was widely distributed, through the direct ownership of wealth, indirect ownership in pension funds, or as a consequence of property ownership, this generally created a political culture that was more liberal and less sympathetic to state controls than in other societies. In all countries, the desire to own property had a greater capacity to focus aspirations than wider political movements. This is not a tendency that plays a major role in political thought, but home ownership was the prime ideological commitment in many societies, not least the most powerful, America. These policies were encouraged by public policy, in the shape of relief on mortgages.

Democratisation and its Opponents

Alongside these factors, it is necessary to emphasise the importance, in social and political thought and change, of democratisation: the process of becoming responsive to the popular will, or to aspects and impressions thereof, a process often decried as populism. The popular will is a concept that is difficult to judge, but is no less important for that. The struggle for democracy is generally thought of in terms of gaining representative government and the vote, but that was incomplete without democratisation. Indeed, democracy created a new means for validating a power structure and social system that was frequently essentially impervious to democratic pressures, and notably so if entrenched in a strong state corporated system. This impervious characteristic was contested by democratisation, which entailed both a reconceptualisation of the state, so that it represented, at least in theory, the organised will of the people, and, building on this, the use of the state to try to change society.

That democracy would entail such changes led, in opposition, to a powerful assertion of elitist practices, and sometimes views in many countries. What was known in East Asia as 'money politics' – the frequently corrupt shared direction of government and the economy by political and economic cliques – was widespread

across the world. Indeed corruption subverted both the popular will in democracies, and the reforming, or at least controlling, aspirations of authoritarian regimes, and lessened support for both forms of government. Corruption received a powerful impetus from the major expansion of the illegal narcotic drug industry from the 1960s. Crime took to globalisation as readily as other forms of free-enterprise. In some countries, such as Burma, Colombia and Peru, insurrectionary movements derived much of their revenue from criminal activities, especially the drug trade, and this challenged governmental authority, law and order, and social peace, in autocracies and democracies alike. In Colombia, where guerrilla groups competed with right-wing paramilitaries, and both attacked the public, civil society broke down in the late 1990s, with 23,172 killings alone reported in 1999, and the flight abroad of large numbers in response to the chaos.

Hostility to accountability was also, frequently effectively, demonstrated in many democracies, albeit in an implicit, not overt, manner, by the unwillingness of, often self-defining, elites, such as judiciaries, or town planners, university academics, or public broadcasters, to accept popular beliefs and pastimes as worthy of value and attention, and their conviction that they were best placed to manage and define social values. The extension of the scope of government during the century exacerbated this condescending and anti-democratic paternalistic tendency, because much of it entailed social policing. Both in authoritarian societies and in democracies, behaviour deemed anti-social in the spheres of education, health, housing, personal conduct, and law and order, all became a matter for scrutiny, admonition, and, in many cases, control by the agencies of the state. This was pushed far in Singapore, a democracy that had one-party rule under the People's Action Party from 1959.

The Expansion of the State

State spending as a percentage of GDP in the wealthy OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries rose from 25 in 1965 to 37 in 2000, by when GDP was far greater. However, the expansion of the public sector created a serious burden on the remainder of the economy. In addition, across the world, the expansion of government agencies and extension of state control brought income and status to those who ran, or benefited from, government. In many countries, state employees were able to negotiate their way into a relatively safe and comfortable position, and in some, such as Portugal in the 1990s, they were also better paid on average. This expansion of government often had a powerful class component, and was linked to the prestige of 'white-collar' over 'blue-collar' occupations. In addition, the continuation and spread of Western-style bureaucracies in states that gained their independence from colonial rule were important in the definition of new patterns of social ranking and behaviour. These bureaucracies frequently absorbed a large share of state revenues, and helped ensure that a prime function of government appeared to be the employment of public officials. Thus, from the 1950s until 1985, Egypt provided such jobs for all university graduates, and, in 2001, there were still about six million people employed by the Egyptian government.

Much of the domestic history of states across the world can be presented in terms of the demands and tensions created by democratisation. These were not simply material, but could be seen in social politics, namely the workings of society understood as reflecting the distribution and nature of power within society. The impact of democratisation could be seen clearly in education policy and in welfare. In most countries, at least in theory, inclusive governmental practices, stemming from universal provision in crucial fields such as education, health

and military service, were important. So also was populism. This was encouraged by the explicitly democratic political language of left-wing political movements, many of whose activists came from the trade unions. Right-wing populism was also important. From the 1960s, there was also a widespread reaction against deference and hierarchy that affected most organisations and careers, and also relations between people and organisations such as the police. More widely, pressure groups challenged existing arrangements and sought to stir up and/or direct public demand for change.

Far from suggesting that democratisation implied one social agenda or political programme, its importance lay in the degree to which it gave vitality to democracy, translating it, in particular, from politics to society. At the same time, democratisation tended, in its focus on customers/voters/members, and its emphasis on rights, not responsibilities, to make it harder for institutions to operate. This helped undermine Communism in Eastern Europe.

A powerful contrary pressure arose from globalisation, specifically the rise of multinational companies in national economies and their extension into the service sector. With foreign bases and ownerships, such companies were, in part, removed from the scrutiny and control of national agencies and opinion. Globalisation also posed a potential challenge to national identity. The tension between globalisation and democratisation was readily apparent in the second half of the century, not least in countries that dismantled command economies and embraced pluralistic democratic systems. This tension, in states such as South Africa in the 1990s, was exacerbated by high levels of poverty and by expectations of improvement of living conditions through public policy. Despite their economic value, it proved difficult in many states to win popular support for neo-liberal policies of privatisation and the free market, and this posed a question mark about the stability of states that embraced them in the 1990s. This was particularly true in Latin America. However, the failing economies of states that did not do so, such as Cuba, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, were scarcely an advertisement for opposition to liberalisation; and nor were many (although far from all) state-run companies and services. Furthermore, with most economies increasingly dependent on outside trade, investment, and energy supplies, there was a need to satisfy external demands for economic openness and political reliability, if not accountability.

National and Local Government

At a different level, it is important to note the widespread failure to address localism when considering ideas and beliefs. This part of a more general neglect of local identities and government. It is easy to understand because, on the whole, the expanded role for government throughout the world led to a development in the power and pretensions of the central state, rather than of local government. In part, this was due to the traditionalism of local authorities, but the dynamic of central planning and financial control was more important. Across the world, the greater role of local government, where it occurred, generally arose from initiatives by central government and was usually not matched by an ability to formulate policy.

The relationship between central and local government was a prime instance of the competition for power and scarce resources that affected and shaped government and politics throughout the century. In some countries, for example Lebanon in the 1980s and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the state collapsed and power atomised, but in countries where the state maintained coherence it was rare for the central government not to gain

power. In the USA, the federal principle remained active and state governments continued to have a central role in domestic government, but the focus, from the early 1940s, on international threats and global responsibilities - the rise of the 'national security state' - ensured that the central government played a greater role than hitherto, fuelled by the military-industrial complex.

In India, the greater authority of the central government from the 1960s reflected not the response to external challenges but rather a shift, also seen in many other countries, from politics and government understood as an accommodation of a number of interests and centres of power, to a more centralised and less pluralist notion of authority. This owed much to a conviction of the value of government intervention and planning as a means to modernisation and growth, and also reflected the difficulty of fulfilling goals for the latter.

Politics and Ethnicity

An account of politics and ideology that says so little about Fascism and Communism may seem perverse, but each was a failure. Fascism was destroyed as a significant force with Adolf Hitler, dictator of Germany in 1933-45. His National Socialism rested on a personality cult and a confused mixture of racialism, nationalism, and a belief in modernisation through force. Force certainly characterised Hitler's regime, with a brutal attitude towards those judged unacceptable that culminated as a genocidal attack on what were seen as lesser species, particularly Jews.

In a horrific form, the Nazi concentration and extermination camps, mostly notably Auschwitz, testified to a far more widespread use of concepts of race in order to rank peoples and develop and express national and international cohesion. This was more common in the political thought of the century than is generally appreciated, and was particularly important in the state-building that followed decolonisation and the ebbing of traditional political allegiances. Thus, in Egypt in the 1950s, the republican revolution of 1952 was followed by pan-Arab nationalism. This, however, proved weaker than state power, and most attempts to link Arab countries, such as the union of Egypt and Syria in the United Arab Republic (1958-61), were shortlived. The 1990 merger between North and South Yemen rested on many years of conflict.

However, whatever its weakness as a basis for international movements, ethnicity proved more successful as an ideology for countries and ruling groups. This was true in the Third World, for example the Malay nationalism of the United Malays National Organisation, which has governed the country since independence in 1957. The Mongolian state based its identity on an ethnic consciousness that included concern about how best to sustain racial purity. This also led to the expulsion of large numbers of ethnic Chinese in the 1960s. At the same time the Halh-majority language and culture in Mongolia was supported at the expense of other Mongolian groupings, some of which were referred to as half-breeds.

The religious logic of Pakistan as the Islamic state created out of British India in 1947 was subverted by ethnic politics, specifically the mistreatment of the Bengali majority of East Pakistan by governments based in West Pakistan, leading in 1971 to a unsuccessful revolt, and, after an Indian invasion, the Indian-supported creation of the new state of Bangladesh. In turn, Bangladesh's governments mistreated minority non-Bengalis, particularly the Chakmas near Chittagong. Like many other peoples across the world, these and other Bangladeshi tribal peoples were subjected to assimilationist pressures, and also found that both autocratic and

civilian governments followed hostile policies. The power of the state was generally directed against those judged outside the fold of patronage structures and the government's image of its people. Aside from land seizures, the Chakmas suffered from the flooding of land by a dam, the Kaptai dam; a fate similar to that of others across the world with a weak hold in the political system.

Ethnicity also increasingly became a national ideology in Europe after the fall of the Romanov (1917) and Habsburg (1918) empires and, again, in the 1990s, after the fall of Communism. Yet, the new states faced separatism struggles of their own, as the principle and practice of national self-determination confronted the inchoate and controverted nature of nationhood across much of the world. Countries were rarely homogeneous ethnic groups separated by clear-cut boundaries. As a result, although it was welcomed as a progressive idea, self-determination as the basis for nation-creation, like nationalism and decolonization, was also a cause of international instability. The principle of self-determination failed to address the issue of who was allowed to seek it. In 1960, the United Nations stated that all 'peoples' had the right to self-determination, but it was not clear how 'peoples' were to be defined. They could be 'constructed' as much as nations. For example, the Ovimbundu of Angola were presented as a single 'polity', but, in practice, were a dozen warring tribes.

States sought to deny efforts by minorities to pursue self-determination. Across much of the world, force was used to suppress regional separatism. Successive Ethiopian regimes unsuccessfully sought to control Eritrea, where a war of secession was waged between 1961 and 1991, eventually leading to the creation of a new state. Katanganese separatism was suppressed by Congo with United Nations support in 1963, while in 1966 the Ugandan army suppressed a secession attempt by the Kingdom of Buganda: the new state taking precedence over other loyalties.

In 1967-70, Biafra, the political expression of Ibo nationalism - unsuccessfully sought independence from Nigeria in a conflict fuelled by ethnic fear and hatred. The slaughter of possibly 30,000 Ibos after a coup in 1966 led to a collapse of Ibo support for the notion of Nigeria. The Nigerian government was unsympathetic to the Ibo demand for a looser confederation, while the Ibo leadership challenged the legality of the federal government and increasingly took steps towards autonomy. The resulting 'police operation' led to a full-scale civil war. The 'warfulness' of the domestic political situation was readily translated into civil war, thanks to the prominent role of the military in government and because there was already a high level of civil violence. The atrocities committed against civilians by both sides in the Biafran conflict were all too common in separatist wars, reflecting the crucial argument of ethnic numbers, the polarisation of civil politics, and the commitment of military regimes to holding states together.

Such attitudes led to a politics of exclusion, seen at one level in hostility in many countries towards migrant workers. This exclusion culminated in periodic genocides, such as the Turkish slaughter of the Armenians in 1915, or the genocide in Hutu-ruled Rwanda in 1994 in which about 800,000 Tutsis were killed, as well as the harsh treatment of Hutus by Tutsi-ruled Burundi, or the brutal assertion and expansionism attempted by Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s. The Croatian Democratic Union was typical in the authoritarianism of its leader, Franjo Tudjman, who became President of Croatia in 1991, and in its use of nationalism to provide both identity and rationale.

Such ethnic nationalism was not always on behalf of the largest community within a country. Indeed, in South Africa, Afrikaner supremacism was specifically designed to keep power from the majority black community. This led to the concept of apartheid, or separate development, which culminated in the idea of creating Bantustans: apparently independent states in which most Black South Africans were to be confined. Developed by Hendrik Verwoerd and Johannes Vorster, Prime Ministers in 1958-66 and 1966-79 respectively, this concept is a reminder of the need to avoid glib remarks about 1960s values as if they enjoyed a global following. That was also the decade Nixon rose to power. Apartheid legislation had been propagated from 1948, when the National Party gained power under Daniel Malan (Prime Minister until 1954). Crucial legislation included the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts (1950), and the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act (1970). Apartheid existed at a number of levels. There was detailed segregation at the level of parts of buildings and transport facilities; a re-spatialization of cities, as Blacks were moved, for residential, although not employment, purposes, out of town centres; and the redefinition and resettlement of large parts of the rural hinterland as homelands were created by dictat. Four of these Bantustans were declared independent: Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977), Venda (1979), and Ciskei (1981). None was to last. At the same time, the hostile international response to South Africa, which led to an arms boycott and to economic sanctions, which denied the country foreign investment, indicated that some regimes were, at least publicly, unacceptable

Ethnic consciousness challenged states that sought to offer a pan-ethnic national consciousness, such as Indonesia or post-apartheid South Africa, where, in the 1990s, the Zulu Inkatha movement opposed the inclusiveness of the African National Congress. Czechoslovakia, a state created in 1918 from the ruins of the Habsburg empire, faced longstanding tensions between Czechs and Slovaks, that led to separate states in 1939-45 and then again from 1992, while difficulties with German and Hungarian minorities led to the expulsion of the Germans in 1945. In Cyprus, tension between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and the intervention of Greece and Turkey, culminating with a Turkish invasion in 1974, led to a partition of the island on ethnic grounds, with large-scale movements of people.

In Indonesia, the 1990s brought a strengthening of ethnic tension and regional consciousness, with widespread violence. Thus, in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), from 1997, native Dayaks fought Madurans who had immigrated from the 1950s, in part with government encouragement: thinking of Indonesia as a unit, the government sought to move people from areas of overcrowding, although without any consultation with the population in the receiving areas. Adding to the horror of this conflict, beheading played a major role in the violence: it was important in traditional Dayak culture, was seen as the way to win favourable magic, and is a reminder of the persistence of such ideas. In Indonesia, ethnic rivalry was linked to tension over resources, particularly land and jobs. This could also be seen in less-violent confrontations, for example in the central highlands of Vietnam in the 1990s, where long-established tribesmen resisted immigration by lowlanders who cleared the land they occupied for cash crops. Again, this was the reality of politics in a century where they have been too readily discussed in terms of clashing ideologies. Although the form of the slaughter in Kalimantan was very different to the gas chambers used in the Nazi concentration camps, the underlying reality was the same, and is a reminder of the grim durability of hatred during the century, and its role in politics. Under pressure, some

societies, such as Somalia in the 1990s and Syria in the 2010s, moved from the state basis of a national government to the clan or ethnic basis of regional power.

Important differences between states in terms of their treatment of ethnic issues reflected and sustained distinct social and political circumstances: endogamy (marriage within the clan) was more common in some countries than others and the latter were more tolerant societies. Thus, in the USA, sexual and marital relations between members of different ethnic groups became more important during the century, particularly from the 1960s. Similarly, in Australia, a lessening of ethnicity as a source of identity led not only to a willingness to take large numbers of immigrants from Asia, but also, in 1962, to the granting of the vote to the Aborigines, the indigenous population. Five years later, the constitution of 1901 was changed so that Aborigines were included in the census. The Aborigines continued to have lower living standards and their cultural assumptions were not those of an increasingly urban society, but public discrimination diminished. In the 1960s, the policy of seizing the children of mixed parents from their Aborigine mothers and committing them to institutions where they were to be brought up as 'whites' was abandoned. It had reflected the fusion of racism with the social policing and eugenicism that were so strong in the first half of the century, when steps had also been taken to wipe out Aboriginal languages.

Authoritarianism

Alongside discussion of democratisation, it is necessary to recall the number of occasions during the century in which democratic governments were replaced by the military, especially in Latin America and Africa, but also in Asia and Europe. This was particularly true of the creation of military regimes, for example Chile after the 1973 coup, but also of changes in civilian governments, such as those of Peru and Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1992, President Alberto Fujimori used the army to shut down Peru's Congress and courts. Although military leaders could act as reforming figures, with Atäturk in Turkey as the best example, most lacked any such intention and could only offer an authoritarianism they termed order. The creation of the Chinese republic as a result of the 1911 revolution saw power go to the strongest army commander, Yuan Shikai, and Sun Yatsen (1866-1925), the founder of China's Nationalist Party, felt obliged to resign the presidency to him in 1912. Unwilling to accept parliamentary opposition or provincial autonomy, Yuan acted as a dictator from 1913, and in 1916 became emperor. However, it proved difficult for a new ruler to recover the mystique of earlier monarchs and, in the face of growing opposition, Yuan rapidly ceased to call himself emperor and soon after died. An attempt in 1917 by another general to restore the last Manchu emperor also failed.

These events reflected the more general difficulty of creating new monarchical dynasties and the growing weakness of legitimist positions. Most monarchies were overthrown, and those that continued (for example Japan, Thailand, Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium) or were revived (Spain) did not wield political control. Most dictators sought to present themselves in populist terms, or at least as expressions of a supposed national will. In Indonesia, General Suharto, who became President in 1968, sought to establish a New Order designed to replace ethnic and religious divisions and to ensure economic growth, and created a party, Golkar, to rally support for his army-based regime. In Afghanistan, King Mohammed Zahir Shah

was overthrown in 1973 in favour of his cousin, Mohammad Daud, who renounced his royal titles and made himself President and Prime Minister.

Dictators also appealed to a desire for order, stability and competence, rather than to a continuity based on legitimism, although in many states, for example Turkey in 1960 and 1980, the military staged coups in order to maintain what they saw as the constitution.

The frequency of violent seizures of power suggests that it is unwise to write about politics and government without taking note of them. In Latin America, there were frequent coups, as in Venezuela in 1948 and 1958, Peru in 1948, 1961 and 1967, Bolivia in 1951, Colombia in 1953 and 1957, Guatemala in 1954, 1978, 1982 and 1983, Argentina in 1955, 1962, 1966, 1970 and 1976, the Dominican Republic in 1963, Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973, Grenada in 1983 and Ecuador in 2000. In addition, there were military rebellions, for example in Brazil in 1954 and Argentina in 1988. Many of the military regimes were longlasting, in Brazil for example from 1964 until 1985. It was no accident that secret police forces, such as the Iranian Savak and its Islamic successor, became one of the most important props of such regimes. They also helped mould their ethos.

In the short-term, such regimes, whether military or civilian dictatorships, were far less powerful or rigid in practice than they appeared, and could only operate by accepting the circumvention of their nostrums and structures, by their own members, as well as by vested interests, and by the public itself; a situation that helped undermine confidence in autocracy and Communism alike. In the long-term, these regimes found it difficult to contain political problems and satisfy popular demands. This was true not only of Europe and Latin America but also of other cultures. Thus, in the Philippines, the civilian dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, who had become President in 1965, was overthrown by popular opposition in 1986; while, in Thailand, the military lost power in 1992 (and the government fell to popular disaffection again in 1997), and, in Indonesia, Suharto was forced to surrender power in 1998 after thirty-two years in office. This process revealed widespread popular hostility to the paternalistic views that state-backed economic growth enabled governments to dispense with democratic scrutiny. In Bahrain in the Persian Gulf, where Parliament was suspended in 1975, after a brief period of democracy, civil liberties and constitutional government were reintroduced from 1999. In 2000, the decade-long rule of Serbia by Slobodan Milosevic came to an end when popular protest forced him to respect the results of an election; the rule of Peru by Alberto Fujimori also collapsed that year. In 2000, the Kuomintang, which had ruled Taiwan from 1949, as the last relic of its earlier government of China, lost a presidential election, a convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of the multi-party politics that had not been tolerated there in the early decades of Kuomintang rule.

The authoritarian regimes termed Fascist after 1945, especially Paraquay under Alberto Stroessner (President 1954-89) and Spain under Francisco Franco (1939-75), were of no importance as a model for developments elsewhere, although they testified to the conservative social and cultural policies that many authoritarian states pursued. A different result from World War Two would, however, have led to a situation in which fascist states, such as those allied to Hitler, for example Slovakia and Croatia, were more common. In Europe after 1945, the nationalist, traditional far-right was discredited by World War Two, tainted by collaboration, or, in Eastern Europe (bar Greece), brutally suppressed by the Communists. Instead, Christian Democracy emerged as a powerful force, particularly in West Germany and Italy, but also in the Benelux

countries. This movement reflected the corporatism that was so powerful in the Western world until the rise of neo-liberal free-market policies and anti-statist rhetoric in the last quarter of the century. Right-wing dictatorships came to an end in Greece (1974), Portugal (1974), and Spain (1975).

Some dictators, such as Idi Amin of Uganda (1971-9) and Mobutu Sese Soko of Congo (1965-97), only fell as a result of foreign invasions, while another invasion of Congo was launched in 1998 in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Mobutu's replacement, Laurent Kabila. Domestic coups and violence put paid to more dictators, including Kabila in 2001, although others, such as Colonel Qaddafi of Libya (1969-), proved more durable. The same was true of the military dictatorship in Myanmar (Burma), which crushed the 1988 democracy movement. In the closing years of the period, a number of dictators were succeeded by their sons, for example in North Korea (1996), Syria (2000) and Congo (2001). This reflected not so much the strength of a monarchical or dynastic attitude as the degree to which close-knit ruling groups were unwilling to destabilise their position.

The Decline of Communism

It is premature to write of Communism's complete failure, given its continued role in the official ideology of the most populous country in the world, China, but, in Europe, Communism was revealed as a failure in the 1980s and 1990s, unable to fulfil its policy objectives in government, and heavily rejected by the people. Furthermore, in China, the groups and attitudes condemned by the Communists as they seized and consolidated power were, in many cases, prominent a half-century later, having revived following the death of Mao Zedong.

Born in civil war, the Chinese Communist state was violent from the outset. Beijing was occupied and the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in 1949. Mao, who was both Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and President of the Republic, was ready to use force. The Agrarian Reform Law of 1950 was enforced at the cost (estimates vary) of 200,000 – 2,000,000 landlords' lives, and, in other campaigns of the early 1950s against alleged counter-revolutionaries, capitalists and corrupt cadres, maybe 500,000-800,000 were killed. In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-9), capitalism and bourgeois values were rejected and, under the 'Sixteen Points' adopted in 1966, a violent effort was made 'to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base'. In both short and long-term, this attempt to reverse the trend to 'revisionism' failed. The acute disruption, not to say anarchy, brought by the revolutionary Red Guards led to a determined effort to restore stability and also to the disbandment of the Red Guards. After the death of Mao in 1976, the radical 'Gang of Four', which included Mao's widow Jiang Qing, was kept from power. There was a marked reaction against Mao's policies. Communism lost its radical edge in China and became an official creed that adapted to capitalism, although dictatorial power was retained by a ruling group.

The brutality of Communism's social politics was shown during the occupation of Hue by the Viet Cong in the Vietnam War in 1968. About 5,000 South Vietnamese civilians were slaughtered or 'disappeared'. Their crime was that they came from social categories judged unacceptable in the Maoist society that the Communists were trying to create.

Although longer-lasting, so far, than its Chinese counterpart, Russian Communism could not manage the transition to capitalism. Gaining power, as in China through violence – in Russia a civil war (1918-21) that

followed a coup in 1917 – the Communists forced through major changes, especially under Joseph Stalin, the dictator from 1924 until his death in 1953. Russia was taken into state ownership, the country was forced into industrialisation, and the Orthodox Church was reduced. Terror and government-tolerated famine killed at least eleven million in Stalin's 'peacetime' years, warped the lives of the remainder of the population, and made faith, hope, and truth casualties. The secret police were a crucial prop to the government, and were far more powerful than in democratic societies.

The Soviet regime became a military super-power, but was unable to build up a solid basis of support. A paranoid sense of vulnerability, which owed much to World War Two and something to Communist ideology, encouraged a major stress on military expenditure. Nearly a quarter of state expenditure went to military purposes in 1952, when the Soviet Union was not at war, and this figure increased as greater nuclear capability was added to the arsenal. Thus, the major economic gain of the 1950s and 1960s seen across most of the world brought only limited benefit in terms of Soviet living standards. Totalitarian regimes, such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, were command systems that were inherently prone to impose inefficient direction, rather than to respond to advice and to interest groups. This had a serious long-term consequence for the stability of the Soviet system, for a lack of popularity made it difficult for the government to view change and reform with much confidence.

With time, the sham character of Communist progress became more apparent, to the Russians, to other subjects of the Soviet state and of other Communist states, and to foreign commentators. The reform policies of the Gorbachev government, the attempt from 1985 to create 'socialism with a human face', inadvertently destroyed both Soviet Communism and the Soviet state. Communism could not be democratized, and it proved impossible to introduce market responsiveness to a planned economy. At the same time, there was no protracted attempt to use the military resources of the Soviet state to prevent this collapse.

Radical governments in other states lost power or changed policy. In Nicaragua, the radical Sandinista movement that had forced the dictatorial Somoza dynasty from power in 1979, and resisted American economic, political and military pressure thereafter, was defeated in a general election in 1990. In Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam, a Marxist who had seized power in 1974 from the feudal monarchy of the Emperor Haile Selassie, was driven out in 1991, and replaced by Meles Zenawi and his policies of economic liberalism. However, the transition from Communist rule was sometimes to a state that combined formal democratic constitutionalism and economic liberalisation with autocratic practice. This was particularly true of the former Soviet republics in Central Asia, such as Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan. Several of the ex-Communist states, including Belarus and Turkmenistan, were dictatorships.

Elsewhere, the transition from Communism also proved difficult, and former Communists were able to profit from resulting government unpopularity in order to return to power: in Bulgaria in 1994. However, the combination of democratic accountability and the problems of economic management ensured that these Communists operated in a very different context to that of their predecessors in the Soviet era. The Bulgarian ex-Communists lost power in 1997.

Former Communist states were an obvious instance of the more widespread problem of fragile democratic structures. Although it was easy to draw up democratic constitutions, it proved far harder to ensure

governments that accepted the restraints of law, the creation of mature political institutions, parties and practices, and the development of public confidence in all three, as well as in the police, the judiciary and the government. This was also a particular problem in states where non-Communist authoritarian regimes had yielded power, as well as where the social extent of democratic participation was limited, as in much of Latin America.

Conclusions

Across much of the world the most significant ideological trends of the century were the persistence, indeed revival, of religious belief and the drive for independence from colonial rule that was central to major shifts in global power during the century. Religion and nationalism were most successful in eliciting popular support during that period. Alongside these, it is necessary when considering modern politics to recall the pressures of democratisation, the extent of authoritarianism, and the ambivalent character of the concept and language of reform.