

The third point is that the ideology of the Right now appears strong not only because the media are adept at disguising the crudity of right-wing ideas. The Right plays also on those issues where the Left has hitherto been weak; and these are issues which we cannot simply ignore. Foremost among them is the question of human rights, the defence of which has traditionally been associated with liberalism. Take, for example, the use made by the New Philosophers of the revelations coming from the Russian Human Rights movement. In response to these developments, the Left needs to take very seriously the whole question of socialist democracy and the task of showing how socialism can fulfil its promise of realising more authentically those liberties which the Right purports to hold dear. The day school on human rights announced elsewhere in this issue (p. 0) will, we hope, contribute to the working out of this response.

These are some elements of the intellectual scene as the Cold War is revived. The prospects for the Left are bad; and it will need whatever strengths it can call upon.

The Editorial Subcommittee

RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL
FOR BLACK AND
THIRD WORLD
LIBERATION

Race & Class is an anti-racist, anti-imperialist quarterly covering black struggles in metropolitan countries, migrant workers' struggles in Europe and liberation struggles in the Third World. Recent issues included: *Orlando Letelier* on Chile, *John Berger* on peasant experience, *Malcolm Caldwell* on South east Asian conflict, *Basil Davidson* on Angola, *Eqbal Ahmad* on Tunisia, *Noam Chomsky* on Vietnam, *Michael Klare* on US naval strategy, *Fred Halliday* on mercenaries and counter-insurgency, *E.P. Thompson* on state secrecy, *John Saul* on class and tribe in Africa, *A. Sivanandan* on racism and the state, *Gail Omvedt* on the politics of starvation, *David Edgar* on fascism in Britain, *Amrit Wilson* on Asian women. Recent articles have examined science and imperialism, socio-biology, class struggles in Ethiopia, Sudan and the Gulf states, women in China and Cuba, state formations in Latin America, racism in popular fiction.

Race & Class is available to individuals on subscription at £5.50/\$12 per annum (£8/\$20 to institutions). Subscriptions can be entered at any point in the volume. Send cash with order, cheques made payable to 'The Institute of Race Relations', 247 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NG UK.

IDEOLOGY AS COMMONSENSE: The Case of British Conservatism

ROBERT ECCLESHALL

Ideology has an affinity with religion. Its success depends upon its capacity to proselytise. The task of ideologues is to convince as many as possible that, of the competing pictures of society generally available, their perspective is the most plausible and compelling. This seems to place ruling-class ideologies at an immediate disadvantage in so far as their 'natural' subscribers are in a minority. Social reality makes sense from the standpoint of the economically privileged as an integrated, functional structure in which inequalities of wealth and power appear just and mutually beneficial. The dominant class thereby emerges as the authentic custodian of the national interest: its economic and political ascendancy operating within a benevolent system of stratification by providing the skill and guidance from which emanates the well-being of those lower down the social hierarchy. The materially disadvantaged majority, in contrast, might be expected to favour an alternative image of society. Their aspirations are best enshrined in a conflict-model of society which represents inequality as the outcome of class exploitation. Yet, besides serving the self-conception of the privileged minority, an effective ruling-class ideology must deflect the

'natural' inclination of the majority to perceive society as an antagonistic structure pivoted upon class hostilities. For, in order to sow seeds of social cohesion, it must gain general approval for the existing power structure. The mission of a ruling-class ideology, therefore, is to win converts amongst the subordinate class by persuading them that its particular slant on the social order is correct and indisputable.

Ideology in Everyday Life

How, then, does a ruling-class ideology fulfil its herculean mission? Clearly, it could not compete successfully in the ideological arena if it consisted merely of a curtain of false ideas drawn across the eyes of the unsuspecting masses. Ordinary people are unlikely to be bewitched by fairy tales spun out of the fertile imagination of capitalist hobgoblins. Figments conjured from thin air and superimposed in a willy-nilly fashion would be a poor guarantee of what Gramsci termed ideological hegemony: the process whereby the authority of the dominant class so permeates the social order that others willingly accept their subordinate location within it. So that

it may be an active ingredient in the apparatus of social domination, defusing opposition to established structures by cultivating widespread consensus, ideology must be more intimately connected to social processes than is conceded by those who see it as little else than a conspiracy of ideas invented by scheming capitalists.

The implication is that ideology is anchored in everyday reality. It derives hegemonic appeal by feeding upon, and in turn shaping, perceptions arising from experiences at home, school, work, or whatever: rendering those perceptions ideologically serviceable by channelling them into a coherent but partial view of society. The business of a ruling-class ideology is to incorporate social practices into a perspective which obliterates the exploitative framework within which they operate. Far from pouring sheer lies into empty heads, therefore, the dominant ideology succeeds by misrepresenting the facts of ordinary life. In this way, its ideological content is hidden under the guise of common sense.

This is why ideology conforms to Marx's characterization of mistaken beliefs in general. For Marx, the real conditions of society provide the reference point for comprehending every human illusion. Religious conviction, for instance, is not to be explained by supposing that people have been brainwashed to accept the existence of imaginary deities. Rather, the felt need for spiritual consolation reflects the impoverishment and injustices suffered in class society. Bourgeois ideology, too, is rooted in actual social processes. The classical economists, according to Marx, managed systematically to describe the capitalist market. But their account, for all its scientific rigour, was ideological in two significant respects. First, it was selective and incomplete. While correctly portraying worker and capitalist as formally free and equal partners in the system of exchange, it omitted to disclose that, by generating surplus value and so guaranteeing capital accumulation, this legally fair process was transmuted into a structure of domination and subordination. Second, their account was ideological because it presented an exchange economy, not as a historically evolving and so mutable system, but as the natural, necessary and unchangeable method of creating wealth. Thus, by concealing the exploitative basis and transience of the capitalist mode of production, the science of classical economy endowed it with ideological underpinning by sanctifying it.

The Need for Inequality

Conservatism, as one manifestation of bourgeois ideology, has the type of correspondence to social reality indicated by Marx. It proffers itself for popular consumption in the form of common sense by building upon and distorting the facts of social existence. Hence, instead of denying class differences, it rationalizes them by rearranging them into the picture of a non-antagonistic, just and inevitable social order. The structural contradiction between capital and labour, from which the class system emerges, is consequently obscured in a coherent but selective view of society.

It may seem strange that conservatives are so blatant in proclaiming the necessity and convenience of social inequality. Such tactics may appear to be inadequate guarantees of ideological hegemony. Yet

they work precisely to the extent that they distort social facts. For example, the fact that there exists restricted mobility between social classes can be used to disseminate the myth of equal opportunities whereby individuals are said to attain the level of wealth and social influence concomitant with their innate abilities. More significantly, it is a fact that the structures of everyday life in capitalist society are hierarchical. People are programmed by authoritarian experiences at work and elsewhere to perceive the world as divided between a minority of decision-makers and a majority who passively comply with instructions transmitted from above. Conservatism strives for hegemony by operating upon these normal features of the capitalist world. The hierarchical ranking visible in an army, for instance, or the division in the production process between management and the work force, are frequently presented as microcosms of the distinctions existing in society at large, proof of the ineradicability of inequality. As George Gale addresses his fellow ideologues:

The Conservative party represents capital and property in much the same way as the Labour party represents workers. Since neither capital nor property has votes, and since few people consider themselves to be either capitalists or propertied ... the Conservative party has to persuade a majority of workers to vote for it. The Conservative party is not egalitarian and never can be. It is a waste of time pretending that equality is what it is about. It is about inequality; but since inequality is a fact of everyday life, and since everybody knows perfectly well that some people are more able than others, that some work harder than others, that some can take responsibility where others cannot, and that in every society, in addition to the great bulk of middling dogs there are also top dogs and under dogs, this need cause it no nervous tremors (1).

It does not require much ideological guile to convert the contingent facts of class-divided society into natural, indestructible facts of the human condition.

British conservatism has been a spectacularly successful ideology. The Tory party has established itself as a particularly resilient vehicle by conveying the ideas and interests of the British ruling class for three hundred years. In doing so, it has provided ideological shelter to different forms of property ownership by withstanding the strains of gradual transition from a largely agrarian to an advanced industrial economy. In addition, British conservatism has managed to be a strong competitor in the political marketplace by offering a package of ideas sufficiently attractive to seduce many who are not part of the ruling class alliance. Since the granting of adult male suffrage in 1885 the Conservative party has had to rely on the electoral support of those whose natural allegiances might be expected to lie elsewhere. Since the emergence at the turn of the century of a party claiming to stand for labour against capital, and organizationally dependent upon the trade union movement, manual workers have been in possession of what appears their own political instrument. Yet the Conservative party has been so adept in severing sections of the working class from the Labour party that it has been returned to office for approximately two-thirds of the period since 1885. And even now, in a period of deepening economic recession and high unemployment, a Conservative

government has been elected in the expectation that it will perform a rescue operation.

British conservatism's success is due largely to its possession of a rich and varied ideological repertoire. It may employ the aristocratic rhetoric of benevolent paternalism, and also the bourgeois language of individual initiative, in a concerted attempt to consecrate the authority of propertied elites. This rich ideological inheritance is a consequence of the peculiarities of English cultural development. Elsewhere in Europe the struggle between feudal and emergent capitalist elites was usually protracted, and often turbulent; in France, for instance, the representatives of the ancien regime were confronted by a rising bourgeoisie only in revolutionary upheaval at the close of the eighteenth century. The result has been that many European nations have inherited two distinct and irreconcilable expressions of ruling-class ideology.

Paternalism and Elitism

In England, however, the transition from feudalism to capitalism was less dramatic. The English revolt against absolutism, during the Civil War period of the 1640s, occurred at a premature moment in the formation of capitalism. The outcome was a constitutional government in 1688 that safeguarded the interests of all forms of property ownership. From then onwards new elites gradually were absorbed into the pre-existing power structure. This accommodation of new types of economic activity by the existing political order was reflected on the ideological plane. For, following the settlement of 1688, propertied groups joined forces in saturating constitutionalism with notions of ordered hierarchy that located the subordinate class in its traditional role of social dependence and deference. New ideological expressions were consequently grafted on to a set of pre-modern values, permitting an aristocratic ethos to persist in conjunction with the articulation of newer, bourgeois ideas. The particular genius of British conservatism has been to blend traditional and modern ideological strands into a coherent and robust defence of class inequality. 2

The aristocratic motif within conservatism was developed during the eighteenth century into the picture of an organic hierarchy in which social rank was determined by birth rather than by individual effort. Those of superior station were charged, in the spirit of *noblesse oblige*, charitably to discipline and protect those dependent upon them by curtailing crime and alleviating distress. This image of a close-knit community, coordinated by the paternal affection of the materially privileged, was an idealization of the realities of a largely rural society. For the squierarchy, officiating as magistrates and administering poor relief, did constitute that local chain of command through which the lives of the poor were regulated. But, by portraying landowners as benevolent guardians whose social superiority conformed with the divine hierarchy of the universe, Tories were able to distort the facts of class society by incorporating them into a divinely ordained and unalterable pattern of inequality.

During the nineteenth century, the idea of paternal guardianship was deployed by many Tories in order to condemn the effects of growing industrialization upon traditional bonds of social dependence. More significantly, in a period when

the working class was becoming enfranchised, the persistent appeal of a stable, intimate social hierarchy enabled Disraeli to devise a formula for the leadership of propertied groups around the theme of one nation. The effect, by furnishing a set of potent cultural symbols around which to marshal attitudes of social deference, was to bequeath the legacy of protective elitism to the twentieth century.

Society appears in bourgeois rhetoric as a collection of independent individuals each intent on pursuing self-interest. Here there is no providentially ordained, fixed social hierarchy but, instead, a fluid structure in which individuals rise to the social level concomitant with their natural abilities. Thus, inequalities are said to reflect the uneven distribution of human talents. Riches are seen as the due reward of those who have expended maximum energy, intelligence and agility in making material provision for themselves. Conversely, poverty is taken as a sign of some innate deficiency, the failure of individuals to exercise sufficient skill to secure a comfortable existence: those who prove themselves incapable of seizing opportunities that are equally available to everyone must expect to pay the just penalty of a lower standard of living. In this way, market forces are ideologically misrepresented in that their inherent tendency to coagulate into a structure of domination and subordination is concealed.

The Liberal party, not the Conservative party, was the major propagator of undiluted bourgeois values for much of the nineteenth century. The success of bourgeois ideology, in so far as it managed to defuse social tensions by deriving a certain hegemonic appeal, was due to its distorted correspondence to the experience of the working class. For, following the defeat of Chartism, the mid-Victorian period witnessed a proliferation of such working-class organizations as trade unions and friendly societies which drew ideological inspiration from the gospel of self-help. Deprived of a revolutionary movement, many of the working class discovered that the bourgeois virtues of hard work, thrift and self-reliance did provide a makeshift safeguard against the harsher realities of industrial capitalism.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a bourgeois ethos was safely enshrined as an alternative theme within the ideological repertoire of conservatism. For, responding to the exodus of businessmen from the Liberal party to the Conservative party, conservative ideologues like W. H. Mallock transformed the gospel of self-help into a vigorous defence of privilege. The economically successful, it was proclaimed, were fully entitled to their riches because their enterprise was the mainspring of all public benefits. From the innovative skills exhibited by captains of industry flowed those technical improvements in production upon which depended the continuing prosperity of everyone. The structure of inequality was consequently justified on the ground that it generated mutual benefits for rich and poor alike. The effect was to portray the dynamic minority as a legitimately ascendant class which exerted a benign and progressive influence upon society at large.

Analytically, the picture of a closed hierarchy of unequal social ranks seems incompatible with that of an open, competitive structure built upon individual endeavour. In practice, given the unique aspects of English culture, conservatism has

managed to accommodate the two social images under one flexible ideological canopy. Hence, while aristocratic and bourgeois strands are periodically orchestrated as alternative social theories, they normally feature as variations on a single theme. The effect has been to forge an indissoluble link between economic prosperity and political supremacy by transforming the wealthy into the legitimate guardians of the national interest. This broad defence of the political leadership of propertied elites has been achieved by updating the aristocratic theory in order to endow the beneficiaries of the capitalist market with sufficient authority to regulate the activities of the subordinate class.

What emerges from conservative utterances, therefore, is a composite picture of a functional social order that is integrated by means of an appropriate command structure. Having assimilated a market economy into a Tory conception of the state, conservatives are able to welcome the crystallization of economic processes into class differences because it permits the economically successful to supply that political initiative on which are said to depend the vitality and coherence of the nation. The effect is to endow propertied elites with a monopoly of insight into communal requirements which authorizes them to issue directives to those whose natural inferiority, indolence, ignorance, imprudence or whatever renders them unsuitable for self-government. So conservatism proposes to subject the subordinate class to a form of tutelage which extends through the public mechanisms of social control to the diffusion of a system of common morality.

British conservatism's genius in refashioning traditional defences of class rule so as to sanctify the persistent inequalities of capitalism has been instrumental in allowing it effectively to respond to

the major economic crises and developments of the present century. So that it may affirm the eternal advantages of inequality with sufficient plausibility to gain the electoral endorsement of a large segment of the subordinate class, a ruling-class ideology cannot trot out exactly similar arguments regardless of circumstances. It must be adaptive enough to suit the contemporary mood, jettisoning ideas which inhibit it from functioning adequately and absorbing ideas that enable it to keep pace with social change. Conservatism has proved so adept at continually revising its repertoire that it has gained electoral advantage from the relative affluence of the post-war era, and also from the spectre of economic decline that has haunted Britain in the 1970s.

The Technological Way

Post-war Britain experienced a high level of ideological consensus in so far as the ideal of laissez-faire had been abandoned by those on the right, as well as the left, of the political spectrum. All parties converged in the conviction that both social justice and economic efficiency could be secured by a state which, besides assuming widespread responsibility for distributing cultural benefits, also ensured the stability and output of the economy. It was generally acknowledged that careful political husbandry of the economy, coupled with extensive welfare provisions, would combine to expel those economic recessions and social conflicts which had characterized society in the 1930s and in earlier phases of capitalism. What emerged, therefore, was a technocratic ideology proclaiming the capacity of Keynesian economic remedies to foster a steadily expanding universe of material prosperity where even the poorest would enjoy affluence on an unprecedented scale. The consequence was to substitute economic growth as a surrogate for any radical redistribution of wealth, as well as for eradication of the structural contradictions persisting between capital and labour. There was little need to worry about lingering inequalities, ran the argument, when the abolition of economic scarcity was already on the agenda of managed capitalism.

Technocratic ideology was seductive for three principal reasons. First, compared with earlier phases of capitalism, Keynesian techniques did succeed in delivering the goods by permitting consumer goods to be produced on a hitherto unknown scale. Second, assisting the ideology to become a dominant mode of consciousness was a massive advertising campaign aimed at marketing the vast array of consumer products. There is some credibility in Herbert Marcuse's description of consumer capitalism as a relatively closed system: a one dimensional society in which ideological opposition was obliterated by the success of the representatives of managed capitalism in persuading the public that every human need could be satisfied. Indeed, the enormous ideological efforts made to convince people that the good life was to be found in patterns of consumption did bear a distorted resemblance to everyday reality. Perhaps a majority of the working class, harbouring memories of the 1930s and now able to own cars and television sets, were predisposed to believe that a mixed economy constituted the best of all possible worlds. Third, in so far as manual workers were tranquilized by relative affluence,

NOBILITY OF LIFE

"WHO BEST CAN SUFFER, BEST CAN DO."—Milton.

The Victorian Reign is unparalleled in the History of Great Empires for its Purity, Goodness, and Greatness.



ABOVE ALL!!!

A Fearless Devotion to Duty and Unflinching Truthfulness!

THE QUEEN'S PRIZE!

The conditions laid down by the QUEEN for the Prize given by HER MAJESTY to the Marine Boys are these:—

Cheerful Submission to Superiors; Self-respect and Independence of Character; Kindness and Protection to the Weak; Readiness to Forgive Offence; a Desire to Conciliate the Differences of Others; and, above all, Fearless Devotion to Duty, and Unflinching Truthfulness.

"Such principles, if evoked and carried into action, would produce an almost perfect moral character IN EVERY CONDITION OF LIFE."—SMILES.

SHAKESPEARE AND DUTY

"Come the corners of the world in arms, And we shall shock them; nought shall make us rue, If ENGLAND TO HERSELF DO REST SUB TRUE."

THE PIVOT OF DUTY.—Sterling Honesty of Purpose; without it Life is a Sham.

WHAT HIGHER DUTY CAN MAN ATTAIN, THAN CONQUEST OVER HUMAN PAIN?

IN THE BATTLE OF THIS LIFE ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" is an imperative hygienic need or necessary adjunct. It keeps the blood pure, prevents and cures fevers, acute inflammatory diseases, and removes the injurious effects of stimulants, narcotics such as alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee, by natural means—thus restores the nervous system to its normal condition, by preventing the great danger of poisoned blood and over-cerebral activity, sleeplessness, irritability, worry, etc.

SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHER SALINES.—"Dear Sir,—Having taken your 'FRUIT SALT' many years, I think it right to tell you that I consider it a most invaluable medicine, and far superior to all other saline mixtures. I am never without a bottle of it in the house. It possesses three most desirable qualities—pleasant to the taste, promptly efficacious, and leaves no unpleasant after-effects."—A DEVONSHIRE LADY.—Jan. 25, 1889.

THE GREAT DANGER OF SUGAR, PINK OR CHEMICALLY COLOURED SHERBET.—Experience shows that sugar, pink or chemically coloured sherbet, mild ales, port wine, dark sherris, sweet champagne, liqueurs, and brandy are all very apt to disagree, while light wines and gin, or old whisky, largely diluted with seltzer water, will be found the least objectionable. ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" is peculiarly adapted for any coast but'ual weakness of the liver. It possesses the power of reparation when digestion has been disturbed or lost, and places the invalid on the right track to health.

CAUTION.—Examine each bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked "ENO'S Fruit Salt." Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless and occasionally poisonous imitation.

Sold by all Chemists. Prepared only at

ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, LONDON, S.E., BY J.C. ENO'S PATENT.

the failure of social democratic parties seriously to confront the structure of domination must be counted a key factor in the spread of ideological homogeneity. The Labour party leadership, seeking until the 1930s to escape the strident rhetoric of class warfare, was readily mesmerized by the myth that welfare capitalism provided a cure for every social ailment. Falling victim to the belief that the good society lay in the gift of managed capitalism, the Labour party sold itself as the most efficient manager of the welfare state. The strategy was not entirely ineffective. In 1964 Harold Wilson engineered the return of his party from the political wilderness by promising a white-hot technological revolution which, by stimulating economic expansion, would bring untold benefits to all social groups. But the Labour party's attraction to the mixed economy, and its consequent inability to challenge the framework of advanced capitalism, helped to disseminate the ideological camouflage under which conservatism was able to adapt to the post-war world.

The conversion of the bulk of the Conservative party to Keynesian policies began in the 1930s with the publication of Harold Macmillan's The Middle Way. Macmillan claimed that, by securing uninterrupted economic growth, an interventionist state would guarantee capital accumulation, and also relegate class conflicts to the dustbin of history. From then onwards, most conservative ideologies channelled their energies into skilfully manipulating technocratic ideology into a defence of the inegalitarian relations of managed capitalism. Macmillan's famous election slogan of the 1950s - 'You've never had it so good' - was designed to induce complacent acceptance of existing structures, as well as to portray the Conservative party as the embodiment of that instrumental knowledge required to sustain and administer the system of material plenitude.

The effect was to depict dominant groups as a pragmatic elite which, dedicated to continual technological innovation and efficient political management, acted as the benevolent guardian of the public good. The additional material advantages which this elite enjoyed over the majority emerged, consequently, as just rewards for the services rendered by the custodians of the national interest. According to Peter Walker, who is one of the few in the present Thatcher Cabinet who still inclines to the middle way, conservatism:

simply needs to show that the inequalities associated with a regime of economic growth are to the advantage of lower income groups, and make their standard of living higher than it would be under an egalitarian system. . . . Growth demands the payment of higher salaries to industrial managers, but this is a small price to pay for the great gains in welfare which can result from economic advance; if those with managerial ability or other scarce talents which are beneficial to society are in short supply (and they are in every country in the world), and if to induce the exercise of these abilities high salaries and inequality are required, then it must be rational for society to pay those high salaries. But the test of these inequalities must be the contribution they make to the welfare of society. . . . Providing a free enterprise system organizes its society in such a way that the losers can still lead a decent life, the prizes for the winners, be they

in the form of splendid houses, larger cars or yachts, do little harm to society as a whole (3). Hence, by giving a familiar ideological twist to developments within capitalism, conservatives were able to view the prime beneficiaries of advanced industrial society through a traditional political perspective. The old functional and hierarchical image of society was simply revised in order to shower accolades on those whose unique responsibility was said to be that of cushioning society against the toil and poverty that had been inflicted upon earlier generations. In this way, alleged wealth-creators were slotted into the cultural niche once reserved for landed and other propertied elites. By fusing traditional and modern ideological elements into an affirmation of class ascendancy, the doctrine of the middle way remained faithful to its conservative antecedents.

The problem with all versions of technocratic ideology is that, depending upon the continual generation of material abundance, they hang by a single, precarious thread. They lose plausibility in a prolonged period of economic recession such as Britain has suffered in recent years. The failure of managed capitalism to sustain steady growth has provoked a resurgence of social conflicts in which members of the working class, accustomed to the near full employment and higher wages of recent decades, have resolutely refused to accept an erosion of what they now consider the minimal requirements of a comfortable life. The Labour party, having deprived itself of critical social concepts by capitulating to the consensus ideology of welfare capitalism, has responded negatively to the current crisis; for, relying upon its traditional links with the trade unions, it has advocated an incomes policy in the form of a social contract that amounts to an injunction to workers to pitch wage demands at a rate lower than that of inflation. But the working class has been stubbornly resistant to pleas to bail out an ailing capitalism by accepting a reduction of living standards. Both the Heath and Callaghan governments fell, directly or indirectly, as a consequence of union militancy. It is in this context - the failure of social democratic policies to stem economic decline, and the absence of radical left alternatives to the structures of advanced capitalism - that authoritarian measures of the right gain a measure of credibility.

The End of the Ideology of Welfare Toryism

Although there were intimations that some conservatives had become disenchanted with the middle way during the Heath years, the resurgence of a more aggressive ideological stance was confined to a fringe of the party. But Mrs Thatcher's elevation to the leadership installed a militant ideology at the hub of Conservative party thinking. The subsequent electoral victory of May 1979 instigated a Conservative government dedicated, inter alia, to reversing the trend since the 1930s of increasing state penetration into the economy; to curbing inflation through tight monetary control; to rewarding success by providing the rich with hefty tax cuts; to sabotaging the mildly redistributive effects of widespread social welfare by curtailing public expenditure; and to emasculating the power of organized labour by enacting anti-union legislation. These measures

amount to a concerted onslaught upon working-class conditions: widening the gap between rich and poor and dismantling those institutional devices which presently cushion the latter against the harsher operations of market forces. Why, then, should a set of blatantly sectional policies receive electoral endorsement? Conservatives have gained consent for their policies by drawing upon their extensive repertoire in order to perform an ideological operation upon the general feeling of crisis and economic malaise. Radically anti-egalitarian and potentially divisive measures are thereby misrepresented as dictates of common sense: the inevitable path to be followed if national decline is to be arrested and material prosperity restored.

Central to this ideological strategy is the revival of an unadulterated entrepreneurial ethos. Rejuvenating the spirit of free enterprise by rolling back the frontiers of the state is said to be essential if talent is to be harnessed to jolt a sluggish economy into dynamic advance. Apostles of the free market, from Adam Smith to Friedrich Hayek, are cited in order to establish that an exchange economy is a completely open structure in which inequalities are the natural outcome of the diversity of human ability. Individuals, argues Sir Keith Joseph, are entirely responsible for their life-chances because everyone has an equal opportunity to do well. 'In Britain we have an infinitely mobile society - an infinite number of snakes and ladders'(4). Britain's difficulties are said to stem from the institutional penalties which the collectivist state has imposed upon individual success. The solution is to restore market forces by permitting the economically successful to become rich. They will then be encouraged to discharge their energies into economic revival. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, expresses it:

One of Britain's most urgent needs is for people now to become less concerned with the distribution of wealth and more concerned with its creation. You cannot create a rich society without allowing some individuals to become rich as well. That is why we must restore the legitimacy of becoming rich - or richer than they were - by taking risks (apart from those which arise from doing the football pools)(5). Inequalities are thus represented as the just price paid for that national revival in which everyone will share, though unequally, in the resulting material abundance.

The virtues of a free economy, unfettered by government meddling and propelled by individual initiative, are reinforced by being incorporated into the conception of a freer society. In place of the nursemaid state of welfare capitalism, which allegedly saps the moral fibre by unduly protecting its members against life's realities, we are offered a vision of a society grounded in individual choice and independence. This perspective is constructed by manipulating the betty-bourgeois virtues of thrift and self-reliance so as to mis-describe the unpleasant aspects of unimpeded market forces as an extension of individual freedom. Thus, the hardships contingent upon a diminution of social welfare are ideologically masked as a welcome chance for people to help themselves instead of depending upon public charity. Opportunities to invest in private schemes of health and education, which in a world of unequally distributed scarce resources are inevitably privileges available to a wealthy minority, are depicted as a widening of

choice for everyone. Similarly, the application of strict monetary controls are defended as a means of persuading members of the working class to act responsibly by rationally calculating their long-term economic interests. For, unless they temper wage demands, they must suffer the consequences of their actions in the form of higher unemployment. Anti-egalitarian measures, therefore, are transformed into items on the agenda of a free society in which human dignity will be enhanced, and where any individual who manifests sufficient skill and energy will have the opportunity of enjoying a comfortable life. So the gospel of self-help serves the function of ideologically preparing people for the harsher society which conservative policies are designed to create. For its message is that, once the evils of collectivism have been eradicated, any inhospitable features of the social world will be due to individual failure and irresponsibility.

Proclamation of the virtues of a liberalized economy does not comprise the whole of current conservative ideological strategy. It also includes a strong advocacy of the need for social discipline. The effect is to sever the defence of minimal government intervention in the economy from any suggestion of laissez-faire in every other area of society. In so far as a deliberate sabotaging of welfare capitalism will exacerbate conflicts by widening the gap between privilege and misery, the Conservative government must focus attention upon consolidating the mechanisms of social control. This is why free-marketeers are usually strong disciplinarians on questions of law and order. Symbolically, one of the first tasks of the Thatcher government was to accord large pay increases to the two principal agencies of social control: the police and army.

In order to win consent for their efforts to tighten the apparatus of coercion, conservatives must deploy the other major ingredient within their ideological repertoire: the image of a hierarchical social order rendered stable by the supervisory activities of an enlightened minority. The tactic here is ideologically to play upon the sense of general decay so as to create a siege mentality against the wreckers and enemies within the nation's walls. This assault upon anti-social elements within the community is not confined to a condemnation of militant trade-unionists. Rising crime rates, for instance, provide fruitful material for the purveyors of an authoritarian ideology intent on selling their wares in the wrapping of common sense. For people whose homes have been burglarised, or know old ladies who have been beaten up, are susceptible to the idea that only firm and widespread government action can prevent disintegration throughout the entire social fabric. Nor are Tories averse from flirting with racism when it permits them to manufacture a climate of general alarm. Whatever the effect of Mrs Thatcher's reference to fears that the country might be flooded with immigrants, it was certainly not to diminish the conviction that good Britons must be eternally vigilant against all who, from wherever they come, would threaten an already imperilled national way of life.

The logic of this ideological construction of a spectre of social indiscipline is that many people are incapable of self-government. In Margaret Thatcher's words: 'man is inherently sinful and in order to sustain a civilised and harmonious society we need laws backed by effective sanctions'(6). In

the context of an entrepreneurial ethos, the implication is that those who have proved their individual merit and social worth by attaining positions of leadership in industry and elsewhere are best equipped to maintain a civilized and integrated society. Their tutelage should extend to those who, having failed to make a success of their lives, are intent on disrupting good social order and on subverting the natural justice of the free economy: left-wing militants, 'loungers' and 'scroungers' on social welfare, truculent strikers, and so forth. The overall effect is to portray the beneficiaries of market forces as guardians of the public interest.

So, despite its strident rhetoric, the ideology of the so-called New Right is a variation on the age-worn and familiar conservative defence of class inequality. Whether it continues to succeed in marshalling a consensus around a set of highly sectional and exploitative policies remains to be seen. Perhaps an alternative consensus, organized around a social image which truly embodies majority interests, can only be mobilized by a reformed Labour party prepared to raise fundamental questions about capitalist institutions. This is why the outcome of the current left/right struggle in the Labour Movement may be instrumental in determining whether conservatism is finally unmasked in the eyes of ordinary people as the antithesis of common sense.

- 1 George Gale, 'The Popular Communication of a Conservative Message', in *Conservative Essays*, ed. Maurice Cowling, London, Cassell, 1978, pp181, 190.
- 2 I am, of course, drawing upon the debate triggered by Anderson and Nairn regarding the outlines of English cultural development. The principal articles relevant to the debate are: Perry Anderson, 'Origins of the Present Crisis', in *Towards Socialism*, ed. Anderson and R. Blackburn (London, Fontana, 1965), pp11-52; idem, 'Components of the National Culture', in *Student Power*, ed. Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969), pp214-84; idem, 'Socialism and Pseudo-Empiricism', *New Left Review* 35 (1966), 2-42; Tom Nairn, 'The British Political Elite', *New Left Review* 23 (1964), pp19-25; idem, 'The English Working Class', in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed. R. Blackburn (London, Fontana, 1972), pp187-206; Nicos Poulantzas, 'Marxist Political Theory in Great Britain', *New Left Review* 43 (1967), pp 57-74; E. P. Thompson, 'The Peculiarities of the English', in *The Socialist Register*, 1965, ed. Ralph Miliband and John Saville (London, Merlin Press, 1965), pp311-62. My quarrel with Anderson and Nairn is that, stressing the traditional flavour of the dominant ideology, they underplay the significance of bourgeois ingredients. Bourgeois ideas have been more instrumental than they acknowledge in shaping an alternative liberal ethos to the aristocratic legacy; and also in nourishing the peculiar, resilient amalgam that constitutes conservatism. See my 'The Identity of English Liberalism', *Politics & Society*, 9 (1979), pp1-32; and Richard Johnson, 'Barrington Moore, Perry Anderson and English Social Development', *Cultural Studies* 9 (Spring 1976), pp7-28.
- 3 Peter Walker, *The Ascent of Britain*, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1977, pp20, 22.
- 4 Sir Keith Joseph, 'The Class War', *The Guardian*, 18 July 1979, p7.
- 5 Sir Geoffrey Howe, 'Urgent need to create wealth', *The Guardian*, 3 July 1978, p14.
- 6 Margaret Thatcher, 'A Speech on Christianity and Politics', London, Conservative Central Office, 30 March 1978, p10.

HEIDEGGER'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT

ROGER WATERHOUSE

This is the first of three short articles on Heidegger. The second will deal with the argument of *Being and Time*. The third will be a critical evaluation of Heidegger's whole philosophy.

Heidegger gets mentioned more and more in the English-speaking world. He even gets read more than he used to. His works, however, partake of what Lovejoy called 'the pathos of sheer obscurity, the loveliness of the incomprehensible'.

The reader doesn't know exactly what they mean, but they have all the more on that account an air of sublimity; an agreeable feeling at once of awe and of exaltation comes over him as he contemplates thoughts of so immeasurable a profundity - their profundity being convincingly evidenced by him by the fact that he can see no bottom to them (1).

Heidegger's thoughts do have a basis. For the ordinary English reader that basis is obscured however not only by Heidegger's mind-bending style, but by his own ignorance of the cultural background from which Heidegger's thinking sprang. In these articles I want to make Heidegger's thinking intelligible as a development out of certain intellectual trends. His popularity is something else - to be explained not merely as intellectual fashion but as answering some clearly felt need. The truth of what he has to say is a different ques-

tion again: one which can only be addressed after we have really understood what he is getting at.

My aims, then, are threefold: to express as simply as possible the main outlines of Heidegger's thought; to consider his philosophy as a cultural phenomenon; and to evaluate the truth of what he has to say. I shall centre my discussion on his only major work, *Being and Time*, because this is the only systematic exposition of his doctrines. I also believe that it anticipates all the themes of his later works.

Martin Heidegger was born in 1889 at a small town in the Black Forest, near Freiburg-im-Breisgau. Virtually the whole of his life was spent in this area of south-west Germany. He was a man with roots, which he never forgot and from which he was never tempted to separate himself. His upbringing was catholic and provincial: his father was sexton of the local church. His gymnasium education was of the conventional humanistic kind: large doses of the classics, history and Germany literature - almost total neglect of natural science. Heidegger was a wizard at Greek and Latin, retaining throughout his life the ability to quote large chunks at the drop of a hat. When he left school in 1909 he went to the seminary at Freiburg university and began training for the priesthood. Two years later he switched his major from theology to philo-