

Ideological Disputes

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Since the term 'Ideology' and 'Ideological' are used in a variety of ways, I shall start by saying something about how I intend to use these terms in this paper and indicate what I understand to be the nature of my remarks about them.

For the purposes of this paper I shall take Marxism, Conservatism, Liberalism and Nationalism to be examples of political ideologies. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list; I could, for example, have included Fascism or National Socialism. It is merely intended to provide me with enough material to make the main points of this paper without becoming too involved in matters of exegesis. It should also be noted that in calling Marxism, Liberalism and the rest ideologies I am not using the term in a pejorative manner. That is, I wish to distinguish at the outset between my thesis and that of those who would argue that in calling a belief, doctrine or argument ideological, we are also condemning it as unreasonable or irrational. My aim is simply to discuss how we can best characterise ideological arguments, by comparing and contrasting them with other kinds of arguments. That said, it ought to be clear that my remarks will be philosophical rather than historical in nature. Though I shall be referring to disputes between ideologists that took place in the past, my interest in them will not be that of the historian. I shall be concerned with their conceptual structure rather than their chronological development.

I

It can scarcely have escaped the attention of any student of politics that disputes between, for example, Conservatives and Marxists are as interminable as they are ill tempered. Moreover, disputes between various Marxist or Socialist groupings are often characterised by many of the same features. Why should this be so? Is it because of the stubbornness or irrationality of one side in the dispute, or is it because the very nature of the disputes themselves precludes a satisfactory resolution? I shall characterise the disputes between Liberals and Marxists or Conservatives and Nationalists as 'external' disputes, and those between members of the same ideological persuasion as 'internal' disputes.

The most fertile source of 'internal' disputes is undoubtedly amongst those groups professing to be Marxists. The followers of Trotsky, Mao Tse Tung, Althusser, not to mention the 'orthodox' Communist Parties of both Eastern and Western Europe, all claim to be "true" Marxists, as opposed to their opponents who are 'revisionists', 'ultra-leftists' or 'adventurists'. Consider the following examples of such disputes.

At the beginning of the present century some Socialists, such as Bernstein, argued that certain of Marx's predictions had failed to come about because of changes within the structure of western capitalism that Marx had not foreseen. Socialists should, therefore, abandon such redundant ideas and replace them with an analysis that took the new situation into account. More recently, the late Anthony Crosland argued that increasing economic prosperity had effectively defused the class struggle and that Marx's predictions of catastrophe were false.

Against this it was argued (by Kautsky and Luxemburg among others) that the 'scientific' nature of Marxism meant that in the end it would be vindicated by events and shown to be correct. Any setbacks would only be temporary, because capitalism cannot survive the internal contradictions it generates, no matter how many times it finds a way to overcome a particular crisis, whether by war or by economic imperialism.

A second example is that of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent history of the Soviet state. Some Marxists have argued that whatever imperfections there are in the USSR, it is a socialist state, Marxist in economic policy and the first example of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in action. Others have argued that it is nothing of the sort, complaining that the Soviet rulers have departed from Marxism and set up a 'degenerated workers' state' or 'State Capitalism' instead.

There are features of such debates that are worth mentioning here. Firstly, a great deal of attention is paid to specific texts, pre-eminent amongst which are the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. This does not mean that such texts are unambiguous, consistent, and have settled interpretations that all the disputing parties are agreed upon. Rather it means that in some circumstances it is enough to refer to a statement of Marx (or Lenin) in order to end an argument and to decide upon one course of action rather than another. In other words, not only must an argument be convincing, it must be shown to be in accordance with 'Marxist principles'; that is to say, some foundation for it must be sought in the writings of accepted Marxist writers such as Marx, Engels and Lenin. An example of such a position is a fairly recent debate in *Marxism Today* on the question of dialectics and nature.¹ The author who

attacks Engels on this point does not stop with a demonstration of the incoherence of Engels' arguments, he also feels impelled to show that these views were different from those of Marx. In a similar way, his opponent not only defends the arguments of Engels, but attempts to show that they are inseparable from those of Marx and an attack on Engels is also an attack on Marx. Though interpretation may differ widely from group to group, there is a fairly wide agreement over these works that can be used in such a way to, as it were, 'stop further questioning'. Thus, whilst it would be of importance in an argument between Marxists to show that Marx held opinion X by quoting the appropriate passage, it would be absurd to cite the opinions or writings of J S Mill or Adolf Hitler.

Not anything, then, can *count* as a contribution to such a debate. The procedure is not an arbitrary one. This leads to the second feature of such debates, the part played by the notion of authority, or an authority. As we noted above, to show that Marx or Lenin opposed a certain action *can* be enough to stop further argument. To go on would be as absurd as a Christian saying "I know that X is against the will of God, but I still don't see why I shouldn't do it". This is not to give Marx divine status, merely to point out that his works have the status of authorities for adherents of Marxism.

Theological debates provide a striking comparison. One thinks of St Augustine's famous remark at the end of the Pelagian controversy "Roma locuta est, causa finita est". Lest anyone think that such deference to authority is dead, a modern example shows the same point. In G Egner's book *Birth Regulation and Catholic Belief*² the author examines (and finds wanting) the traditional arguments put forward by fellow Roman Catholics against contraception. However, he also accepts that there is a tradition in the Catholic Church against contraception, and the fact that such practices have been condemned by Popes, Saints and Councils of the Church, *counts as an objection* against his position. It need not be the end of the matter, for a tradition isn't everything. He might for example, show that the tradition has been mis-interpreted by his opponents, or that it conflicts with a more fundamental area of Christian belief, and that it should therefore be abandoned. The point is that it is recognised as an objection that must be faced, in a way that the objection "But that's unscientific" would not. Now in much the same way a Marxist might feel able to say "Well, so much the worse for Marx if he believed Y", but he would have to admit that it was an objection that Marx disagreed. And if he found himself disagreeing with Marx a great deal then the end of his allegiance to Marxism would be near at hand.

Such a parallel should not be pressed too far. It might be sug-

gested that the Bible is not a document that is self interpreting and that there was at one time a body recognised as the true interpreter of scripture – the Catholic Church. What happened at the Reformation was that the appeal to the Pope as a source of authority lost its force for some Christians; the authority of the Papacy being rejected in favour of the Bible alone. In such circumstances a prescription such as Augustine's loses its force to compel all those who are not Roman Catholics. A unity was thereby lost for Christendom. On the other hand, so the argument might run, the writings of Marx have been matters of dispute from the very start and there has never been a widely accepted authority in a position analogous to that of the Catholic Church.

This point becomes of some importance when we consider a possible objection to this characterisation of debates between Marxists. The objection is simply that it *is* pejorative to pretend that all debates between Marxists are over who are the real heirs to the true gospel of Marxist thought and never about empirical matters. Rosa Luxemburg, for example, was right about the *facts* and Bernstein was wrong; these disputes were, therefore, factual matters that could be settled in favour of one side or the other.

Now I have no wish to argue that matters of truth and falsity never arise in debates between Marxists. Someone might argue that event Y took place in 1066, another that it took place in 1067 or whatever and, of course, such a dispute could be settled upon production of the appropriate evidence. But this is not quite what I have in mind here.

What evidence would one produce to show that the Russian Revolution installed the dictatorship of the proletariat in that country? The terms used here, 'revolution', 'proletarian dictatorship' and so on are not descriptive terms that are capable of verification (did it or didn't it happen?) but evaluative terms that already provoke controversy. It is not as if all the disputing parties are agreed as to what would count as an example of X and are looking for one, they are disagreeing over the very examples themselves. Thus the Marxist who claims that the Soviet Union is 'State Capitalist' is not likely to be convinced of his error by a description of the events in the USSR since 1917, since the terms used by himself or his opponent already decide the question in advance of any evidence offered. There are no appropriate criteria for deciding between rival Marxist claims to the authenticity or otherwise of certain political actions. History cannot provide them because the description of the events offered by the historian has no place for either proletarian dictatorship or state capitalism – they are not explanatory hypotheses about the past since our description of the events in the Soviet Union would not be less com-

plete or comprehensible if they were left out. In the same way that the historian's description of events since the birth of Jesus is not enhanced by referring to the advent of the Kingdom of God at that time. It makes no difference to how things were.

Nor can a closer study of Marxism illuminate what is the correct view to hold about the past, or the correct action to take in the future. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, there is no 'correct' version of Marxism that would command allegiance from all who look without the blinkers of prejudice. Any assessment of Marxism from within is bound to beg the question and any assessment from outside Marxism will only be able to note that there are many differing Marxist groups who disagree, but who quote the same works in the support of their respective positions. There are, for example, no 'core' doctrines that all Marxists must hold (and in the same way) in order to be called Marxists – where would we find them without begging precisely those points at issue. To reject Engels or Stalin or even Lenin as 'un-Marxist' might tell a listener the kind of Marxist we are, but it will not illuminate the logic of Marxism. The absurdity of saying that Engels wasn't 'really' a Marxist could be paralleled by saying that the Pope isn't 'really' a Christian. If there is no 'essence' to Marxism, neither is there some kind of original set of beliefs that Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin or Althusser can be shown to have diverged fundamentally from. The difficulty here can be brought out by asking the question "When did Marx become a Marxist"? Do we need to take all of Marx's works into account, should we abandon the earlier ones as Althusser suggests, or are the contributions of Engels and Lenin vital to Marxism? Clearly the various Marxist parties have their own answers to these questions, the point is that they cannot be settled by an appeal to something called 'the facts'.

Secondly, Marxism cannot specify in any detail those actions which count as moves towards 'a Marxist society' or are genuinely 'revolutionary' as opposed to 'counter-revolutionary'. Marxism is not a party manifesto with political objectives, though Marxist groups might have both. All a doctrine like Marxism can do is talk of creating a Socialist society, of ending 'exploitation' and 'alienation', it cannot tell us whether or not programme X will bring about that end, or whether Soviet citizens are 'unalienated'.

Thus debates between Marxists as to whether the revolution of 1917 or 1948 in China were 'socialist' are not settled by appealing to the facts at all. They are in fact, not settled.

In debates between Marxists, then, we have seen that there are not conclusive criteria that can be brought to bear by either side, but that nevertheless there is a broad agreement as to the language used in such disputes, the range of concepts and judgements invoked.

ed. As we shall see later on, though Marxists might disagree over the conditions under which socialism can be said to flourish, they do agree that socialism is something to be fought for and that terms such as 'class', 'alienation' and 'exploitation' are the vocabulary of such a struggle. To use a phrase of Wittgenstein's, they bear a family resemblance to each other and their disputes, if we read them attentively, remind us just how much they have in common.

Of course, not all arguments between members of the same ideology or party are like this. Conservatives do not invoke Disraeli or Burke in quite the same way that Marxists invoke Lenin or Trotsky. What is interesting about debates between Conservatives is the way that the debate has now occupied the intellectual grounds formerly held by their great rivals, the Liberals. Sir Keith Joseph and Enoch Powell for example, seem very similar in certain respects to the version of Liberalism espoused by Adam Smith, yet they are portrayed as 'real' Conservatives, to be contrasted with Heath, Butler and MacMillan. 'Real' Conservatism turns out to be 18th century Liberalism.

The case of Liberalism shows more clearly just how far members of the same ideology can differ in terms of both intellectual grounds and practical recommendations. Locke, J S Mill, T H Green and Herbert Spencer are all recognised as Liberals, yet they not only disagreed on how best to promote Liberal values, they disagreed as to what Liberal values were. Locke, for example, saw 'human rights' as the key, Mill appealed to 'utility', Green appealed to 'moral self-realisation' and Spencer seems to have believed in a biological (and therefore non-moral) view of politics. Now none of these is the 'real' Liberal, nor is Liberalism an amalgam of all these positions. Rather they are positions that have, at one time or another, seemed more or less compelling to those who called themselves Liberals. Modern Liberals, for example seem to favour the arguments that promote 'positive' liberty, rather than seeing liberty as the mere absence of restraint. Yet it is difficult to see what common grounds could be offered for deciding between the two views any more than Mill's appeal to utility could be said to refute Green's talk of self-realisation.

I hope that none of this has given the impression of being too cut and dried. Plainly there are figures who have changed from one ideology to another and those who are on the borderline between competing ideologies. Different ideologies are not sealed compartments, incapable of change or adaptation.

Also, it should be noted in passing that the relationship between ideological adherence and a philosophical stance is often a complex one. There is no obvious relationship between philosophy and ideology. T H Green and Mill were both Liberals, yet nothing

could have been further from Mill's conception of moral duty than that of Green. On the other hand, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen admitted that he found utilitarianism a sympathetic creed, though he remained a staunch Conservative.

I I

Before turning to consider those disputes between members of opposing ideologies, it is necessary to say something about what is involved in the notion of settling an argument. Part of the difficulty I wish to raise is precisely what counts as a solution to a disagreement of this kind. At first glance it appears that different things will count as solutions, or, as K R Minogue puts it, Apartheid is a *problem* for blacks, but a *solution* for Afrikaaners.

Clearly, part of calling an exchange of words an argument is the presupposition that there are common standards or criteria available to provide a framework as to what counts for or against an assertion. If the Professor is uncertain as to whether or not there are snakes in Iceland then he can go there, hire guides, peer at the ground through a strong magnifying glass and so on. Of course, there may be matters of fact that are at present unresolvable because we lack sufficiently sophisticated techniques or instruments. The point is that it is agreed *what* would count as a test of *that* assertion. In science, for example, two disputing scientists would be bound by the results of a properly conducted experiment.

The technique of 'looking and seeing' is not the paradigm for *all* arguments however. Questions of logic, whatever Lenin might have thought, are not empirical matters but are settled in advance of *any* evidence.³ As Wittgenstein showed us, there are a great many different *kinds* of argument with more, or less, developed criteria for deciding between competing positions. To realise this one only has to look at the differences between arguments in philosophy, history, aesthetics, mathematics or theology; for finding a solution will depend upon using *appropriate* procedures and they may differ from case to case.

The question is then, "Are there appropriate criteria for settling ideological disputes"? As we have already seen, arguments between members of the same ideology have appropriate arguments and authorities that can be advanced and recognised as contributing to the debate at hand. Equally, they are not always decisive; it is usually the case that defeat for one side in practical political terms is followed by the abandonment of their theoretical stance rather than vice versa. The victory of Stalin's view of Marxism over that of Trotsky in the Soviet Union is a good example of this.

If we look, not at the debate between the fellow Marxists, Stalin and Trotsky, but between Burke and Paine, it soon becomes

apparent that not only do the two sides disagree as to the appropriate criteria for settling their quarrel, but that there are no such criteria. This is because their dispute is not so much about the course of the French Revolution but about the significance of such an event. Now this does not mean that there are no factual errors in either account, nor that such issues are not of legitimate interest to us. The crucial point in their dispute comes when they agree over what happened, but offer completely different interpretations of it. For example, Burke saw the 'terror' as proof of the savage and brutal nature of the revolutionaries and their revolution, Paine saw it as the explosion of a people after years of repression and corruption under the *Ancien Regime*. Again, Burke saw the decision to behead the king as conflicting with their claim that they had nothing against Louis as a person. Such an act could only be one of callous revenge. Paine saw this claim as evidence that the revolutionaries were concerned with the great issues of liberty and equality, rather than in carrying out a vendetta against the French royal family.

To take a more modern example, a Marxist and a Nationalist might perfectly well agree that the First World War broke out in 1914, that British losses at the Somme were N thousand (or rather, they would agree over what kind of evidence could substantiate or refute such claims). What they would disagree about is the significance that those facts have. They see the war in different ways, one as a conflict between classes, the other as a conflict between nations. In this case there is no appropriate procedure for deciding between the two, for each ideology provides the grounds for assessment. The famous statement "All history is the history of class struggle" is not an empirical generalisation, but lays down a condition for understanding any historical event within Marxism. It provides a framework for understanding *all* historical events. There could no more be an event that did not illustrate class struggle than there could be an unalienated man within capitalism, or a married bachelor. "All history is . . ." stands in relation to past events in the same way that "All events have a cause" stands in relation to those events investigated by science.⁴ By this I mean that it cannot, within Marxism, be falsified by an appeal to evidence, since it provides the framework for the proper (in Marxist terms) understanding of that evidence. The situation is not, for example, analogous to two scientists discussing what would count as evidence for a particular hypothesis, where there must be things that would not count as evidence. For the Marxist *anything and everything* is evidence, nothing is irrelevant or excluded.

The *kind* of dispute that we have here might be illuminated by looking at moral disagreements. Now much ink has been spilt over

the question of the relationship between matters of fact and judgements of value. Some philosophers, such as R M Hare, have argued that facts and values are logically independent, such that an evaluative conclusion cannot be drawn from a factual premise. Others, such as Phillipa Foot, have argued that *some* factual statements entail a moral conclusion, a conclusion, moreover, that must be the same for all moral agents.

Hare's account suggests that there is a 'world' of facts and in the case of moral judgements an evaluative element is added. This is done by the agent concerned deciding to make a principle universal. Particular judgements of value follow from the application of these universal principles to particular cases. Thus, in Hare's account it is possible to decide to be against lying in the same way that it is possible to decide to be against capital punishment. What this account misses, as Julius Kovesi points out in his book *Moral Notions*⁵ is that moral terms do not *evaluate* a world of descriptions, they *describe* a world of evaluations. There is, for example, no purely factual account of lying, such that we could decide to be for or against it. This is not because it has no descriptive content, but because we learn how to use the term 'lying' in the course of learning the term 'wrong'. From the start, lying has a moral importance for us and we learn to pick it out as something that should be avoided and condemn people because they tell lies and so on. As H O Mounce puts it,⁶ to ask "Ought lying to be avoided" would be like asking "Ought I to avoid what I ought to avoid" (This should not be confused with the question of whether a particular lie would be justified in exceptional circumstances or not. Such a matter would only be a moral dilemma if lies were already seen as things to be avoided).

It does not follow from this, however, that the same moral conclusion must be reached by all moral agents who have the facts before them. The same facts can entail *different* moral conclusions, especially when different moral practices are involved. Thus the statement that X committed suicide will carry a different weight for O'X the Roman Catholic and McX the atheist. For the former, suicide is just one of the ways in which a person can do wrong, for the latter it might have no moral significance at all.

If we look at an area of deep disagreement such as abortion, we can see that both sides might agree that the mother's life is in danger or that an extra child might place a great burden on the family resources. For one side, this is enough to justify termination, but for the other killing what is seen as a human life cannot be justified, whatever the circumstances. There is no possibility here of settling the matter by an appeal to some concept such as human good or harm; for it is precisely over what is to *count* as

good or harm that the two sides disagree. What is understood to count as good will be different for various moral practices or traditions, and it is the tradition that *orders* the way in which the facts are to be understood. Thus the Samurai who commits suicide rather than suffer dishonour and the Catholic who feels suicide to be a grave sin are worlds apart.

It should be emphasised here that there is, of course, room for either side to change their mind, or be convinced by their opponent. My point is that to recognise this, to change one's moral standards or way of life is nothing like recognising that one has made an error in a mathematical calculation or recognising a mistake in a crucial experiment.⁷

This may seem to have taken the discussion a long way from disputes between different ideologies. However, having seen the incommensurable nature of different moral positions and the way in which really fundamental moral disagreements may fail to find a solution, we can see that disputes between different ideologies display many similar characteristics. The Liberal and the Marxist may both agree that the days lost through strikes in Britain have increased since the war, but to the Marxist this indicates something about the class nature of society, the deepening capitalist recession and the class consciousness of British workers. To the Liberal it might indicate that the balance between the various sections of the community that is essential for harmony in society has been disturbed and must be restored.

As we have already seen, the arguments and conclusions are based upon different premises. Mill for example starts from the notion that the highest value must be placed upon the greatest good of the greatest number and asserts that democracy is the pre-requisite of progress. On the other hand, Sir Henry Maine denied that democracy had brought about what *he* understood to be progress⁸ and rejected the idea that democracy and freedom, so beloved by Mill, were the highest ends of government at all.

It is better for a nation, according to an English prelate, to be free than to be sober. If the choice has to be made, and if there is any real connection between Democracy and Liberty, it is better to remain a nation capable of displaying the virtues of a nation than even to be free.⁹

How can Mill's appeal to freedom and utility refute Maine's appeal to the virtues of nationhood?

To risk being prolix, such disagreements are not like disagreements between two scientists, where one explanation would be replaced by another *of the same sort*. With ideologists, the correct analogy would be where one of the disputing scientists ceased to see the *point* of science any more.¹⁰ If for example, Lenin had be-

come a Nationalist, or Lord Hailsham joined the Socialist Workers' Party, it would not mean that they now had a superior *explanation* of political activity; rather it would be that in the one case Marxism and in the other, Conservatism, no longer played any part in their lives, or way of thinking about politics.

It is important here to see that the Marxist and Nationalist who argue about the First World War and Burke and Paine are not, strictly speaking, *contradicting* each other in their respective accounts of events. A series of remarks by Wittgenstein on the Last Judgement helps to bring this out. He compares two people disagreeing over the statements (i) there is a German plane overhead. (ii) there will be a Last Judgement. In the former case, although there is disagreement, the judgements are still fairly close together, in the latter case, disagreement indicates a vast gulf between them. He continues:

Suppose someone is ill and he says: "This is a punishment," and I say: "If I'm ill, I don't think of punishment at all". If you say: "Do you believe the opposite"? – you can call it believing the opposite, but it is entirely different from what we would normally call believing the opposite.

I think differently, in a different way. I say different things to myself. I have different pictures.

It is this way: if someone said: "Wittgenstein, you don't take illness as a punishment, so what do you believe"? – I'd say: "I don't have any thoughts of punishment . . ." ¹¹

In a similar way the Marxist and the Liberal or Nationalist have pictures before them when they consider the General Strike or World War I. In the way that the believer sees illness as a punishment and the sceptic does not, so the Marxist sees the Great War as an example of 'class struggle' and the Liberal does not. They do not, strictly speaking, contradict each other because they are not describing, or misrepresenting, the same event or entity. By this I mean that 'capitalism' and 'the state' are not like cats and sheep that can be more (or less) accurately described by either side. 'Capitalism' is a different thing in Liberalism than in Marxism. The Marxist account of 'capitalism' cannot be divorced from such notions as 'alienation', 'exploitation', 'class' and so on, and since Liberalism has no place for these concepts, it cannot be said to be mis-describing 'capitalism' in the sense understood by Marxists. It has a different understanding of capitalism. When a Marxist says "The Great War was an example of class struggle. . ." the Liberal does not want to say "No it wasn't" (cf "There is an elephant in the room" – "No there isn't"), but to talk in a completely different way about balance, reason, the guilt of individuals and so on. To adapt the passage above, when the Marxist says "If you don't

see the war as a struggle between classes, what do you believe?" the Liberal says "I don't have any thoughts of classes."

In this sense the world of the Marxist and the world of the Liberal are complete, and admit of no intrusion; for everything must demonstrate the class nature of society in Marxism, nothing can do so in Liberalism. Of course, people do change, become converts or cease ideological adherence. But then, as the *Tractatus* puts it:

It becomes an altogether different world. It must so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. As if by accession or loss of meaning.^{1 2}

Someone might object here that though matters of social or historical fact may be hard to resolve, they are, in principle, capable of solution. Thus, there is a way of deciding between the Marxist and Liberal interpretation of the Great War by reference to objective standards. It may well be the case that both are wrong. My answer here is that not only does the understanding of 'capitalism' offered by Marxism differ from that offered by Liberals or Conservatives, it also differs from that offered by history. Clearly a great deal could be said about this, but the point I wish to make is that when the historian uses the term 'capitalism' he is using it to *describe* a set of economic relationships that play a part in the attempt to write a plausible account of events that took place in the past based upon the available evidence. In contrast, the Marxist use of the term 'capitalism' cannot be divorced from a whole complex of notions (alienation, class, and so on) that make it an *evaluative* term. There is, moreover, no way in which 'capitalism' could be a neutral term in the framework of Marxism since understanding what 'capitalism' is also involves recognising that it is exploitative, alienating and the rest. In short, the historian does not refute or confirm the Marxist (or Liberal) account of the past since it belongs to a different logical area.

It would be no use here to object that the historian also evaluates (in the selection of evidence and so on), for that kind of evaluation is nothing like the evaluation of 'capitalism' found in Marx and they are, therefore, not strictly comparable. It would be as if someone inferred from the fact that pawnbrokers redeem notes of debt and Jesus redeemed Mankind, that the terms were being used in a comparable way. Clearly the former use is a technical term with no 'metaphysical' connotations, whilst we would be hard put to understand the second without getting to grips with a whole range of theological notions such as 'sin', 'grace' and 'the fall'.

I have tried to show that ideologists are not concerned about whether or not certain facts pertain, but with a wider enterprise that is often described as the search for *the* meaning of the world.

They are not, in this sense, very far removed from religion. The meaning for which they seek cannot be within the world, for then it would only be a fact among facts, and could, quite simply, have been different. History, as we have seen, is unlikely to be able to provide the ideologist with any kind of foundation for his/her beliefs.

We are left with the conclusion that disputes are only able to be settled where there are appropriate criteria that can be brought to bear. It has been my argument that both in disputes between members of the same ideology and in-disputes between different ideologies, there are no such criteria. Ideological disputes do end of course; they run out of steam, become irrelevant in changing circumstances or are resolved by the *political* victory of one side or another. It is this rather than intellectual agreement that ends them. As Paine put it in *The Rights of Man*, “When the passions of the pen are unleashed, ‘tis the man, not the subject that becomes exhausted.”

- 1 R M Gunn and D Hoffman, ‘Is Nature Dialectical?’ *Marxism Today*, January and February 1977.
- 2 G Egner, *Birth Regulation and Catholic Belief*, Sheed & Ward, London 1966.
- 3 Cf L Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London , Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, 5.552
- 4 This is not quite true. One difference would be that learning more about Marxism would help to elucidate what was meant by ‘class struggle’, whereas learning more about science would not involve the same elucidation of causality.
- 5 J Kovesi, *Moral Notions*, London, 1967, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 6 In D Z Phillips & H O Mounce, *Moral Practices*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969. I am indebted to that book for much of the argument in the next three paragraphs. I do not, of course, claim the approval of either author for my use of their arguments.
- 7 The person who tries to excuse a moral failing or an evil action on the grounds “It was a mistake” is surely not meeting the criticism that is being made, e.g. Nixon and his handling of Watergate.
- 8 Any argument to show that democracy (or the lack of it) had brought progress is likely to be circular here, since a progressive society is defined by Mill as one which is democratic and vice versa in the case of Maine.
- 9 Sir Henry Maine, *Representative Government*, London, 1886, p 63.
- 10 This analogy is used by D Z Phillips in the context of contrasting religious belief and science. Again, I do not claim his authority for my use of his example.
- 11 L Wittgenstein, *Lectures on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, Ed C Barratt, Oxford, Blackwell, 1966, p 55.
- 12 L Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.43