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## Ideology

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### Introduction

a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it.

This article describes the nature, history, and significance of ideologies in terms of the philosophical, political, and international contexts in which they have arisen. For discussions of particular categories of ideology, see the articles socialism, communism, anarchism, fascism, nationalism, liberalism, and conservatism.

### Origins and characteristics of ideology

The word first made its appearance in French as *idéologie* at the time of the French Revolution, when it was introduced by a philosopher, A.-L.-C. Destutt de Tracy, as a short name for what he called his “science of ideas,” which he claimed to have adapted from the epistemology of the philosophers John Locke and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, for whom all human knowledge was knowledge of ideas.

The fact is, however, that he owed rather more to the English philosopher Francis Bacon, whom he revered no less than did the earlier French philosophers of the Enlightenment. It was Bacon who had proclaimed

that the destiny of science was not only to enlarge man's knowledge but also to “improve the life of men on earth,” and it was this same union of the programmatic with the intellectual that distinguished Destutt de Tracy's *idéologie* from those theories, systems, or philosophies that were essentially explanatory. The science of ideas was a science with a mission; it aimed at serving men, even saving them, by ridding their minds of prejudice and preparing them for the sovereignty of reason.

Destutt de Tracy and his fellow *idéologues* devised a system of national education that they believed would transform France into a rational and scientific society. Their teaching combined a fervent belief in individual liberty with an elaborate program of state planning, and for a short time under the Directory (1795–99) it became the official doctrine of the French Republic. Napoleon at first supported Destutt de Tracy and his friends, but he soon turned against them, and in December 1812 he even went so far as to attribute blame for France's military defeats to the influence of the *idéologues*, of whom he spoke with scorn.

Thus ideology has been from its inception a word with a marked emotive content, though Destutt de Tracy presumably had intended it to be a dry, technical term. Such was his own passionate attachment to the science of ideas, and such was the high moral worth and purpose he assigned to it, that the word *idéologie* was bound to possess for him a strongly laudatory character. And equally, when Napoleon linked the name of *idéologie* with what he had come to regard as the most detestable elements in Revolutionary thought, he invested the same word with all of his feelings of disapprobation and mistrust. Ideology was, from this time on, to play this double role of a term both laudatory and abusive not only in French but also in German, English, Italian, and all the other languages of the world into which it was either translated or transliterated.

Some historians of philosophy have called the 19th century the age of ideology, not because the word itself was then so widely used, but because so

much of the thought of the time can be distinguished from that prevailing in the previous centuries by features that would now be called ideological. Even so, there is a limit to the extent to which one can speak today of an agreed use of the word. The subject of ideology is a controversial one, and it is arguable that at least some part of this controversy derives from disagreement as to the definition of the word ideology. One can, however, discern both a strict and a loose way of using it. In the loose sense of the word, ideology may mean any kind of action-oriented theory or any attempt to approach politics in the light of a system of ideas. Ideology in the stricter sense stays fairly close to Destutt de Tracy's original conception and may be identified by five characteristics: (1) it contains an explanatory theory of a more or less comprehensive kind about human experience and the external world; (2) it sets out a program, in generalized and abstract terms, of social and political organization; (3) it conceives the realization of this program as entailing a struggle; (4) it seeks not merely to persuade but to recruit loyal adherents, demanding what is sometimes called commitment; (5) it addresses a wide public but may tend to confer some special role of leadership on intellectuals. In this article the noun ideology is used only in its strict sense; the adjective ideological is used to refer to ideology as broadly defined.

On the basis of the five features above, then, one can recognize as ideologies systems as diverse as Destutt de Tracy's own science of ideas, the Positivism of the French philosopher Auguste Comte, Communism and several other types of Socialism, Fascism, Nazism, and certain kinds of nationalism.

That all these “-isms” belong to the 19th or 20th century may suggest that ideologies are no older than the word itself - that they belong essentially to a period in which secular belief has increasingly replaced traditional religious faith.

### **The philosophical context**

#### **Ideology and religion**

Ideologies, in fact, are sometimes spoken of as if they belonged to the same logical category as

religions. Both are assuredly in a certain sense “total” systems, concerned at the same time with questions of truth and questions of conduct; but the differences between ideologies and religions are perhaps more important than the similarities. A religious theory of reality is constructed in terms of a divine order and is seldom, like that of the ideologist, centred on this world alone. A religion may present a vision of a just society, but it cannot easily have a practical political program. The emphasis of religion is on faith and worship; its appeal is to inwardness and its aim the redemption or purification of the human spirit. An ideology speaks to the group, the nation, or the class. Some religions acknowledge their debt to revelation, whereas ideology always believes, however mistakenly, that it lives by reason alone. Both, it may be said, demand commitment, but it may be doubted whether commitment has ever been a marked feature of those religions into which a believer is inducted in infancy.

Even so, it is in certain religious movements that the first ideological elements in the modern world can be seen. The city of Florence, which in so many fields witnessed the birth of modernity, produced perhaps the first “ideological” Christian.

The attempt of Girolamo Savonarola to construct a puritan utopia was marked by several of the qualities by which one recognizes a modern ideology: Savonarola treated the vision of a Christian community as a model that men should actually seek to realize in the here and now. His method was to dominate the state through an appeal to the populace, and then to use the powers of the state to control both the economy and the private lives of the citizens. The enterprise was given a militant spirit; it was presented by Savonarola as being at one and the same time an outward struggle against papal corruption, the commercial ethos, and Renaissance Humanism, and an inward struggle against worldly ambitions and carnal desires.

Savonarola had numerous followers in his attempt to give Christianity an ideological dimension: he inspired Calvin's Geneva and the Puritan

communities of the New World. Indeed, in both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, when Christianity was invested with a new militancy and a new intolerance, when a new emphasis was placed on creeds and conversion, religion itself moved that much nearer to ideology.

### **Ideology in early political philosophy**

The Italian political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli was one of Savonarola's sharpest critics, but he was also, like him, a precursor of modern ideologists. Historians who speak of him only as an immoralist overlook the extent to which Machiavelli was a man with an ideal - a republican ideal.

Rousseau recognized this when he spoke of *The Prince* as a "handbook for republicans."

Machiavelli's dream was to see revived in modern Italy a republic as glorious as that of ancient Rome, and he suggested that it could be achieved only by means of a revolution that had the strength of will to liquidate its enemies. Machiavelli was the first to link ideology with terror, but he was too much of a political scientist to enact the role of the ideologue.

Seventeenth-century England occupies an important place in the history of ideology. Although there were then no fully fledged ideologies in the strict sense of the term, political theory, like politics itself, began to acquire certain ideological characteristics. The swift movement of revolutionary forces throughout the 17th century created a demand for theories to explain and justify the radical action that was often taken. Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* is an outstanding example of literature written to justify the rights of man against absolutism.

This growth of abstract theory in the 17th century, this increasing tendency to construct systems and discuss politics in terms of principles, marks the emergence of the ideological style. In political conversation generally it was accompanied by a growing use of concepts such as right and liberty - ideals in terms of which actual policies were judged.

### **Hegel and Marx**

Although the word ideology in the sense derived from Destutt de Tracy's understanding has

passed into modern usage, it is important to notice the particular sense that ideology is given in Hegelian and Marxist philosophy, where it is used in a pejorative way. Ideology there becomes a word for what these philosophers also call “false consciousness.” G.W.F. Hegel argued that people were instruments of history; they enacted roles that were assigned to them by forces they did not understand; the meaning of history was hidden from them. Only the philosopher could expect to understand things as they were. This Hegelian enterprise of interpreting reality and reconciling the world to itself was condemned by certain critics as an attempt to provide an ideology of the status quo, in that if individuals were indeed mere ciphers whose actions were determined by external forces, then there was little point in trying to change or improve political and other circumstances. This is a criticism Karl Marx took up, and it is the argument he developed in *The German Ideology* and other earlier writings. Ideology in this sense is a set of beliefs with which people deceive themselves; it is theory that expresses what they are led to think, as opposed to that which is true; it is false consciousness.

Marx, however, was not consistent in his use of the word ideology, for he did not always use the term pejoratively, and some of his references to it clearly imply the possibility of an ideology being true. Twentieth-century Marxists, who have frequently discarded the pejorative sense of ideology altogether, have been content to speak of Marxism as being itself an ideology. In certain Communist countries “ideological institutes” have been established, and party philosophers are commonly spoken of as party ideologists. Marxism is an excellent example, a paradigm, of an ideology.

### **The sociology of knowledge**

The use of the word ideology in the pejorative sense of false consciousness is found not only in the writings of Marx himself but in those of other exponents of what has come to be known as the sociology of knowledge, including the German sociologists Max Weber and Karl Mannheim, and

numerous lesser figures. Few such writers are wholly consistent in their use of the term, but what is characteristic of their approach is their method of regarding idea systems as the outcome or expression of certain interests. In calling such idea systems ideologies, they are treating them as things whose true nature is concealed; they consider the task of sociological research to be the unveiling of what Mannheim called the “life conditions which produce ideologies.”

From this perspective, the economic science of Adam Smith, for example, is not to be understood as an independent intellectual construction or to be judged in terms of its truth, consistency, or clarity; rather, it is to be seen as the expression of bourgeois interests, as part of the ideology of capitalism.

The sociology of knowledge in its more recent formulations has sought support in Freudian psychology (notably in borrowing from Freud the concepts of the unconscious and of rationalization), in order to suggest that ideologies are the unconscious rationalizations of class interests. This refinement has enabled sociologists of knowledge to rid their theory of the disagreeable and unscientific element of bald accusation; they no longer have to brand Adam Smith as a deliberate champion of the bourgeois ethos but can see him now as simply the unconscious spokesman of capitalism. At the same time, these sociologists of knowledge have argued that Freudian psychology is itself no less a form of ideology than is Adam Smith's economics, for Freud's method of psychoanalysis is essentially a technique for adjusting rebellious minds to the demands and constraints of bourgeois society.

Critics of the sociology of knowledge have argued that if all philosophy is ideology, then the sociology of knowledge must itself be an ideology like any other idea system and equally devoid of independent validity; that if all seeming truth is veiled rationalization of interest, then the sociology of knowledge cannot be true. It has been suggested that although Weber and Mannheim inspired most of the work that has been done by sociologists of knowledge

their own writings may perhaps be exempted from this criticism, if only on the ground that neither of them put forward a consistent or unambiguous theory of ideology. Both used the word ideology in different ways at different times. Weber was in part concerned to reverse Marx's theory that all idea systems are products of economic structures, by demonstrating conversely that some economic structures are the product of idea systems (that Protestantism, for example, generated capitalism and not capitalism Protestantism). Mannheim, on the other hand, tried to restore in a more elaborate form Marx's suggestion that ideologies are the product of the social structure. But Mannheim's analysis may have been obscured by his proposal that the word ideology should be reserved for idea systems that are more or less conservative, and the word utopia for idea systems of a more revolutionary or millenarian nature. Mannheim did not, however, remain faithful to this stipulative definition, even in his book entitled *Ideology and Utopia*.

On the other hand, Mannheim was well aware of the implication of the doctrine that all idea systems have a class basis and a class bias. As a way out of the dilemma he envisaged the possibility of a classless class of intellectuals, a "socially unattached intelligentsia," as he put it, capable of thinking independently by virtue of its independence from any class interest or affiliation. Such a detached group might hope to acquire knowledge that was not ideology. This vision of a small elite of superior minds rising above the myths of ordinary society seemed to some readers to put Mannheim closer to Plato than to Marx and to cast new doubts on the claim of the sociology of knowledge to be a science.

### **The political context**

#### **Ideology, rationalism, and romanticism**

If some theorists emphasize the kinship between ideology and various forms of religious enthusiasm, others stress the connection between ideology and what they call rationalism, or the attempt to understand politics in terms of abstract ideas rather than of lived experience. Like Napoleon,



who held that ideology is par excellence the work of intellectuals, some theorists are suspicious of those who think they know about politics because they have read many books; they believe that politics can be learned only by an apprenticeship to politics itself.

Such people are not unsympathetic to political theories, such as Locke's, but they argue that their value resides in the facts that are derived from experience. Michael Oakeshott in England has described Locke's theory of political liberty as an "abridgment" of the Englishman's traditional understanding of liberty, and has suggested that once such a conception is uprooted from the tradition that has given it meaning it becomes a rationalistic doctrine or metaphysical abstraction, like those liberties contained in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which were so much talked about after the French Revolution but rarely actually enjoyed, in France or elsewhere.

Whereas Oakeshott has seen ideology as a form of rationalism, Edward Shils, a U.S. political scientist, has seen it more as a product of, among other things, romanticism with an extremist character.

His argument is that romanticism has fed into and swelled the seas of ideological politics by its cult of the ideal and by its scorn for the actual, especially its scorn for what is mediated by calculation and compromise. Since civil politics demands both compromise and contrivance and calls for a prudent self-restraint and responsible caution, he suggests that civil politics is bound to be repugnant to romanticism.

Hence Shils concludes that the romantic spirit is naturally driven toward ideological politics.

### **Ideology and terror**

The "total" character of ideology, its extremism and violence, have been analyzed by other critics, among whom the French philosopher-writer Albert Camus and the Austrian-born British philosopher Sir Karl Popper merit particular attention. Beginning as an Existentialist who subscribed to the view that "the universe is absurd," Camus passed to a personal affirmation of justice and human decency as compelling values to be realized in

conduct. An Algerian by birth, Camus also appealed to what he believed to be the “Mediterranean” tradition of moderation and human warmth and joy in living as opposed to the “northern” Germanic tradition of fanatical, puritan devotion to metaphysical abstractions. In his book *The Rebel (L'Homme révolté)*, he argued that the true rebel is not the man who conforms to the orthodoxy of some revolutionary ideology, but a man who could say “no” to injustice. He suggested that the true rebel would prefer the politics of reform, such as that of modern trade-union socialism, to the totalitarian politics of Marxism or similar movements. The systematic violence of ideology - the *crimes de logique* that were committed in its name - appeared to Camus to be wholly unjustifiable. Hating cruelty, he believed that the rise of ideology in the modern world had added enormously to human suffering. Though he was willing to admit that the ultimate aim of most ideologies was to diminish human suffering, he argued that good ends did not authorize the use of evil means.

A somewhat similar plea for what he called “piecemeal social engineering” was put forward by Popper, who argued that ideology rests on a logical mistake: namely the notion that history can be transformed into science. In *The Logic of Scientific Discovery (Logik der Forschung)*, Popper suggested that the true method of science was not one of observation, hypothesis, and confirmation but one of conjecture and experiment, in which the concept of falsification played a crucial role. By this concept he meant that in science there is a continuing process of trial and error; conjectures are put to the test of experiment, and those that are not falsified are provisionally accepted; thus there is no definitive knowledge but only provisional knowledge that is constantly being corrected. Popper saw in the enterprise of ideology an attempt to find certainty in history and to produce predictions on the model of what were supposed to be scientific predictions.

Ideologists, he argued, because they have a false notion of what science is, can produce only prophecies, which are quite distinct from scientific

predictions and which have no scientific validity whatever. Though Popper was well disposed toward the idea of a “scientific” approach to politics and ethics, he suggested that a full awareness of the importance of trial and error in science would prompt one to look for similar forms of “negative judgment” elsewhere.

By no means are all ideologists explicit champions of violence, but it is characteristic of ideology both to exalt action and to regard action in terms of a military analogy. Some observers have pointed out that one has only to consider the prose style of the founders of most ideologies to be struck by the military and warlike language that they habitually use, including words like struggle, resist, march, victory, and overcome; the literature of ideology is replete with martial expressions. In such a view, commitment to an ideology becomes a form of enlistment so that to become the adherent of an ideology is to become a combatant or partisan.

In the years that followed World War II, a number of ideological writers went beyond the mere use of military language and made frank avowals of their desire for violence - not that it was a new thing to praise violence. The French political philosopher Georges Sorel, for example, had done so before World War I in his book *Reflections on Violence*.

Sorel was usually regarded as being more a Fascist than a Socialist. He also used the word violence in his own special way; by violence Sorel meant passion, not the throwing of bombs and the burning of buildings.

Violence found eloquent champions in several black militant writers of the 1960s, notably the Martinican theorist Frantz Fanon. Moreover, several of the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's dramatic writings turn on the theme that “dirty hands” are necessary in politics and that a man with so-called bourgeois inhibitions about bloodshed cannot usefully serve a revolutionary cause. Sartre's attachment to the ideal of revolution tended to increase as he grew older, and in some of his later writings he suggested that violence might even be a

good thing in itself.

In considering Sartre's views on the subject of ideology it must be noted that Sartre sometimes used the word ideology in a sense peculiarly his own. In an early section of his *Search for a Method (Critique de la raison dialectique)*, Sartre drew a distinction between philosophies and ideologies in which he reserved the term philosophy for those major systems of thought, such as the Rationalism of Descartes or the Idealism of Hegel, which dominate men's minds at a certain moment in history. He defined an ideology as a minor system of ideas, living on the margin of the genuine philosophy and exploiting the domain of the greater system. What Sartre proposed in this work was a revitalization and modernization of the "major philosophy" of Marxism through the integration of elements drawn from the "ideology," or minor system, of Existentialism. What emerged from the book was a theory in which the Existentialist elements are more conspicuous than the Marxist.

### **Ideology and pragmatism**

A distinction is often drawn between the ideological and the pragmatic approach to politics, the latter being understood as the approach that treats particular issues and problems purely on their merits and does not attempt to apply doctrinal, preconceived remedies. Theorists have debated whether or not politics has become less ideological and whether a pragmatic approach can be shown to be better than an ideological one.

On the first question, there seemed to be good reason for thinking that after the death of Stalin and the repudiation of Stalinism by the Communist Party, the Soviet Union, at least, was becoming more interested in the "pragmatic" concerns of national security and the balance of power and less interested in the ideological aim of fostering universal Communism. This in turn seemed to many to have resulted - in both the United States and the Soviet Union - in a shift toward a pragmatic policy of coexistence and a peaceful division of spheres of influence. There were indications in many countries that the old antagonisms between capitalist and

socialist ideologies were giving way to a search for techniques for making a mixed economy work more effectively for the good of all.

But while many observers believed that there was much evidence of a decline of ideology in the latter 1950s, others believed that there were equally manifest signs in the following decade of a revival of ideology, if not within the major political parties, then at least among the public generally. Throughout the world various left-wing movements emerged to challenge the whole ethos on which pragmatic politics was based. Not all these ideologies were coherent, and none possessed the elaborate intellectual structure of the 19th-century ideologies; but together they served to demonstrate that the end of ideology was not yet at hand.

As suggested earlier, certain controversies about ideology have to some extent been rooted in the ambiguity of the word itself, and this is perhaps especially relevant to the confrontation between ideology and pragmatism, since the word pragmatism raises problems no less intractable than those involved in connection with the word ideology. In the senses outlined at the beginning of this article, ideology is manifestly not the only alternative to pragmatism in politics, and to reject ideology would not necessarily be to adopt pragmatism. Ordinary language does not yet yield as many words as political science needs to clarify the question, and it becomes necessary to introduce such expressions as belief system, or to name the relevant distinctions, to further the analysis.

Almost any approach to politics constitutes a belief system of one kind or another. Some such belief systems are more structured, more ordered, and generally systematic than others. Though an ideology is a type of belief system, not all belief systems are ideologies. One man's belief system may consist of a congeries of ill-assorted prejudices and inarticulate assumptions. Another's may be the result of deep reflection and careful study. It is sometimes felt to be convenient to speak of a belief system of this latter type as a philosophy or, better, to distinguish it from

philosophy in the technical or academic sense, as a *Weltanschauung* (literally, a “view of the world”).

The confrontation between ideology and pragmatism may be more instructive if it is translated into a distinction between the ideological and the pragmatic, taking these two adjectives as extremes on a sliding scale. From this perspective, it becomes possible to speak of differences of degree, to speak of an approach to politics as being more or less ideological, more or less pragmatic. At the same time it becomes possible to speak of a belief system such as liberalism as lending itself to a variety of forms, tending at the one extreme toward the ideological, and at the other toward the pragmatic.

### **The context of international relations**

It has been said that ideology has transformed international relationships in the 20th century - in appearance at least. Earlier centuries experienced dynastic wars, national, civil, and imperial wars, and diplomacy designed to further national security or national expansion or to promote mutual advantages and general peace. Such factors, indeed, appeared to govern international relations until recent times.

International relations today are seemingly dominated more often than not by the exigencies of “-isms”: wars are fought, alliances are made, and treaties are signed because of ideological considerations. The balance of power in the contemporary world is a balance weighted by ideological commitment. “The Communist bloc” confronts “the Free peoples,” and in the “Third World” emergent nations cultivate a nationalist, anticolonialist ideology in their search for identity and their efforts to achieve modernity.

But this is not to assert that ideological wars, or ideological diplomacy, are entirely new. What has become the most conspicuous element in contemporary international relations - so conspicuous that other elements are often entirely ignored - was present, to a lesser degree, in earlier international relations. It is necessary here to distinguish between the actual events of history and the interpretations

that are put on history, for some events lend themselves more readily than others to an ideological interpretation. The ideological perspective has become increasingly significant as the general public has come to play a role in considering questions of war and peace. When questions of defense and diplomacy were settled by kings and their ministers and wars were fought by professional soldiers and sailors, the public was not expected to have any opinion about international relations, and in such a situation there was little place for ideology.

### **Ideology in the World Wars**

In the course of World War I, however, a new element appeared to have been introduced. The war was seen by those who experienced it as being in its early stages a national war of the traditional kind, and as such it was not at first expected to assume any profoundly disturbing form. Each combatant people viewed itself as fighting for king and country in a just war. But by 1916 the Allies were being urged to think of their endeavour as a war “to make the world safe for democracy,” and the Germans, on their side, were correspondingly encouraged to visualize the war as a struggle of “culture” against “barbarism.” On both sides, the casualties were far more terrible than anyone had foreseen, and the need to sustain the will to war by an appeal to ideology was plainly felt by all the nations involved. Whether such “war aims” were really the main objectives of the governments concerned is another question; what is important is that, as the need was increasingly felt for a justification of war, the justification took an ideological form. Whether or not World War I changed its real nature between 1914 and 1918, the prevailing conception of it underwent significant alteration. This became more marked after the Russian Revolution of 1917, when the Bolsheviks submitted to harsh German peace terms for reasons that were not only practical but ideological - namely, the preservation and promotion of Communism. Pres. Woodrow Wilson took the United States into the war on the Allied side with an alternative ideological vision - that of ensuring permanent peace through the League of Nations and of establishing

democratic governments in all the conquered countries.

The rise of Communism clearly marked a corresponding increase in the role of ideology in international relations. Fascism helped to speed the process. The Spanish Civil War of the 1930s was an almost clear-cut confrontation between the ideologies of left and right (not entirely clear-cut because of the ambiguous relationship between Communism and anarchism).

The precise extent of ideological commitment in World War II is a matter of some controversy. At one level, the 1939 war is seen as a continuation of the war of 1914. Two of the leading protagonists - Great Britain and the United States - agreed more in their anti-ideological stance and their hostility to Nazism than in promoting an alternative ideology.

Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, suspicious of British and French imperialism and eager to cultivate a progressive ideological outlook, was critical of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's politics, hostile toward Charles de Gaulle's, but surprisingly tolerant of Joseph Stalin's. The revival of Wilson's idealistic war aims in the Atlantic Charter provided a basis for a kind of general ideological union of the Allies. But such formulations proved to be of small significance compared to the profound ideological commitment of the Soviet Union to Communism, and that of the United States to an international position more ideologically anti-Communist than pro anything.

### **Ideology of the Cold War**

What came to be called the Cold War in the 1950s must be understood, to a large extent, as an ideological confrontation, and, whereas Communism is manifestly an ideology, the “non-Communism,” or even the “anti-Communism,” of the West is negatively ideological. To oppose one ideology is not necessarily to subscribe to another, although there is a strong body of opinion in the West that feels that the free world needs a coherent ideology if it is to resist successfully an opposing ideology.

The connection between international wars and



ideology can be better expressed in terms of a difference of degree rather than of kind: some wars are more ideological than others, although there is no clear boundary between an ideological and non-ideological war. An analogy with the religious wars of the past is evident, and there is indeed some historical continuity between the two types of war.

The Christian Crusades against the Turks and the wars between Catholics and Protestants in early modern Europe have much in common with the ideological conflicts of the contemporary period.

Religious wars are often communal wars, as witness those between Hindus and Muslims in India; but an “ideological” element of a kind can be discovered in many religious wars, even those narrated in the Old Testament, in which the people of Israel are described as fighting for the cause of righteousness - fighting, in other words, for a universal abstraction as distinct from a local and practical aim. In the past this “ideological” element has in the main been subsidiary; what is characteristic of the modern period is that the ideological element has become increasingly dominant, first in the religious wars (and the related diplomacy) that followed the Reformation and then in the political wars and diplomacy of recent times.

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