Editors' introduction

This, the final volume of the Cambridge History of Political Thought, attempts to provide an overview of the main currents of twentieth-century social and political thinking. It is difficult to narrate the history of political thought in any period; but to attempt to survey the history of twentieth-century political theorising in all its variety and diversity presents particular difficulties, if only because the century just ended was marked by a pervasive scepticism about the ways in which histories are narrated and an acute aware-ness of the many and alternative ways in which they may be constructed. The influence of Marx and Freud, amongst other theorists, has fostered 'the hermeneutics of suspicion', according to which nothing is ever as it ap-pears to be, and this suspicion extends to the writing of histories, including the present one. For a start, suspicions about ideological bias are bound to arise, and these are only compounded because our contributors are narrating the history of their own time. Questions may also be asked about why some topics and thinkers are included and others excluded. And, not least, there is the ever-present question of method: why narrate from one orientation rather than another? Why employ this method (or methodology) instead of that?

These are difficult questions for which we confess we have no fully sat-isfactory answers. But several disclaimers may be in order. First, the editors of and contributors to the present volume doubtless do have their own political preferences and ideological biases, and these doubtless influence what we write about and how we go about doing that. Happily, however, we do not all share the same political preferences or subscribe to a single ideology. Quite the contrary; we believe that the reader will be struck not only by the variety of topics treated here, but (we hope) by the diverse and even-handed, if not invariably 'objective', ways in which they are treated. Unfortunately, but inevitably, some thinkers and topics are treated at greater

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length than others, while many are excluded entirely. This selectiveness is an unavoidable consequence of our being bound by a word limit that we have come perilously close to exceeding. We have attempted to be as inclusive as possible in our choice of thinkers and themes, and to detect and mitigate overt ideological bias. And finally, as regards method, we should note that the present volume is not wedded to or inspired by any particular methodology. Rather, we have thought it best to be eclectic, adopting a variety of approaches according to the thinkers, problems and themes addressed in individual chapters. The chapters are primarily thematic, generally chronological and occasionally focused on a particular theorist. In the main, each chapter explores a theme throughout the whole of the period covered by this volume. Exceptions arise when a particular theorist is notably associated with a given idea or school of thought; or when a theme is of sufficient importance to merit treatment in more than one chapter, either because of the longevity, centrality and pervasiveness of its influence, or because, although short-lived, it produced a particularly rich literature.

Nevertheless, we admit the very enterprise of writing a history of political thought produces certain inherent distortions. Though we have aimed to be as ecumenical as possible, devising the table of contents and setting word limits obliged us to make some hard, certainly contentious, and occasionally no doubt arbitrary choices. Because it is a history, we have tried to avoid making presentist judgements concerning which ideas are of the most relevance or importance for us today, instead taking our cue from their significance in their own time. Because our concern is political thought rather than practice, we have often given more weight to theories that have had greater resonance in the world of ideal rather than in that of real politics – though the two are closely connected, with all contributors exploring the links between them. Above all, because our focus is on political ideas rather than intellectual history more generally, we, like the editors of earlier volumes in this series, have been faced with difficulties in delineating the range and identity of the subject matter.

These problems are particularly acute in the twentieth century, when the scope of 'the political' was hotly contested and frequently extended to make the variety of themes, thinkers and topics enormous. Our starting point has been that the twentieth century was pre-eminently an age of ideologies, and these formed the main languages of political thought. As modes of political thinking, however, they can hardly be explored in isolation from the political events they helped to shape and were in turn shaped by. Similarly and relatedly, the identity of political thought during this period

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has become fractured and further complicated by the ever-increasing scope and complexity of phenomena that can be regarded as political. In an age of globalisation, the state, long the central focus of political thought, is now widely regarded as one actor among many others, including NGOs (non-governmental organisations), international corporations, regional and global trade regimes, human-rights monitoring agencies, international relief organisations, and transnational political movements of women, environmentalists and other groups. Thus, what is (and is not) regarded as 'political' restricts or extends the range of 'political thought', whose identity is open to question in its turn. Issues of immigration, international trade, environmental protection, human rights, terrorism, cultural identity, the evolving languages of the social sciences and aesthetics, new social movements, the changing constitution of states and societies – these and other developments have helped define the character of modern (and arguably 'post-modern') political thought. In consequence, we have considered the emergence of the environmental and women's movements, an anti-Western and anti-liberal backlash in Islamic movements and states, the development of the discipline of political science, and the impact of modernism in art and literature and Freudian psychology on political thought. This degree of diversity is unprecedented and well-nigh unmanageable in editorial if not in political terms. Finally, like its predecessors, this volume deals primarily with 'Western' political thought. Even so, the expansion of the West and the processes of globalisation, which greatly increased during this period and have enhanced the interaction and mutual influence of Western and non-Western political languages and tradition, have put the adjective 'Western' into question. Instances of transnational and cross-cultural fertilisation include the influence of Henry David Thoreau on Gandhi, and Gandhi on Martin Luther King and the environmental movement, of Marx and Lenin on Mao, and Mao on ultra-leftist movements in Europe and South America. We have accordingly looked at instances in which Western political thinking has been either appropriated or criticised by non-Western traditions, as with Mao and Gandhi on the one hand and anti-colonial and Islamic movements on the other.

In order to dovetail with its predecessor volume, the present history has in several instances picked up where that volume left off and has in others (and perhaps unavoidably) trespassed into the territory of the nineteenth century. There are two rather obvious reasons for this. The first is that a century is a chronological convention, not a hermetically sealed capsule into which everything fits without remainder or overlap; consequently any

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division of the history of political thought (or indeed of anything else) is largely artificial. A second reason for reaching back into the nineteenth century is that many of the agendas of twentieth-century political thinking were to a very considerable extent set in the latter part of the preceding century. Thus we begin roughly in 1880, when the major European states had been largely established and the era of liberal regimes begun. This was also the period of imperial consolidation, the socialist critique of liberal-capitalist society, the rise of modern mass democracies, the women's suffrage movement, and the search for a social democratic middle way, as found for example in the modern welfare state. The next main chronological divide within our period comes with the First World War, mass military mobilisation, the Russian Revolution, the rise of totalitarianism, and the economic chaos of the Great Depression, and culminates with the Holocaust and the Second World War. The next great divide comes with the Cold War, decolonisation and the end of the European empires, a much-vaunted (and greatly exaggerated) 'end of ideology', followed by the end of the end of ideology with the rise of new social movements, the demise of communism, a resurgent conservatism, the onset of a new tribalism (often linked to a revival of religious fundamentalism), and the crisis of the welfare state as it comes under pressure from both internal and external social, economic and ideological forces.

In taking our history up to the present, we do not wish in any way to advocate a Whiggish (and still less a Hegelian) account of twentieth-century political thinking. Very few indeed would wish to claim that the history of the twentieth century – and of twentieth-century political thinking – is a story of progress. Quite the contrary. The twentieth century was a time of turmoil, of mass movements and mass murder, of holocausts and hydrogen bombs. As the Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky observed with uncharacteristic understatement, 'Anyone wishing to live a quiet life has done badly to be born in the twentieth century.' Whether, or to what extent, the twenty-first century and the new millennium will be any quieter or less violent remains an open question. If the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent 'war on terrorism' are any indication, the prognosis is far from promising.

Part I
The changing fortunes of liberal democracy

1
The coming of the welfare state

MICHAEL FREEDEN

The welfare state – the overriding objective of domestic politics in most de-
veloped Western states during the first half of the twentieth century – was
a product of fundamental changes in the conceptualisation both of welfare
and of the state. Evolving accounts of human nature and of the interde-
pendence between individual and society were supplemented by structural
experimentation with various measures intended to secure the realisation
of those understandings. They were also accompanied by competing ethical
and conceptual interpretations of rights, duties, responsibilities and agency.
Moreover, they were nourished within opposing ideological families that
sought to be sharply distinguished from one another, yet displayed over-
lapping and complex configurations of ideas. Variations in time and space
account for some important differences of emphasis, but also demonstrate
that shared pools of ideas were drawn upon from which these local diver-
gences emanated.

Ideological disparities

At its zenith in the mid-twentieth century, the welfare state was frequently
defined as one in which the power of a democratic state is deliberately used
to regulate and modify the free play of economic and political forces in
order to effect a redistribution of income (Schottland 1967, p. 10). This
definition, like any other, conveys a particular interpretation, in this case
one that presupposes a state-instigated deviation from a market norm, as
well as the absence of 'modification' or intervention in earlier welfare ar-
rangements – both highly contestable assumptions. It also fails to differ-
entiate between the practices of welfare as insurance and as assistance, or
between welfare as the guaranteeing of minimal material conditions and

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welfare as human flourishing in broad, even optimal senses.[1] Nor does it offer a comparative distinction between 'welfare state', 'l'état providence' and 'Wohlfahrtsstaat', or furnish the historical perspective without which twentieth-century welfare-state thinking is unintelligible. Ultimately, that economistic and materialist definition constitutes an impoverished representation of the more extensive political ends and ideals welfare thinkers were hoping to realise, even those thinkers who themselves resorted to economic argument. For many, a democratic underpinning of the welfare state was a requisite of welfare, even though its conceptualisations emerged from undemocratic origins. Moreover, in line with more focused and functional thinking about the state, it was proffered as a vital instrument in securing further social and human ends such as flourishing, community, equality, dignity, responsibility, free self-development, participation, and productive and satisfying labour, in many of their multiple forms.

But even at the level of historical explanation difficulties abound. Conventionally, the welfare state has been portrayed as emerging from a collectivist assault on the principles of individualism; or – not at all the same thing – from a struggle between rival liberal and socialist viewpoints; or even, as in the German case, between rival conservative and socialist ones; or as a paternalist or, conversely, mutualist impulse derived from charitable practice in the private sector. Such frames of reference no longer seem the most fruitful interpretative devices to apply, if offered as monolithic causes. The richness of the ideational composite of welfare thinking defies earlier simplistic categorisations that saw social reform as the 'golden mean' between laissez-faire and socialism (Fine 1956), a view predominant particularly in the less nuanced world of the American ideological spectrum. Rather, welfare thinking is both shaped by, and the shaper of, a multitude of factors. These include modern theories and practices of citizenship, physical and psychological notions of human well-being, the growth of bureaucracies, new understandings of the ends of politics and the uses to which state power may be put, objectives of modernisation and nation-building, perceptions of changing equilibria among social forces and classes involving the encouragement of democratic participation, developing technologies of social security, alternative economic bases to the rationales for the redistribution of wealth, contesting views concerning social justice, competing allocations of ethical and social responsibility to diverse social agencies, emerging future-oriented attitudes towards time and its mastery, reassessment of risk,

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1. For the replacement of the minimum with the optimum see Briggs (1961).

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and novel means of effecting social control and social order. Nor was there any simple correlation among all these factors: their manifold permutations reflected the fecundity and flexibility of the ideological packages in which they were presented. For those who expected ideologies to be highly structured and visible, such as the Swedish welfare theorist Gunnar Myrdal, this state of affairs was confusing, causing him to complain in the 1950s about 'the remarkable absence of any adequate positive and realistic ideology of the Welfare State' (Myrdal 1965, p. 59). A broader understanding would regard the loose system of political ideas attached to the welfare state, referred to here as welfarism, as a house of many mansions, though its pivotal permeation by liberal principles is unmistakable.[2]

Any account of twentieth-century welfare thinking has to begin at the end of the nineteenth; even then, while the direction of some welfare solutions was becoming apparent, there remained a large number of contested areas of principle, and further issues were being introduced. Nevertheless, welfare-state thinking in Europe did not progress seamlessly. It erupted in particular during two bridging periods:[3] the turn of the century and mid-century. The emergence of society as a significant, possibly predominant, actor in its own right, and the acceptance of the state as a prime organiser, even initiator, of domestic public policy, with the concomitant of state intervention as normal and perennial rather than exceptional and temporary, were two of the most salient legacies bequeathed by the progressive ideologies of the fading nineteenth century to its successor. Both feared and welcomed, these understandings prevailed across the spectrum of political ideologies. In Britain, those developments accompanied a late resurgence of utilitarianism now wedded to the exciting messages of social evolution. The two schools of thought were employed to confront the growing realisation of the social costs of the industrial revolution and, moreover, of the avoidability of many of those costs. British idealist thought merged with late-Victorian conceptions of progress and with new social theories to proclaim the importance of social wholes and, by implication, of group membership.[4] Independently of socialist teachings, the abstract individual – who had thrived only amidst the powerful myths of laissez-faire axioms, while absent in social practices – was replaced with an appreciation of the interdependence of individuals

2. See Ashford (1986, p. 13): 'one of the major misperceptions about the political development of welfare states cultivated by a short historical perspective is that the rise of social policy to prominence was a socialist accomplishment'.
3. The phrase relates to Reinhart Koselleck's *Sattelzeit*: an epoch of consequential change that both links and separates two periods (Koselleck 1972, p. xv).
4. For a critical view of such welfare theories of progress see O'Brien and Penna (1998, pp. 210–12).

and the indispensable blessings of social cooperation. In parallel, France witnessed the advance of ideas on social solidarity which, though deriving from slightly different starting points, emphasised state support for individual responsibility and foresight, conjointly with their partial replacement by social insurance, as a matter of national interest. Security and liberty were bonded together by perceived sociological necessities of social life. Germany, at the time, was combining a form of state paternalism with the social duty to produce organisational efficiency. Sweden was pushing the twin notions of individual liberty and social equality with a highlighted democratic tint. Only the United States was treading a more tentative path in which limited and decentralised private welfare arrangements were preferred to heavy state intervention. All these themes, however, were evident in major or minor keys in every one of those countries.

Pauperism, poverty and work

The development of twentieth-century welfare thinking requires interpretation against a complex backdrop. To begin with, aid to the needy was associated primarily with poverty, especially in its specific form of pauperism: the extreme and often irredeemable poverty associated with idleness, inefficiency, destitution, weak character and, on another level, social destabilisation. Pauperism entailed a quadruple set of perspectives. First, it was attached to a moral stigma, signifying an individual lapse in terms of expected standards of conduct, if not criminal then blatantly anti-social. Second, pauperism was to be treated through local rather than national initiatives. Third, it upheld the ascendancy of the voluntarist principle, in which either charity (the good will of the donor) or self-help through mutual benefit societies (the prescient will of the recipient) played a major, if not exclusive, role. Fourth, it was sustained as a conceptual category by the belief in the virtues of the free market, however much economic practice deviated from it. Prior to 1914, the view of poverty as pauperism competed for recognition and legitimacy with two other conceptualisations. For some – in Britain notably Charles Booth and B. Seebohm Rowntree, whose social surveys of London and York respectively provided path-breaking insights into the incidence of penury – poverty denoted a non-judgemental characterisation of disadvantaged individuals located beneath a specified point on a quantitative scale of income or means at their disposal. But this understanding was augmented by a fuller view, according to which poverty referred to a spectrum of non-monetary and non-material indicators, the absence of