

On Ideology

by [Myron Gananian](#) (June 2022)



No better starting point in discussing ideology than with Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.'s words that encompass its essence: "Certitude leads to violence." His following words provide further clarity as only he was able: "This is a proposition which has an easy application and a difficult one. The easy application is to ideologues, dogmatists, and bullies-people who think that their rightness justifies them in imposing on anyone who does not subscribe to their particular ideology, dogma or notions of turf. If the *conviction of rightness is powerful enough, resistance to it will be met, sooner or later, by force*. There are people like this in every sphere of life, and it is natural to feel that the world would be a better place without them." Ideology is nothing if it is not certain.

It would serve us well to note that the italicized words closely pertain to the current political scene in the US, as they do no less to the French and Russian revolutions. Then several more words from folks who have thought about the knowledge of thought, or epistemology.

We do not need ... to believe in an ideology. All that is necessary is for each of us to develop our good human qualities. The need for a sense of universal responsibility affects every aspect of modern life. –Dalai Lama

An ideology differs from a simple opinion in that it claims to possess either the key to history or the solution for all the 'Riddles of the universe', or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws, which are supposed to rule nature and man. –Hannah Arendt

And now, the most succinct and perspicacious of all;

The function of ideology is to stabilize and perpetuate

dominance through masking or illusion. –Sally Haslanger

It is timely to talk about ideology, for increasingly the word is used pejoratively, more often by the Right aimed at the Left. Is it then just a curse word or does it signify something far more profound and malevolent? In any case, the word is used passingly, with the assumption that its meaning is either evident or of little consequence. Maybe not.

If those thoughts are acceptable then comes the first of many questions about ideology, “Is there any good that comes from *any* ideology?” The short and the long answers are a resounding “No,” not from pundits, oracles, and professors, but from even the most cursory glance at human history. This being the case it is easy to settle on the major religions as the greatest violators of peace and prosperity. But in no way does this absolve the several other brands of ideology that have cursed humanity; political, sociological, and economic, vying for the Misery Index Award.

We in the US in particular are currently suffering the revivification of a political ideology tried unrelentingly during the preceding many centuries; *centralized political power*, a creature in direct contravention to our republic’s founding intentions; power granted from the people to the government, not the obverse. Our government, in contrast to most every other nation, is *By and For the People*. The various names given to centralized political power are irrelevant. At heart and in their consequences, they are all alike. Centralized political power’s appeal and success arises from its inherent ideology, no less a faith than the belief in a divinity. Ideologies provide clarity and certainty, bulwarks against the ambiguity and gamble that life is. Newtonian Physics is far more comforting than the randomness and uncertainty of Quantum Mechanics, though the latter comports more accurately with life on earth, and beyond.

Since the 1880’s, with the onset of the Progressive Era, there

has been an inexorable increase in the absorption of power by our Federal Government and the spread of its tentacles over every aspect of the lives of its citizens, abetted by all three branches of government. As just one, though most glaring example, a cursory glance at the budget will confirm this assertion. The power to tax is indeed the power to destroy and one of many paths in expanding the tentacles of centralized control. Impoverishing someone nicely places them in a relation of weakness and beggary. Obedience to the dictates of the ideology then is not only inevitable but more easily accomplished. It is called "The Infernal Revenue Service" for good reason.

It is proper to ask next, what is it that attracts people to support an ideology though they may not be in the seat of power and simply its followers? The answer to that question will also tell us what types are attracted to an ideology, to either sit in the throne of power or to live in its thrall.

The attraction: All ideologies provide certainty and clarity, the essence of faith. The anxiety produced by the absence of these desirable states is an irresistible force driving one to ideology for their resolution. Few things provide comfort and security as does certainty, which entails a long list of further alleviations; predictability, release from having to provide one's own answers to life's miseries, granting permission to another to dictate the terms for interpersonal relations as well as with the rest of society and thereby diminishing the burdens of self-reliance and individuality, which are considerable. We must not overlook that many are indifferent or simply lazy and unconcerned about the future. This indifference about the future is *their* security. In sum, an ideology is attractive *because* it diminishes the travails that come from self-determination and independence. It is thought that life's burdens are more easily borne if they are shared with others in society; "common misery," or in this case with a superior power claiming the ability to protect its

followers from the exigencies of living. An attractive path to diminishing pain and increasing pleasure. Ideologies reduce the need of its subjects to use the rare privilege of applying risk-benefit calculations in their daily decisions. The promise of removing risk is very alluring. Don't stock brokers offer this? Since the benevolent ideology of centralized power is the repository of all that is virtuous it rises beyond criticism.

Then the question of who are attracted to the reins of centralized power, which is begging the question since the query supplies the answer; those who relish the role of dominating the lives of others. One has to suspect that the Determinists are correct, that some folks are born to dominate and others to live their lives in a subservient status, a painful realization but one which coincides with reality better than most. Inherent in domination is the conviction that those who wield power know what is best for those who do not. It is informative to ask about the motives of those who seek to occupy even the lowest levers of political power such as those who populate our Sewer Boards, Architectural Boards, School Boards, and the like; the answer would likely be that the majority fit this description.

The cruelty of centralized power is that only those who wield the power are its beneficiaries. It cannot be otherwise. It is not realistic to suppose that those in a position of power would share it with those excluded from power. Then it would not be centralized power. Diluted power is not power, it is Democracy.

The list of consequences of ideology are protean, intruding on every aspect of those not in power. It is also true that those in power must conform to its philosophy as well, otherwise they too are then ejected. Uniformity of thought and action from top to bottom. One of the most challenging aspect for those not in power is to criticize and fight against the purity of the cause, imbued with loftiness bordering on

holiness, which characterize all ideologies, regardless of their origin. Along with the necessity to have as much uniformity as possible in its followers, it is a prime requisite that success be punished. Note the current attitude in the US on this score as well as its spread to other nations. There is no limit on what can be said or done to take down the successful. One dares not say anything derogatory about the underclass in the US at present but free rein is given to urinate on the Cross and Christ's statue, tax the rich, bring down CEOs pay to that of the employees, criticize and silence the voices of the outspoken who contest authority. With the Supreme Court's blessing burn the American flag with impunity but be accused of a hate crime if one defaces a BLM poster, or as recently, the Ukrainian flag. The utterances of the spokespersons for those attempting to take down our system are given voice far in excess of their numbers. Either obey the orthodoxy or remain mute.

The tools and techniques of ideology are similar in virtually every study of successful ideologies, regardless of their origins. The initial goal is to create a unitary, morally based, idealistic, sublime, and exalted set of dicta that will appeal to the greatest number. It must absolutely be *unitary*, since here again, if not, the opposite would pertain and thought and action would be left to the individual, destructive of centralized power, resulting in splintering and disunity. Heterogeneity and heterodoxy are anathema.

It must be *idealistic* by appealing to the finer nature of its audience and at the same time demonstrating that it promises the certain road to utopia. To achieve this goal it must offer succor and salvation from the concerns and burdens of its followers. Who would refuse such a kind offer from Christ, Mohammed, Mao, Marx or the alphabet soup of the USA, SCOTUS, POTUS, OR CONGRESS? The end always justifies the means. Compassion for the masses.

It must be applied *uniformly*. Exception is poison to the

regime. Individuality, digression, wandering away from conformity leads to condemnation ostracism, and in extreme cases, imprisonment and even death.

Ideology cannot achieve these ends without knowing as much as possible about its followers. Just as a shepherd knows where every last lamb is, so too is this absolutely crucial for the sustenance of power. This is the mother's milk of ideology and is now being accomplished in the US by the unprecedented domestic surveillance growing daily as it has in China. IRS, TSA, HSA, NSA, SEC, FED RESERVE, COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY, FDIC, NATIONAL CREDIT UNION, OFFICE OF THRIFT SUPERVISION, FACEBOOK, TWITTER, TIK-TOK, and who knows how many more unknown to us. Consider the pending threat of a Federal Gun Registry. As an aside, there is no official tally of the number of federal agencies. Most estimates are over 400. Centralized political power does not stop at nationalizing coal and oil; every aspect of life is nationalized.

An essential characteristic of such power is intransigence. Use any technique to prevent an assault on the integrity of its philosophy; propaganda, lying, deceit, denying. Disallow anything that might threaten the integrity of the power structure. Dig in, obfuscate, deny, lie. Use any method to deflect criticism.

Let us return again to history for the finest recent examples of the implementation of these precepts, though there are many more vying for the championship. The Weimar Republic after WWI was unable to achieve anything approaching unity, thereby creating a vacuum into which Hitler stepped and fulfilled admirably, though succeeding for only a few, halcyon years. The early Third Reich was in fine mettle; the populace had everything it wanted, the economy was going gangbusters, though with an uneasy peace beyond its borders. The German populace had no reason to complain, having been promised the moon, they got it, initially in full phase but predictably followed by waning. The entire nation was "bought." In effect

prostituted and infected with a venal rather than venereal disease.

Let us continue with the description of what is the first and most eternal mode of achieving and maintain power-*Homogenize the Populace*. In the last century or more this has been implemented by several, simple, very effective ways.

The Ottomans, under cover of the lead-up to WWI, cut off the head of the snake by first executing Armenian and Greek intellectuals, teachers, priests, and industrialists, thereby, stupidly, eliminating a large cadre of non-Turks who ran the country because of their far superior literacy, leaving them leaderless, their agony making them easy victims. Purify Turkey. Purify Germany.

Bismarck unified almost 300 kingdoms, duchies, fiefdoms and municipalities, melding this mess into the most feared nation from the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 for the next 75 years. Disparity into similarity and unity, essential to establish power.

Mao Zedong used all these techniques but achieved his greatest success by using primarily one of Stalin's methods, mass execution, thereby elimination competition and intellectual opposition. Purify the masses by eliminating non-conformers.

Stalin used an additional method to dilute and homogenize the population; mass movement of peoples from their native lands to others. In effect mixing them together so they would be less distinctive. Prior to this the term "ethnic Germans, Georgians, Kazaks, Uzbeks," etc. was applied to populations living within the borders of another nation by dint of conquest, not forced migration. Ethnic Germans in Sudetenland went to Czechoslovakia by "drifting," as is occurring on our Southern Border. Why are not those crossing our Southern Border called "Ethnic Mexicans"?

In the US there is a blatant effort to blur the distinction

between individuals. All can attend college, IQ be damned; men may compete against women in sports, a penis in the pool is not permitted to be an outrage; rise and prosper by bringing down to a lower level those more accomplished, reverting to the mean, and often below it; think and act like the crowd; diminish the difference between sexes; create more than one gender, devise meaningless pronouns that eliminate distinctiveness. On television create the myth that half the US population is of color. Everyone in uniform, either of cloth, thought, or action. The US is currently undergoing another change that closely imitates this effort at homogenization, at first glance rather puzzling, since it flies in the face of idolizing diversity. Whether by design or unintentionally the effort to give greater voice to minorities cannot but help to reduce the voice of the majority. This undermines the very heart and soul of our democracy and attempts to eliminate the stratification that always occurs in societies that allow variation between individuals. "Majority rules with protection of minority rights," has become "Minority rules and the Hell with majority rights." Eliminate the ranking of majority and minority and every other distinction. Uniformity, sameness, unvaryingness.

Consider the craftiness of the most recent contrivance in achieving uniformity. From "Hand up" to "Hand out" to "Equity," the latter not in the least related to "Equality." Equity is likely the most effective and insidious homogenizer. Couched with the aura of benevolence for the downtrodden underclass it places itself beyond criticism. It exploits the commitment in a democracy to protect minority rights by distorting "equal outcome," the avowed aim of equity, as a "right." The only proper right we have is that of equal opportunity, not outcome. That is equality. Equal outcome is fascism. We are guaranteed the right to pursue happiness. Happiness is not and cannot be guaranteed, even though in reality it may exist just as does a subatomic particle, for a very short time.

Do not diminish the profound consequence of defunding the police and diminishing the severity of criminality by softening bail and reducing incarceration. The resulting minimization of difference between criminal and victim results, again, in shrinking whatever it is that defines individuals from one another.

As a result of homogenization, the fat particles in milk become extremely small and alike, so that none rise to the top, a most desirable state for consuming milk, or people.

Just as farm animals and thoroughbred horses are fed a careful repetitive diet, so too must the domesticated, submissive population be fed the proper diet of information and knowledge. This is achieved first by taking control of the entire educational system beginning with child care, even from birth. Recall the Soviet boast of countless numbers of newborns in state run nurseries awaiting entry into a childhood that freed parents from the burden of parenthood. Consider the current impetus to place two-year-olds in pre-school. Control the press, all newspapers owned or in connivance with the state. Note the current symbiosis between the press and one of our political parties. Strict control of book publishing and movie production. Ban books and even music inimical to the state. In the US this is already a reality what with school libraries determining the selection and elimination of books. Censor, forbid, silence, diminish, reduce. Control the curriculum.

We cannot exclude one of the most profound ways of removing the "glue" that holds most every nation together, the weakening of the role of religion and faith, which as well provide a bulwark against the state when and if they fulfill their proper social roles. Napoleon and Stalin made the heads of the Catholic and Orthodox churches respectively into state employees. Napoleon even jailed Pope Pius the VI, only one of many to meet such a fate. And now we note the "For Sale" sign on the mitre of the Russian Orthodox Church's blessing of the

killing of Ukranians.

All of these methods establish and institutionalize power, so easy without opposition, either weakened or eliminated entirely. An additional end result is to eventually destroy the keystone role of the family in holding together society when it is under threat. Eliminate the Middle Class, the head and the heart of a democracy.

Now to the United State and its trajectory. The tentacles of the government are obvious. Equally obvious is the widespread condemnation of virtually even a syllable of dissent against the voices of a very vociferous minority, resulting in the Woke atmosphere now suffocating every miniscule contrary thought or opinion. It's all of the same cloth, remove statues, ban books such as *How to Catch a Mockingbird*, and extoll *Hunger Games*; do not criticize a single hair on the head of a minority but unrestrained and even encouraged invective against those who represent the success inherent in our society; remove as much evidence as possible of our nation's history. Cut off the snake's head.

As external threats mount as they are currently there will be an increase in fortress mentality leading to stricter implementation of any method that unifies our nation into a monolith. Unity does not countenance dissent.

The final result is a drab, morose, seething, voiceless underclass. Recall the uniform grayness of East Germany and the Soviet Union. Even clothing lacked color. Everything and everyone in lock-step, from their daily lives to the example of the Soviet Union that the bedrock of their economy would be the production of steel as well as its ukase that most men would be trained as engineers and women as teachers. Destroy individuality. Destroy initiative. Destroy imagination. Destroy life worth living.

Power, once granted, is never retrieved without force.

Unrestrained power is not corrupted, as Lord Acton told us, it is rather ideology that corrupts power.

Be warned.

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