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Vree, J.K. de

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Essay

In pursuit of the common weal a theory of emergence and growth of the political party

Johan K. De Vree

1. Introduction

During all of human history and in all countries and civilizations human groups must have vied, competed, bargained, and fought with one another for positions of 'power' and control. And inasmuch as some measure of integration had been achieved among them, much of the struggle must have been about the occupation of the (top) rôles and positions, as well as the policies of those states and empires. The competing groups, coalitions, factions, armed bands, etc., were often more or less permanently organised, and recruited sometimes considerable followings from among the population. Surely, the political parties as we know them in large parts of the modern world are such groups, too. Yet, they are a comparatively recent development in the political history of mankind. Their birth, if that is an appropriate word at all, can be traced to eighteenth-century England, when, what were until then not much more than loose parliamentary groupings of Whigs and Tories gradually transformed into regular, if still rather inchoate, parties. Parties also had, from the very beginning of independence, a rôle to play on the American political scene. And in the fermentation which characterized Dutch politics during much of the eighteenth century, the 'Patriots' in particular sometimes showed signs of being, or developing into, a real political party. Yet, those formations which emerged in the Dutch Revolution, and the same goes for its French, more famous and far-reaching counterpart, can only with much difficulty and stretching of the current meaning of words, be called political parties.

In the main, the political party is a nineteenth-century phenomenon whose development kept pace with, or followed in the wake of, democracy and the extension of the suffrage. Nowadays, they are characteristic of almost every national political system worthy of the name, also of dictatorial or totalitarian regimes. Perhaps, though, these are not real political parties at all. And surely they function rather differently from the political parties of democratic vintage. Still, the question of the nature of the party, and thus of a distinction between such different 'parties' will have to occupy us in the sequel. In fact,

this is a matter of definition, to be discussed in the next section (2).

Now, even if dictatorial or totalitarian parties were to be excluded from our discussion, we are still faced by a rather astonishing variety of parties or party systems in different states in the world. They vary in ideology, or the strictness or importance of the ideological precepts which are supposed to guide them; in their measure of organisation and the measure of central control existing within them; in the sort or scope of the public they wish to reach; in the scope of their interests which, when sufficiently restricted, renders it often difficult to distinguish them from the interest group pure and simple; in the number of parties with which they have to compete, or with which they normally enter into coalitions – and in many other respects as well.

In view of this variety, one might well doubt whether there is any chance for the enterprise to be undertaken in this essay to meet with even a modest degree of success. Is it really possible to construct a general theory of the political party, one, that is, which does not merely provide a definition which would cover all this diversity, but which, more importantly, were also capable of explaining the occurrence and evolution of such different forms of political life, to render an account of the occurrence of such differences themselves? In the present essay I will try to do precisely that if not, perhaps, to the most minute detail, then at any rate with respect to its main contours, providing a programme for further elaboration and research.

To this end section 3 will be devoted. Sections 4 and 5 will be devoted to an analysis of the party's internal structure and its political environment, and to the character and rôle of a party's ideological position and platform, respectively.

2. The nature of the political party undefined

In the many definitions of the party notion which one encounters in the literature, three elements tend to prevail though in different 'mixes': the width of its concerns or interests: their competing for the actual occupation of the political system's positions, and the fact that they do so by competitive voting.

The political party is to be concerned with the general interest, the common good, of the system of which it is a part; with all matters of public policy, not just with one single issue or a mere private or sectorial interest. This condition is meant to distinguish it from the 'interest group' which is indeed so organised around one, or a few interests only. And, to be sure, this condition does fulfill its task adequately in most actual cases: most, and surely most *important* parties, are concerned with all matters of public policy, in contra-

distinction to most interest groups. An important degree of overlap does, however, occur. Some political parties, especially when (like in Holland) their entrance into the political arena is relatively easy, are extremely narrow in their interests and outlook: organized mainly to defend the farmers' interests, or to lower taxes, or to fight the legalisation of abortion, and so on. On the other hand, there are interests groups which tend to speak out on a great range of public policy issues. Trade unions, for example, tend sometimes to take stands on almost all public affairs, arguing that all these have vitally to do with the well-being of their members.

In such dubious cases the second criterion is meant to do duty. For, after all, the trade unions, or other interest groups, do not seek public office, while all political parties are intended to do just that. But what of such interest groups which, working via particular or even several parties at the same time, seek to have particular people, their 'representatives' nominated to public office? And what of the phenomenon of political parties which can never hope to succeed in occupying positions of power or which, when one does count membership in elective assemblies as such, may never hope to go beyond that, sometimes not even getting that far? Yet, one might argue that their intention and function is at any rate to *influence* public policy and the occupation of public office by thus, seemingly abortively, participating in politics. This may well be true (in fact, I shall proceed more or less along the same lines myself), but then one should be prepared to recognise that this also applies to interest groups – what else would they be for? Again, the differences are not so sharp and straightforward as they might seem to be at first sight.

Finally, real political parties are said to exist only in systems where they compete for office by means of elections, real, competitive elections, that is. Obviously, this condition cannot be met by such formations as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Nazi-party of Hitler's Germany, or the Communist Party of China. For such organisations are typically means for mobilising the population behind the regime's policies, controlling the formation and expression of opinion and of political activity generally from the top, rather than as instruments which serve the citizenry in defending its conception of the general interest. Such dictatorial parties, then, do not count as real political parties and should be left out of consideration.

This seems reasonable enough. Yet, there are also some reasons for not rejecting out of hand their representing specimens of political parties, too, be it of a rather special kind. For the single, or authoritarian party of dictatorial systems, does act as a means or channel through which to occupy public office, it is indeed concerned with the entire range of governmental policies, and it is actually a system within or through which public policy is influenced,

not, of course, that everyone were allowed to introduce whichever proposal or demand pleases him and for which he would then seek to drum up support. To be sure, some such freedom exists, too, as a convenient channel of information for the leadership to know what moves the nation – though only in relatively marginal matters which do not really threaten the existing regime or power relationships. Yet, at higher party echelons in particular, and within the (sometimes merely terminological) confines of the reigning ideology, the party is also a battleground for alternative conceptions of the public good. In a way, what is performed by many parties in a regular democracy, is of necessity to be performed within and by the single party of the dictatorship – although one should never lose sight of the very real and narrow constraints within which such parties function. There is some theoretical sense, too, in treating them as parties, as they manifest some of the same developments and forces which gave rise to the regular political party – though, of course in vastly different circumstances. More generally, we will have to seek to define the party notion in such a fashion as fits in with an articulate political theory, thus allowing us to ultimately solve the empirical problems to which the party gives rise – or to help us investigate the usefulness or adequacy of that theory itself.

Now it is not necessary to describe the political theory concerned in full here.¹ Suffice it to say that politics is conceived as the process through which more or less stable configurations of behaviour or conduct (the outcomes or results of the process: effective decisions, *modi vivendi*, etc.) are produced from (sets of more or less conflicting) demand behaviour. Now, people act so as they expect greater benefits will accrue to them with a higher likelihood, or smaller sacrifices with a lower likelihood, both benefits and sacrifices taken in a fully generalised sense. It can then be shown to follow that the effectiveness of demand behaviour in actually influencing behaviour, its *weight*, is determined by: (1) its *access*, the likelihood that it will actually 'reach' the other party; (2) the combined effect of the *height* of the benefits and sacrifices manipulated as judged by the *addressee*, and the magnitude of the *likelihood-expectation* induced in the latter as to the actual forthcoming of the benefits and sacrifices – the 'credibility' of demand behaviour, roughly. The political outcomes themselves represent a sort of equilibrium in which additional investment in demand behaviour is deemed too risky or costly in view of the expected (small) change in the result to be achieved thereby, or, somewhat less accurately: it represents the mobilisation of a dominant coalition as against the forces that would be prepared to further change the result.

The occurrence and intensity of political processes between parties, in its turn, is determined by: (1) the extent of their *interdependence*; (2) their relative *strengths*; and (3) the measure of *congruence* between their preferences.

When A is *dependent* upon B, it means, in its most general sense, that some of B's actions are instrumental, or even necessary conditions, for the success of some of A's actions. From this it can be readily seen that the greater such dependence becomes the higher the likelihood that A will invest more in attempts to influence B's conduct, *i.e.*, in demand behaviour. *Strength* means roughly the extent to which a party commands outcomes valued by the other party, as well as the ease with which he can mobilise or apply these efficiently in demand behaviour. It follows that the stronger one is, the better his 'position', the more one can, at smaller cost to himself, invest in demand behaviour, thus increasing its chances of success. But this also means that such (higher) investments will also become more likely. To the extent that the parties' preferences are *congruent*, *i.e.*, that their interests harmonize, they need to invest less in demand behaviour in order to bring about the desired conduct in one another; the political process will be the less intensive for it and will lead earlier to an outcome.

To return now to the political party: viewed in terms of the above its essence would seem to be that it represents a form of cooperation between people through which to generate sufficient, or more, demand weight in the system's political processes. Or, a party may be said to be a coalition of individuals or groups in which they invest some of their strength, their time, energy, resources, and position, so as to make for a more efficient generation of (more) demand weight. In that way they also typically perform the 'functions' of 'aggregating' and 'articulating' people's interests, to convert those interests into demands to be thus fed into the political system, as it is sometimes expressed.²

Is it necessary to go further, and to also stipulate that we are concerned merely with those groupings or coalitions which seek to occupy public office, etc.? If not, no distinction at all is made between political parties and other groups, as indicated already. And, of course, we are *not* interested in all such other groups. But if, on the other hand, we do seek to make such distinctions, they will inevitably be of a somewhat vague and floating nature. Suppose, then, that we treat such distinctions as of a gradual nature only and that we accept the fact that, accordingly, we should no longer speak of 'the' political party, as if it were one definite sort of formation always and everywhere. Rather, we would treat the party as a coalition or organisation to be characterized by the properties mentioned to different extents, thus defining different degrees to which such formations are parties. As a consequence of such an approach, too, those properties would be reduced to a relatively secondary rôle, to be *explained* by the theory, instead of being postulated as a matter of *definition*.

These considerations are greatly strengthened by the fact that theoretically,

too, it does not seem to make much sense to define the party in a stricter and more restricted fashion. For it matters not at all whether or not the theory would also apply to what we normally consider to be mere interest groups in which we are not really interested at this moment, as long as it does indeed also explain the occurrence and growth of the regular parties in which we *are* interested. And the theory does indeed seem to be capable of doing this as well as of explaining the occurrence of such differences as may exist between it and other political formations. Instead of establishing a complete and strict *definition* this reasoning, then, would rather constitute a *research program*, namely, one to explain why and how certain political coalitions and organisations would come into being and do such things as seeking mass followings, competing for votes, trying to occupy public office, to speak out on the general interest, etc. – or do none of such things.

3. From coalition to organisation: emergence and evolution of parties

3.1 A matter of investment . . .

Minimally, then, political parties are to be considered as coalitions of varying permanence, scope and membership, as well as internal organisation. Now what does it mean to say that a political party emerges and grows? This will here be conceived in terms of 'investments', of the investment of time, energy, resources, in, or of incurring risks and sacrifices for, the coalition and its activities. Thus, founding a party, that is, taking the initiative in seeking to build a coalition, means investing time and effort in, roughly, activities of mobilisation and propagation- and quite considerable investments at that, generally speaking. Similarly, occupying positions in the party's apparatus, or building that apparatus, being a party activist, being a duespaying member, or just voting for the party's candidates where and when relevant – all these are examples of different amounts of resources, effort, etc., being invested in the party. Accordingly, the foundation or emergence and further growth of a party can largely be viewed in terms of the investment by different categories of people in specified activities concerning the party. And the analysis of what makes people thus invest (more, and with greater likelihood) in those activities seems a fruitful starting-point for our investigations.

Now, clearly, investing such scarce 'goods' as time, energy or effort, resources, etc., represents a sacrifice which will be the greater the higher the investment in question is. Such action will become more probable to the extent that the greater benefits are expected to accrue from it – which does not necessarily mean that such sacrifices or benefits will be sharply defined

in people's consciousness, if at all; neither that such 'calculations' of advantages and disadvantages will take place very consciously.³ What, then, are the advantages to be expected from investing in party activity?

Obviously, the central benefit around which the party is built, is the increase in demand weight consequent upon thus pooling political strength and positions: it increases the chances that one's demands will be met to a greater extent, that one's interest, not necessarily selfish ones, of course, will be realised or safeguarded. These interests will not necessarily, not even normally, be *only* of a general nature, concerned with the public good. In addition, it also means better chances for jobs and positions for its individual members (both within and without the public sphere) and generally better chances for social advancement and preferment. Again, these advantages, too, are a function of the weight the party is able to mobilise, of its actual political significance.

This is not to say that increasing demand weight, or 'power', were the only benefit to be had from the political party. After all, a party is a social affair like others, like bars and pubs even, in that it provides for the pleasure of company, and is an antidote to loneliness. Parties are also means to enhance one's (feelings of) social status and significance, and may give meaning to life inasmuch as it is thought to represent important activity. However, these 'goods' (and notice that they are of a purely private nature) can be had in very many other social settings, too. They do not very much differentiate the political party from such other groups and activities. Accordingly they cannot be used to explain the emergence of this distinctly political phenomenon. Increasing demand weight, then, remains the fundamental ratio of the political party.

It also immediately follows from the above considerations that (heavier) investments in party activities will become more likely as they are expected to more successfully or efficiently lead to an increase in demand weight, and to the extent that such increasing demand weight is indeed judged to be important with respect to the private as well as public interests or issues at stake for the individuals concerned.

From this most general theorem or law several interesting and important conclusions follow with respect to the political party.

3.2 Founding the political party

The 'founding' of a party, whether it is a matter of just increasing or adapting the measure of organisation and scope of an existing informal coalition, or of creating something entirely new, is in all cases a difficult, time- and labour-consuming affair with rather uncertain chances of success. These are consid-

erable sacrifices and risks, which must naturally be made good by equally considerable benefits. One cannot expect these as a matter of course.

It means in particular that taking such initiatives can be expected to occur with the greater likelihood among those already occupying a relatively central and powerful position in the system, commanding sufficient strength, free time, information, friends and contacts, so as to make the foundation of a party a sufficiently successful proposition. In practice this means that political parties will be, more often than not, initially and primarily an affair of established politicians, or otherwise strong aspirants to that rôle. In contradistinction to them, the poorer, weaker, more peripheral sectors of society will not normally spontaneously found political parties.

In spite of much democratic ideology, and in spite of much propaganda on the part of the parties themselves, then, political parties are anything but a 'grass-roots' phenomenon. Instead, they typically grow among politicians, or at least in the more powerful and central spheres of society; I could think of no example in which this were really otherwise, or where closer scrutiny did not reveal this to be the case.⁴ This applies not least of all to those parties which most expressly address them to those weaker strata themselves and even try to represent themselves as emanating from them. Rather, it is the (would-be) politician who organises the party, addressing himself to, seeking support from those weaker strata. It is in the nature of mobilisation more than of spontaneous political participation and group formation, so dear both to traditional democratic lore as well as much social science. This does not, of course, mean that such parties did not really defend the interests of the lower strata, that they did not also provide for additional upward channels of mobility, that they were insincere in their idealism, and so on. These are altogether different matters.

The above allows us also to say something about the general political circumstances in which such party foundation will occur. Clearly, there must be both people, politicians and others, willing and prepared to seek an increase in the demand weight they are able to mobilise; and, on the other hand, there must exist groups whose (potential) strength and position make it worthwhile to attempt such mobilisation among them. And inasmuch as a party represents, through its more permanent, more elaborate organisation, a substantial increase in such mobilisation effort, there must apparently have grown a greater reservoir of such potential 'power'.

In its turn this will occur when, and to the extent that, the relations of 'power and interest', *i.e.* of strength, interdependence, and congruence in society undergo important transformations. For in such circumstances the system's structures have to accommodate new interests, new groups, hitherto outside of the system's power positions. Normally this is conceived thus that

new groups and interests actively, and as it were spontaneously, seek access to the system's power positions. The present argument, though, would seem to imply a slight shift of emphasis. The new political and social circumstances would, on the other hand, seem rather to represent the emergence of exploitable political interests, strength and position, where there were none before. And it is in the nature of politics that as soon as these occur they will most probably be indeed so exploited – it would represent too beautiful an occasion for increasing demand weight, their status and power, for politicians and those who are strong enough to make a bid for that rôle, to let it pass.

Now the above applies, again, to any group or coalition in society, not just to parties. But it does contain the explanation of the latter phenomenon, too, and in particular why that phenomenon is such a relatively recent one, bound up, in fact, with society's development since the Industrial Revolution roughly. For the developments since the eighteenth century had, through a population explosion, the development of science and technology, and economic growth and expansion, as well as, somewhat later, through industrialisation and urbanisation, indeed led to a progressive increase in the quantity and quality of exploitable interests and groups in society: the bourgeoisie first, and later, on an even larger scale, the labouring population, the 'lower orders' of olden days.

Of course the admission of these groups to the centers of political decision was not an easy and automatic matter, but was accompanied by much fighting and debating, as such transformations in the societal relations of power and interest always do. Ultimately, this crystallised into modern, general-suffrage democracy. And, almost necessarily so, out of sheer 'technical' considerations, it led to the modern mass-party. For to effectively mobilise such large numbers of people, the loose, informal coalitions and cabals of earlier times were no longer suited. Hence, the party, as a much more highly developed apparatus, simply *had* to emerge to do this job – and as a matter of fact, *did* also emerge with successive stages in this (democratic) development.⁵

From this perspective there are two basic reasons why the party had to develop as a multi-purpose, broad-scoped enterprise, instead of limiting itself to a few sectorial interests – which would at least be conceivable.⁶ The first and more obvious one is that those who are taking the initiative in party formation, occupying (or vying for such occupation) the leading positions in the system, are in the nature of things concerned with precisely such general issues, or at any rate with *all* the issue arising in the system. As they are seeking to get support for those positions it is only natural that they should appeal to all the interests concerned with them, too.

An additional, probably not less important, reason is that each and every

interest does indeed represent a potential exploitable 'power base'. The normal tendency for politicians and, therefore, parties would be to seek to broaden its scope as much as possible, to seek to make this reservoir of exploitable interests and groups as big as possible. Not to do so would merely leave the field to the opponent or competitor, which no party or politician will easily do – even when he is not actually aware of this calculus.

Of course there are limits to this tendency: if one seeks to accommodate each and every interest in society, one is bound to land oneself in very inconvenient contradictions, these interests often being contradictory themselves. As a result, every party will seek to delimit for itself a sort of reserved hunting-ground or territory to be defined by the sort of people to which it appeals, the ideology it propagates, etc. This also suggests that inasmuch as parties do restrict themselves to very special and limited interests they tend to be marginal affairs only, operating merely in those territorial 'pockets' which the bigger or more general parties did momentarily overlook or found it useful to ignore. And, in fact, the fate of such typically segmental parties as those of farmers, taxpayers, shopkeepers, and so on, does seem to confirm this argument: if they are not capable of quickly broadening their base of appeal, they are doomed to quickly disappear. In broadening such interests, though, they are usually unsuccessful as they find the territory already occupied, while they offer nothing sufficiently new and interesting.

This may well seem to be an unduly cynical analysis of the formation of parties as it seems sharply to contradict that more common, and also not unpalatable view which explains the political party or parties as expressions of new insights, values and ideologies arising in society among different new groups, as a result or expression of emancipation, enlightenment, and moral evolution. The contradiction, however, is not as great as it would seem to be. For this emancipation and enlightenment are indeed precisely the manifestation of changing positions of groups or strata in society's patterns of power and interest. And the ideologies which are produced do indeed express these changes, attempting to account coherently for them and developing new foundations for legitimacy and policy. Of course, such ideologies naturally seek to represent the developments mentioned as the products of Reason, Conscience, Moral Evolution, or Progress.⁷ It is merely this element which is de-mystified by the present analysis.

It is interesting to see that the above-mentioned developments did not occur only in the context of what were to become the democratic states. For, in a sense every modern state which seeks to develop militarily and economically, as they indeed seem to do all over the world, is confronted by the same problem of seeking to mobilise unheard-of numbers of people and activities, and to somehow admit them to the system's central spheres. It is no coin-

idence, then, that modern dictatorships or totalitarian states do all of them indeed have some sort of party organisation – a single one, of course. It is not difficult to see that such parties, even though functioning rather differently from the parties of democratic systems, derive from the same forces and developments as did the latter.

3.3 Party members and voters

If a party is to be a successful enterprise it must be capable of calling forth further activities or investments on the part of other members of the political system. Indeed, success in this enterprise is the basis for the party's success in the political arena: the extent to which it is indeed capable of mobilising further investment on the part of the population determines ultimately the demand weight it will be able to wield. Such further investments in the political party may assume many different forms: donating money or other facilities (publicity, printing installations, means of communication and transport, offices, etc.); providing it with one's personal knowledge, abilities and energy, as the party activist or the (unpaid) party bureaucrat do; relatively marginal only as in the case of the ordinary dues-paying member; or, finally, one may vote for it in such cases where this is indeed possible. From the standpoint of the people so contributing, these forms also represent different magnitudes of sacrifices, different amounts of efforts etc. invested in the party.

The question to be answered in this section, then, is: What makes people so contribute to the party?, or: What determines the nature and extent of this form of political participation? And further: What determines the number, sort, fervour and so on, of the party's public, membership and voters?

As we have already seen, the main interests which determine party activity are the increase in demand weight to be gained thereby with respect to particular issues, and the effectiveness of such activities in providing jobs and positions and contributing to one's personal advancement.

To begin with, then, people will invest in party activities, and to that extent, as they expect the party to help them realise their interests, to contribute to taking such public decisions as more neatly harmonise with their interests. And clearly, the politicians naturally manipulate this state of affairs, in seeking to make themselves spokesmen or defenders of as many and as important of such interests as possible. Surely, in making such decisions one may not (and need not) be aware of what one is doing precisely; one may act from relatively traditional 'insights'; uncritically accept inherited notions about what one's interests are and who will best defend them: one may be mistaken about which actions really contribute to the realisation of

those interests, as about the nature of those interests themselves, etc. But who is to insure against these risks, and who dares to deny his share of 'irrationality' and ignorance, gullibility, cupidity, or stupidity? In short these risks exist for everyone, and are, therefore, hardly relevant

We have to accept, then, that people act the way they do inasmuch as they 'expect' this to serve their interests as they 'see' them. In view of this, one may presume that the measure of, in particular, voters' irrationality and intractability has been considerably exaggerated. Probably it is an artefact of a wrong research approach, which seeks to 'explain' political participation in terms of all sorts of social and individual characteristics of people the sole advantage of which is that they can easily be counted and weighed, but whose actual rôle in making people act politically remains unclear and unanalysed. Especially as concerns their short-term interests, their immediate earning prospects, their jobs, and the price they have to pay for (public) goods and services, the citizen is probably less of a fool than many social scientists seem to think – even if his actions may still be disastrous in a somewhat longer run.⁸

But then, there must indeed be such interests to serve at such a high level of the political system as to make the large-scale organisation and mobilisation characteristic of the party worthwhile. Put more simply: for someone to undertake some party activity, there must be interests involved at that level (in practice: the national level) at which the party operates. Now this is a matter of a mixture of considerations or social forces. To begin with, it is determined by the growth of the social network of interdependences, in its turn a matter of economic and technological growth and of population. For these largely determine what there will be to decide at the level concerned, to what extent, therefore, whose interests will in what ways be at stake in such decision-making. Conversely, the width or scope of the social sectors drawn into such party activities, as of any other distinctly 'political' action, is determined by considerations of general social growth and development.

Thus, during most of history and in most societies, characterized by relatively stagnant, at any rate slow (comparatively speaking, that is) growth and development, the scope of governmental activities, the need for central decision-making, was relatively limited, too. It is mainly with the advent of the modern industrial age that all this has shown considerable increases, thus equally considerably enlarging the population layers to be drawn into party-activities – indeed, such activities, and the successive growth of the parties themselves were precisely the means to effect this transformation. So far, then, this argument neatly reinforces that of the preceding section.

Yet, this is but one side of the issue. For in a sense it may be said that the more central interests of all people, notably those concerned with security,

well-being, prosperity and so on, were really always at stake at all levels of society. Why then did they not lead to people engaging in party activities, or more permanently linking themselves to political leaders and coalitions, seeking to increase their support, etc., thus making for something similar to the modern party? With some stretching of the meaning of words, such activities did indeed take place; they did so, however, only intermittently and with limited scope or purposes: the rebellions and revolutions by slaves, farmers, etc., which punctuate history, old and new.

In the first place, given the limited technological level of the time, one cannot for the most part have expected the possibility of effective decision-making with respect to those interests. Or at least, it was thought and believed that government could not do much about them. And this makes undertaking the activities mentioned rather unlikely. And inasmuch as technology would have allowed for such decision-making, the generally very limited powers of the governments and the concomitant ineffectiveness of the bureaucracy, did not make such decision-making and organisation for it a very successful, and therefore probable, proposition either. Finally, in the political conditions of the days, the organisation and mobilisation of large numbers of people, especially the common people, having nothing to bring with them than their individual energy and limited abilities, could not mean much – except intermittently, and then only when armed (the individual can at least fight).

For such organisation becomes effective, and therefore likely only when and to the extent that the individual as such comes to represent a potential power to be reckoned with, irrespective of his place in the geographical, ethnic, communal, professional or economic landscape, that is. Only then the organisation of mere numbers begins to count and comes to represent real strength. And this development is again bound up with modern industrialised society, and the growing network of interdependences, the refined measure of the social division of labour, and the concomitant increase in individual skills and resources. Again, then, a reinforcement of the considerations of the preceding section.

In all: the quantity and quality of the social groups, strata, or layers, of society to be drawn into party activities is a function of changing relations of power and interest, and, at one remove, of the evolution of a system's population as well as technological and economic base.

But, granted that there is a party, that it does defend one's interests, and that it does so effectively as it commands sufficient demand weight, is it, even then, reasonable to participate in it? This is the so-called free-rider problem, made famous especially by the writings of *Mancur Olson*.⁹ For as parties are relatively large-scale affairs in which one participates together with a relatively large number of people, implying that one's own contribution does

not make much difference, the chances would seem to be that such investment will in fact not be undertaken: against a relatively important sacrifice there will not be a commensurate gain. It would seem that this argument does indeed apply with full force to the political party, too.

Or, rather, the argument applies to the different levels of party activity which may be distinguished, as it is surely not simply a matter of investing or not-investing. And equally surely it would prevent the formation and development of any party if its only rôle and interest did indeed reside in increasing demand weight – a typically public good. This, however, is not the case. For, as we have indicated already, parties are also repositories and dispensers of jobs and positions. This applies naturally to the sphere of public office itself in the first place. But a party is also a network of relatively important people, or a means of gaining access to them, in the several sectors of society and at different levels of the system. In this fashion, it acts as a not unimportant channel for personal advancement, for the promotion of all sorts of private interests, jobs, positions, protection also outside of the strictly public sphere; parties are also channels for upward social mobility for those strata of the population which, while relatively ignored so far, have gained so much political significance as to make their mobilisation in parties worthwhile, as a result of the forces and evolution indicated.

But all this is concerned with essentially private goods, to be had if and insofar as one does indeed participate, and to the extent that such participation is indeed considered valuable and important enough. And it suggests that, generally speaking, participation varies with the extent to which those private goods are indeed forthcoming or expected; to the extent, roughly, that one's private fortunes, position and income, are bound up with the party. Most of all this applies, of course, to those politicians who founded the party to begin with, and so with diminishing degrees downwards to such extremely limited activities as paying dues, occasionally helping in party work, or mere voting. Surely, one should reckon as such private goods also the personal satisfaction deriving from doing what one regards as his duty, the feeling of ideologically or religiously inspired righteousness, or the sheer pleasure of company, of rubbing elbows with important people. It would seem, though, that such interests are not substantial enough to provide more than intermittent, low-level, and marginally important activities.

This argument may also shed some light upon a much discussed and lamented issue of democratic ethics: while the citizen in a democracy is supposed to act 'rationally' and to participate in a 'responsible' fashion, notably to vote carefully by weighing the pros and cons of the several party programs, by carefully watching the actual conduct of parties, etc., none or very little of this seems to occur in fact. With a slightly moralistic intonation,

never far from such observations: now that finally everyone has the vote, and thus an opportunity to have a say in public affairs, the corrupt citizen is seen to most ungratefully and dangerously spoil this great good, thus preparing the ground for the system's return to darker ages of tyranny and despotism.

From the preceding argument one may not expect more than a marginal investment of time and effort in political activity, including the collecting and processing of information, on the part of those who merely have to vote, and so much the more so when they have relatively little of both commodities to spare. Inasmuch, then, as people merely vote (and it was far from unwise for the law in some systems to *oblige* people to vote!), one should rather expect them to act on the basis of relatively general considerations: Did the government do relatively well, or did the system function smoothly?; Are the parties or their leading personalities to be trusted in doing a satisfactory job?; Are they to be liked and respected, and so on. At first sight such considerations may well strike us as 'irrational' and irrelevant. They are so only from an exaggerated image of politics in a quasi-democratic ideology. For there is nothing irrational or irrelevant about such considerations, vague and general though they may be – they are surely sufficient at the level of activity and interests at which we are now moving. Besides, one may well doubt whether democracy really rests upon the supposed 'rationality' of the strata of mere voters, or even abstainers, rather than upon that of the politicians themselves in the first place. Finally, this sort of thinking betrays a quite exaggerated conception of the importance of the party program and ideology, a matter to which I will return later.

Now the extent to which the political party is indeed capable of providing these 'goods', both public and private, is largely dependent upon its own strength. This suggests the existence of a self-reinforcing dynamism: the bigger a party is, the more demand weight it can accordingly mobilise, and the more private benefits it can thus dispense or help to make available, the more successful and attractive investment in it will become, *i.e.*, the bigger it will become, and so on, *ad infinitum*. The trend is, however, limited by the fact that, as mentioned before, it will be impossible to accommodate *all* (conflicting) interests, and to provide room for *all* social groups and powers. What we will most probably find then, is, again, a sort of division of the political territory by a limited number of fairly large political parties organised around a preferred range of topics or interests and accommodating a limited number of social groups or strata – so much so, indeed, as internal strife and struggle will not permanently incapacitate the party in more or less consistently acting externally.

How many such parties there will come into being is to some extent a matter of historical accident, depending upon such considerations as the

extent to which existing parties were capable of accommodating newly arising interests or opportunities for additional recruitment, or, related to this, the sort of interests which proved effectively mobilisable in the particular historical circumstances of the system. Thus, to mention only this one example, the nineteenth-century Dutch political scene was dominated for most of the century by weakly developed parties of a 'liberal' or 'conservative' signature. These, however, were neither willing nor capable of mobilising the newly emergent groups of lower bourgeoisie and labourers into their ranks. Others did see those opportunities, though, and the ensuing struggle was naturally concerned with the extension of the suffrage to begin with. The point is that the new groups were mobilised around ideological and religious interests – not unnatural given the circumstances of the day, as well as the traditionally important position of clergy and church in the Netherlands, especially among the 'lower classes'. But it will be clear that this base or organisation and mobilisation (which, by the way, was vainly resisted and contested by the secular groups in the struggle for the denominational schools) that this organisational base must needs lead to a number of different parties – the basic cause for the phenomenon of 'verzuiling' (pillarization).¹⁰

A moment ago I mentioned the self-reinforcing dynamism of the development or growth of the party. At a somewhat more general level, a similar dynamism and self-reinforcing trend can be seen to be at work. For we have seen that the formation and growth of political parties is, among other things determined by the number and scope or variety of the interests to be at stake in decision-making at the level of the system. Roughly: the greater the quantity and scope of such decision-making, the more it stimulates the party. These parties, on the other hand, make the mobilisation and articulation of interests so much the easier, thus leading again to more decision-making, the more so as the party represents also the creation or at least the enlargement of a class of politicians with a professional interest in actively seeking for, and activating the interests to be thus mobilised. Thus the party is another vehicle for the general, self-reinforcing trend towards the extension of the rôle and powers of the modern state.¹¹

4. Of oligarchs and their cabals: the party's internal structure and political environment

In this section I will discuss a few of the more important aspects of the relationship between the political parties and the system within which they are to function, and, partly related to that, the problem of their internal structure.

4.1 Parties and their environment

During the preceding disquisitions we have repeatedly hit upon the problems of the party's relationship to its political environment, to the political system as a whole. In particular it appeared that parties represent structures which can be expected only in certain highly developed, or developing political systems. These are characterised by a considerable increase in the quantity and scope of decision-making required at the system's level, as well as by the related need to mobilise an unheard-of proportion of the population politically. In practice, this also means that parties can be expected only in rather highly integrated systems, in relatively strong states, as only these can indeed think of seeking to solve so many problems take so many decisions, and seek to control society to such an extent. So far, then, as has also been hinted at, there does not seem to be much difference between democratic and dictatorial or totalitarian developments. In both cases the party derives from the same forces, and are to be expected in some form or another.

Perhaps *the* central distinction between the two, however, consists of the fact that in democracies several parties are allowed to exist, and that their competition is an essential mechanism for the occupation of public office and the determination of public policy. In dictatorships, on the other hand, there is typically allowed only *one* formation which acts as a means for mobilisation and control, and to strengthen the position of the regime's leaders rather than as a mechanism to decide the occupation of the positions of leadership themselves. Nobody will be prepared to seriously argue that the occupation of the top positions in the Kremlin, or, for that matter, of its central policies, will or have been decided by the Communist Party as such and in its entirety.

That some states at least (for notice that they constitute a relatively small minority in the world) can 'afford' competitive party systems, allowing some of the most central issues in the system to be decided by elections and voting among those parties or their representatives, is something which calls for explanation. And, given the comparative rarity of the phenomenon both historically and in the contemporary world, *it* is to be explained rather than those other systems. Two things, it would seem, are responsible for the occurrence of this sort of system: 'individualism' and 'political mobility'.

By the first term is here meant the fact that the individual must indeed count as an element of power in his own right. Or, rather, larger, countable, masses of individuals must do so. For otherwise elections and voting could not produce the really dominant coalitions to make for effective decisions. If the 'measurement' of power by means of just counting individuals would depart too much from the real facts, it would imply some group being

capable of getting much better results by other means, or, conversely, being too badly off under the voting regime. Such a situation cannot last for long.

But a second element is involved, too, and is intimately related to the above: society must be relatively 'atomised', and individuals must be relatively mobile in the sense that every political coalition, notably those produced by voting, among them is about just as probable. That means that society must not be divided into large, permanent blocs, regions, etc., with their own interests and to which membership on the part of the individual is highly predictable, especially as these interests cover a wide range of issues. For in that case they will both have the power and the will to organise in their own right so as to invalidate any power measure based on simply counting individuals. The power of such groups, like states internationally, is generally much greater than is indicated by sheer numbers.

In relation to this, people must have about equal chances to be in the winning coalition produced by voting. It is not necessary that they be actually in one of those groups making or participating in making the decision. It suffices that the decisions produced through voting are in the main satisfactory. They should at any rate be on balance so satisfactory as not to induce them to seek other decision-making procedures – at least, this should not be the case for such numbers or groups as to make such other procedures a successful proposition.

This reasoning again shows (democratic) parties and party systems to be bound to the rather special circumstances of modern, industrialised society, which have so far been realised only in some of the major Western states and, perhaps Japan. It is a matter of the growth of an intricate network of social interdependences through which people are in several different ways related to their brethren, in which loyalties and interests, enmities and hate are more or less homogeneously distributed over society.¹² And in the absence of these circumstances parties cannot fail but be rather different organisations, or as in Latin America, only of limited social 'coverage' and playing a limited decision-making rôle.

An important aspect of the parties' environment consists, in democracies at least, of other parties, and, generally, of all sorts of interest groups. Earlier we have already observed that there must be a tendency in such systems for political 'space' to become divided by a few relatively large parties, and also which factors determined such distribution. But, especially in multi-party systems, this distribution and division is but one aspect of the matter. For in order to make effective policies, and in order to realise their own ends, they are generally forced to enter into coalitions with other parties.

In this process we meet again with the same mechanism as operated in the formation and evolution of the party itself. For, after all, the party is a sort

of coalition, too. That is, politicians build such coalitions, pooling resources efforts and policies, in order to increase their demand weight. This is a relatively costly affair, too, since the other party's cooperation is not to be had for nothing. It is a matter of bargaining, whose outcome is determined by the extant relations of power and interest. Such bargaining is the more difficult and time-consuming as these relations cannot be 'computed' with any degree of objectivity and certainty – as is well illustrated by the history of Dutch cabinet-formation, in particular. As a general rule, who will enter a coalition with whom, is a matter both of the congruence between the parties' interests, determining how easy cooperation is, how great the concessions will have to be, as well as of the relative importance of the other's contribution, in practice: by his or its relative power in the context of the issues at hand.¹³

The relations between political parties and interests groups will normally be somewhat looser, as they do not need to constitute governmental coalitions, or to cooperate in parliament. Also, interest groups are concerned with a generally more restricted range of issues and they will not wish to prejudice their own position and freedom of manoeuvre needlessly by connecting too closely with a political party. Besides, for them the party is generally only one channel of access and influence among others: the cabinet, parliament, the bureaucracy, and so on. And it would be natural to expect that they will seek access and influence with respect to as many political parties, among others, as possible. All this argues against very close coalitions between the two. Conversely, what they have to offer in return will, for any single political party also be of limited value: monetary support (characteristically given to many parties at the same time!), information, cooperation in the execution of governmental policies, for instance by abstaining from nuisance, and sometimes the votes of their members. Against that, though, it would mean a serious limitation of the freedom of manoeuvre for the party, whose position normally does partly rest also upon its *not* being too exclusively bound to any single interest group, thus allowing it to play them off against one another. Thus, while there will be connections between the parties and the more important interest groups, they will neither be very intimate, nor very regular, and limited to relatively incidental occasions.

Traditionally, parties are conceived in opposition to the state whose power they are supposed to curb, and which they are to make respond better to the wishes of the people. What, however, is the state? While I will not seek any complete definition here, it can at least be safely said that it is a set of institutions, organs or organisations which, working via established rules and procedures (the law), is to regulate politics and decision-making within the system. It thus represents varying levels of political integration, meaning

roughly the extent to which it is successful therein and the system becomes indeed organised and regulated with respect to an increasing number of issues.

Historically this measure of integration and 'stateness' of a system has varied enormously and obviously, and the same applies to the world's political landscape at any given point in time. This means, in fact, that it is not even possible to speak of 'the state' as if it were a well-defined or definable entity. This even applies to any one state at any single moment in time, as a *political* phenomenon, that is, for we *can* give a *legal* definition which is straightforward and definite enough, of course. Politically, a cabinet, parliament, the court system, the bureaucracy, must clearly be counted to belong to the state. But what of that vast number of councils, commissions, committees, and so on, which consist of both representatives of the government in a narrow sense and of private individuals and interest groups, as is exemplified by the Dutch Social-Economic Council? As such bodies do or help do what is the essence of all state organisations, namely to regulate the political process, I would not hesitate to include them. But basically the same argument also applies to other bodies, notably private interest groups and political parties! Of course, there are differences between such bodies, for instance as to who is to take the initiative in instituting them, who pays them, who makes their rules and bylaws etc. From our present viewpoint, though, these matter decidedly less than the fact that political parties, too, are a part of that system of organisations, organs, rules and procedures through which the system's political processes are regulated.

It is perhaps more natural to say that for a political analysis the notion of 'state' has lost its meaning, and so has that of parties organised *in opposition* to the state. The important thing, then, is to see the political party as an organ of the political system, as one of those forms or organisation through which the system's processes are channelled and brought to conclusions in an orderly fashion. The political party, in short, represents one outcome of the process of integration which characterizes the system.

4.2 The structure of parties

Robert Michels was, of course, right: political parties are 'oligarchical'; not, however, as a result of degeneration from some Golden Age in which the party were really their members' affairs, but because parties are of necessity and inevitably 'oligarchical' from the very beginning.

I will not seek to exhaustively review *Michels'* arguments for his famous thesis – provocative mainly because it applied to the (German) socialist party, of all parties. In the main, they neatly fit in with the present analysis, namely

that one cannot expect the ordinary party member whose position and income are not directly bound up with the party to invest heavily in it. This general argument is reinforced by the fact that party leadership requires relatively rare qualities, that the actual occupation of leadership positions tends to develop such qualities by training, and that one comes to possess ever more information crucial to the party, but also to one's own position therein. In short: power begets power . . .

Also one should expect attempts to increase the general level of participation of the party's membership, to increase the measure of internal party democracy!, to have but intermittent and relatively ephemeral success. Rather, such drives represent efforts by *other* aspirants to power and position within the party, by *different* 'oligarchs' to mobilise the party membership, just as new political parties arose and arise in the system at large. Such 'populistic' intra-party revolts may (again: as in the case of parties themselves) be expected when new people or interests come to represent a reservoir for mobilisation for which a place must then be sought in the party's structures by means of struggles, sometimes even leading to the breakdown of parties and to secession. After such successful revolts affairs tend to settle again to previously existing levels of activity and participation, be it under the auspices of new 'oligarchs'. It is ironic, but no coincidence, that relatively successful efforts to attain a permanently high level of political participation can take place only in the context of totalitarian parties, requiring, though, an enormous effort of carefully programmed and guided 'campaigns', 'drives', and organisations to realise ever new goals, which were or are so characteristic of such different systems as (Fascist) Italy, (Nazi) Germany, the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.¹⁴

Parties, too, are political systems in themselves, and they as well as their structures represent the momentarily stable outcomes of fights and debates within them. In fact, as they constitute more or less regulated and organised political systems, they represent examples of, or rather: levels in, ongoing processes of integration, determined, as all such processes ultimately are, by the relations of power and interest within their boundaries. We have already seen this to be the case with respect to the sort of interests around which the party will organise. It also applies to such matters as the measure of centralisation of control achieved by the leadership, its powers and competences, the relative autonomy of more limited sectors or parts of the party, whether it will be a unified and highly centralized, even authoritarian party, such as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or a mere 'federation', or loose coalition of local organisations as American parties are.

In this the party and its structure naturally 'reflect' the forces and circumstances of the political system of which they are a part – though in a

rather more complicated form than expressed by *Duverger's* famous thesis. First of all, it is a matter of which interests became mobilisable, and in which way, during the party's history. When this mobilisation occurred rather by accommodating existing interests, locally varied organised groups and interests, with their own power base, rather than being undertaken by one and the same organization from the very beginning, then, the ensuing party organisation will show much more 'federal' traits than in the latter case. Such local variations can also consist in the fact that to increase demand weight has to take place through different channels of access, requiring the mobilisation of different interests at the different levels of party activity. This may occur notably as a result of the structure of government in which case it more or less forces the party to relatively loose forms of cooperation, the United States representing a prime example of such a state of affairs. In this connection a large rôle will also have to be played by the nature of the political struggles in which the party participates. When, for instance, it is primarily a fighting organization forced to work underground, even using arms, then a rather different type of organization, notably a much more centralised one, may be expected to occur, than in case the establishment of a party is free. And, as against these basically power-political considerations, a rôle will be played also by the personality of the leadership, as well as by sheer luck and accident in the political battle.

To conclude this sub-section, a few words are in order about the notions of 'oligarchy' and 'democracy' which I have generally put between parentheses here. For I think it gravely mistaken to depict the natural tendencies described here by the term 'oligarchical', implying the suggestion that they constitute an aberration of 'real democracy' which rested upon the full participation of all members. This, however, betrays an ideology to mobilise people rather than a politically realistic and adequate conception of democracy. Democracy is rather a system in which a greater number of groups and interests are allowed to compete for public support, *i.e.*, power and public office or policy. That such competition will be undertaken most and most regularly by smaller groups of leaders or politicians, rather than by the membership at large is the natural thing to expect, but does not in the least detract from the nature of democracy. And that parties, similarly, will be dominated in most cases by equally small groups of leaders, does not, as long as intra-party struggle is not forbidden and made effectively impossible, make parties oligarchies, neither does the fact that the current leadership will generally defend its position against newcomers do so.

5. Of ideology and the party's platform: make-believe, justification, or program?

In most common conceptions of the political party a large rôle is played by the party's ideology or program. For, after all, it is a body of men united by their common conception of the public good. And although the notion of interest did play a crucial rôle in the preceding analyses, and thus by implication, it would seem, that of ideology, it did not assume as nearly prominent a rôle as would seem to be required. Rather, the emphasis was upon forces and dynamics largely irrespective of ideological considerations. And, as a consequence, the party in its internal as well as external evolution and growth appeared to obey relatively 'objective' social forces, rather than springing forth from newly won 'rational' insight, new convictions, values and moral development, as would seem to be the dominant conception in existing party ideologies – and quite naturally so! In other words: while the party, or a particular party, is often presented as being born from objective Reason or Moral Values, these analyses show it to be a relatively expectable phenomenon rooted in the much less lofty, if more substantial sphere of, basically, technological and economic evolution.

Whence, then, do such Reason and Values, as embodied in ideology or, for that matter, religion, derive? And what are their functions? Or, if what counts are much deeper forces anyhow, What is the use of formulating ideologies in the first place; and, Why do people yet seem to fight so ferociously over them?

To begin with the last question: ideologies are theories about the world in general and the political system in particular which do not only provide a convenient description of the world as it actually is supposed to be, but also contain guides to action, values which tell people what to strive for, why the world as it is (not) the right one, and how, as well as in what respects it is to be changed. Far from being useless embellishments of human life and politics, then, ideologies are extremely convenient. For they render conduct much easier, telling us immediately how to judge the world, what alternatives are open to us, how to order them, in short: what to do. It is something we all very much need (scientific research being in large part motivated by the desire to achieve an important, 'descriptive', part of just this), and in a sense we can all be said to act on the basis of ideologies.

Of course, ideologies may greatly differ in the extent to which they are formulated and expressed; thus, they probably operate unawares in most of daily life, they may show different degrees of connectedness, of system, and of consistency – witness the differences between Leninism and Fascism in this one respect; finally, they may be subtle and refined as well as very coarse

pictures of society. With respect to the latter aspect, it would seem that all expressly formulated ideologies are indeed exceedingly coarse in providing only a very much simplified picture of the world in which behavioural alternatives and policy choices are reduced to a few simple alternatives which do, by the same token, not provide much guidance for actual conduct of any but the most simple nature – as is equally true with respect to common or religious morality, by the way. And, how could it be otherwise, there not yet being any relatively more sophisticated theory in the field of (social) science itself? Besides, as I will argue below, these properties are not arbitrary results of intellectual development. Rather they clearly embody both the forces and motivations which brought them into being in the first place, as well as the functions they are to fulfil in the political sphere.

To begin with, the formulation or further development of an ideology is, in principle, behaviour like any other behaviour in that it will be undertaken the more probably the greater benefits are to be had from it against the smaller costs. Now the need for a more adequate and coherent theory, descriptive as well as normative, of society, or of life has existed through all times and, in principle, in all people. It has always motivated scientific research and the teachings of moralists, and the more so, generally, the richer the society was. Yet ideologies as we know them nowadays are relatively recent phenomena – although it is impossible to determine a definite starting-point or first case. They date not much farther back than the period of the French Revolution and the beginning Industrial Age. In that respect they are intimately bound up with the development of parties themselves, and for the very same reasons.

In the first place, those ideologies (and this applies to the Jacobin, Liberal, Conservative, Marxist varieties equally) reflected the need for new theories and values in gradually but drastically changing social systems of interest and power. In the second place they were born from the need to mobilise large numbers of people into the political sphere. They did and do so by seeking to convince those people that such is the right thing to do, *i.e.*, by appealing to insight and evaluation. And to do so on a large scale relatively crude theories suffice. Or, rather, overly subtle theories will not do the job as they will not appeal to those for whom they are primarily intended: those who are to contribute in relatively simple activities rather than to make the central public decisions themselves – for which such ideologies all are grossly inadequate.

If this may easily imply a measure of intellectual dishonesty and demagogy, it is still a most natural thing to occur. For, as we have already seen, the vast majority of those drawn into the political or party sphere will be so only in a relatively minimal sense, their actions being generally of a most simple nature. They cannot be expected to invest much effort in political information, theory and ideology; conversely, their leaders will not seek to develop

very refined and elaborate, subtle theories, either. In other words, ideologies are primarily mobilising devices, implying also an important justificatory rôle. For, apart from considerations of self-respect and self-esteem, the political leadership must continually persuade the members, within and without the party, that their actions were indeed the correct ones. Naturally they have to do so in terms of the ideology itself, while practical political occurrences, adversary as well as favourable ones, must be made to show the correctness of the ideology, too.

This suggests that the bigger the public a party seeks to mobilise and attract, the greater the rôle and explicitness of its ideology will tend to be. Traditionally this has applied most of all to the parties of the Left, characterised precisely by the fact that it was they who sought to mobilize the largest public; most of all it does so in one-party states, of course. The same phenomenon can also be seen when parties of the Right seek to address themselves to large publics – as they did in all sorts of fascist and fascistoid forms. It also suggests that to the extent that the ideology does play a rôle in the party, more specialised effort will go into seeking to square actual practice with the ideology: of maintaining ideological 'purity', meaning: controlling its further evolution in adaptation to the actual political circumstances – going as far as, in totalitarian regimes, instituting special functions and offices responsible for that task. Of course, this will not occur to that extent in parties which have grown by continuously admitting and accommodating new, relatively well-defined and organised interests. Ideology would split rather than unite in such cases.

At the same time, and equally naturally, the ideology represents the outcome of an internal party struggle, between groups having different conceptions or interpretations of the ideology – aiming recruitment efforts at different sections of the public (think of the problem of 'trade-unionism' both in Soviet ideology and in practice), or justifying and reinforcing different positions of power and public policies. And while such fights take place within the constraints of one ideology, imposing at least *some* limitations of consistency, these limits cannot be drawn very narrowly in view of the extremely coarse and thus adaptable nature of the ideology itself. And, to mention a very old and venerable example, it is in this coarseness, generality, and thus adaptability that resides the strength of (Christian) religion inasmuch as it is an ideology – which it indeed *also* is.

All these considerations also apply, at a somewhat more restricted level, to the party platform and program. These, too, are primarily mobilising devices to recruit members, supporters and voters, rather than actual programs for action – for which purpose they are necessarily much too general, having to leave open too much room for manoeuvre for the leadership as well as for

unforeseen developments in political circumstances, even though they may be sincerely presented as such by some. They, too, represent temporary outcomes of the battles going on within the party itself, representing a sort of peace treaties and the delimitation of spheres of influence, just as, at a more general and fundamental level, ideologies do.

The upshot of the present analysis is again, that ideologies also are rather expectable occurrences in certain political circumstances. But, one may ask, are they nothing more than that? Or, if it be granted that their emergence and evolution obeys very fundamental and substantial forces in the political system, and that they will hence not automatically embody objective Reason and Morality, still, do these latter have no rôle at all to play?

Surely, if an ideology went grossly against the 'facts', if it contradicted too openly well-developed scientific theories, or if it contained too glaring contradictions, it would not be of any practical use, not even with respect to the limited uses required of it, and neither could it convincingly justify or defend any course of action. In this sense, then, one may expect Reason to play its rôle. And, put somewhat more positively, there is no need to deny that such ideologies, none excluded, were indeed also motivated by a relatively disinterested search for real insight, for Truth. Yet, in the actual circumstances of (social) scientific evolution and the very rough nature of the ideologies as political devices, there is clearly much room for manipulating Truth and Reason.

With respect to the other side of the matter, that of Morality or Values, surely, ideologies are also, and mostly sincerely at that, inspired by moral or ethical values. However, two considerations militate against too easily assuming an independent or autonomous rôle for such values. For first of all, they have to serve the political mobilisation and recruitment of people. From this viewpoint it is a matter of relative historical accident which values and interests will in fact be developed. And in actual fact the world knows some variety at least on this score. Thus, in Holland, as well as in some other countries all sorts of religious denominational values provide the basis for relatively outspoken ideologies, which they do not in other countries. At the same time there is also much similarity in this respect, as modern ideologies typically are concerned, both at the Right and at the Left end of the spectrum, with recruiting as many individuals as possible. It is natural in such circumstances to expect typically individualistic values such as equality and justice to play a rather prominent rôle.

Also, without going too deeply into this essentially learning-theoretical matter, one may plausibly presume that people's values or preferences develop so as to contribute most to the realisation of pre-existing values, or, which comes to the same thing, that they develop so as to contribute most to the

future success of conduct. But it will be immediately clear that the development or evolution of such valuations is thereby also to a large extent shaped by actual (political) circumstances, by the extant relations of power and interest, in which the individual (expects to) find(s) himself. For these largely determine what will in fact contribute to what extent to what.

In all, then, the political party, as well as its ideology can be regarded as rather natural occurrences in certain political systems, produced, ultimately, by fundamental transformations in the technological, economic and population base of human life and society, and thus representing an important aspect of the continuing political evolution of mankind as propelled by those transformations.

Notes

1. See my 'A theory of human behaviour and of the political process' in *Acta Politica*, XI (4) Oct. 1976, pp. 489-524 for a brief exposition of the theory applied here.

2. In particular by *David Easton* in 'A systems analysis of political life', Wiley, New York etc. 1965, and by *Gabriel A. Almond* in 'A developmental approach to political systems', *World Politics* XVII (2), Jan. 1965, 183-214 or *Gabriel A. Almond* and *James S. Coleman* (eds.): *The politics of the developing areas*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1960.

3. It is to be realized that this is *our*, i.e., the observer's, construction to explain human action, but is not meant to describe what goes on in the 'mind' or 'consciousness' of the acting individual. In fact the notion of 'consciousness' or 'mind' does not even play a rôle at all at this level of the theory. Similarly, it need not at all be assumed that people's actions were 'rationally' calculated, nor that this conception would be restricted to some such special sort of behaviour.

4. See also *Joseph Schumpeter*, *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, 3rd ed., Harper and Row, New York and Evanston 1950 (1942), Ch. XXII, and Chs. XXIV to XXVIII, concerning the historical evolution of socialist parties in particular. These considerations also tend to apply to the foundation and growth of such other large-scale formations as labour unions. Cf. for example *Georges Lefranc*: *Histoire du travail et des travailleurs*, Flammarion, Paris 1957; *L. J. Brugmans*: *De arbeidende klasse in Nederland in de 19e eeuw (1813-1870)*, Spectrum, Utrecht-Antwerpen 1958; *L. G. J. Verberne*: *De Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging in de negentiende eeuw*, 3e dr., Spectrum, Utrecht-Antwerpen 1959; *G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate*: *The common people, 1746-1946*; *Wolfgang Abendroth*: *Sozialgeschichte der Europäischen Arbeiterbewegung*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a/M, 1965. This is the more significant as socialist parties and the labour movement generally seem to believe with particular force in a 'grass-roots ideology', contrary to what (their) actual experience teaches us.

5. Cf. also *Gerhard Loewenberg*: *The role of parliaments in modern political systems*, in *Gerhard Loewenberg* (ed.): *Modern parliaments: change or decline?* Aldine-Atherton, Chicago-New York 1971, pp. 1-20, p. 5. The evolution of democracy characteristically took the form of an enlargement of the suffrage - as much a

cause of the emergence of political parties as an effect thereof.

6. Note that it is precisely the essence of corporatist thought to obviate the need for political parties by allowing for the direct representation of such sectorial, *i.e.*, professional or occupational, interests in the central councils of the polity. The present argument also shows why this idea must be considered utopian.

7. It is to be realized that such democratic ideologies, whether of the Lockean, Rousseauian, Jacobin, (American) Federalist, or Marxian variety, all emerged in the course of actual political struggles in which they had to fulfil very definite mobilising and justifying functions.

8. Cf. the argument by *V. O. Key Jr.* in his *The responsible electorate - rationality in persidential voting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1966, in particular pp. 7, 30, 52, 61.

9. See in particular *Mancur Olson Jr.*: *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1965.

10. That is, my reading of this phase of Dutch political history differs from Professor Lijphart's, who tends to view 'pillarization' as produced by pre-existing cultural and religious cleavages which had then to be bridged by accommodating 'elites'. According to the present analysis, though, the phenomenon is rather a product of politicians seeking to exploit whatever potential for mobilising support they met with in the typical situation of Dutch politics in recent history. See *Arend Lijphart*: *The politics of accommodation: pluralism and democracy in the Netherlands*, 2nd ed. revd. University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 1975 (1968).

11. See my *Het stervensuur van Leviathan? Beschouwingen over de ontwikkeling van staat en internationale samenleving*. Samsom, Alphen a/d Rijn 1974.

12. Cf. the importance often ascribed to so-called 'cross-cutting cleavages' or 'multiple loyalties' for the prevention or limitation of violent conflict. See for example *Michael Barkum*: *Law without sanctions: order in primitive societies and the world community*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1968, pp. 39-40, 44; *Robert C. North et al.*: *The integrative functions of conflict*, in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, IV, 1960, pp. 355 - 74; *Dean G. Pruitt and Richard C. Snyder (eds.)*: *Theory and research on the causes of war*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1969, p. 179; *Robert A. Dahl*: *Democracy in the United States: promise and performance*, 2nd ed., Rand McNally, Chicago 1972 (1967), pp. 313 ff.

13. The factors mentioned in the text are easily recognizable in the several varieties of coalition theories, cf. *A. de Swaan*: *Coalition theories and cabined formations: A study of formal theories of coalition formation applied to nine European parliaments after 1918*, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Cy., Amsterdam 1973.

14. See for an analysis of this phenomenon especially *Hannah Ahrendt*: *The origins of totalitarianism*, World Publishing Cy., Cleveland and New York, 1958; and *William Kornhauser*: *The politics of mass society*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1960.

Onderzoek

Herkomst en gezindte van de S.D.A.P.-leden te Nijmegen (1898-1920)

P. F. Maas

In het kader van een onderzoek naar aard en betekenis van de sociaal-democratische gemeentepolitiek in de jaren 1894-1927, werden de uitkomsten van dat onderzoek getoetst aan de feitelijke situatie en ontwikkelingen te Nijmegen.¹ In de confrontatie tussen de twee relatief jonge emancipatiebewegingen, die van de katholieken en die van de arbeiders, speelde de discussie over de relatie christendom en socialisme een belangrijke rol.

De katholieke bisschoppen, destijds nog over een onaantastbaar gezag beschikkend en verzekerd van de gehoorzaamheid en trouw van de gelovigen, hadden in navolging van 'Rerum Novarum' bij verschillende gelegenheden nog eens nadrukkelijk het socialisme als een kerk, godsdienst, ja Godvijandige beweging, scherp en ondubbelzinnig veroordeeld.² Elk contact met socialistische organisaties of socialistische lectuur was de katholieke, op straffe van onthouding der sacramenten, hetgeen eeuwige verdoeming beduidde, verboden.

Desondanks bleven de S.D.A.P.-kopstukken volharden in hun pogen ook de katholieke arbeiders voor het socialisme te winnen. Hun godsdienstige overtuiging zou ook in een socialistische samenleving als 'privaatzaak' volledig gerespecteerd worden. Het socialisme zou heel goed te verzoenen zijn met een christelijke overtuiging en voor zover de S.D.A.P. zich tegen de Kerk en haar bedienaren keerde, was dat het gevolg van de aanwijsbare steun aan het groot-kapitaal. Al te openhartige atheïstische geluiden uit de S.D.A.P.-kring maakten deze verzoenende benadering er niet geloofwaardiger op.

Greitig maakte de katholieke pers daar steeds weer melding van. Deze pers signaleerde tevens de 'afvalligheid' van vele S.D.A.P.'ers, daarbij gemakshalve vergetend, dat de Kerk de gelovige katholieke, die zich wilde beijveren voor de bevrijding van de arbeiders en derhalve voor de S.D.A.P. koos, zonder enige consideratie buiten de gelovige gemeenschap wierp.

Welnu, tegen deze achtergrond leek het zinvol de S.D.A.P.-aanhang te Nijmegen naar herkomst en gezindte nader te analyseren. Alvorens daartoe over te gaan, eerst enkele saillante gegevens over Nijmegen. De Nijmeegse situatie mag namelijk in velerlei opzichten een bijzondere heten.