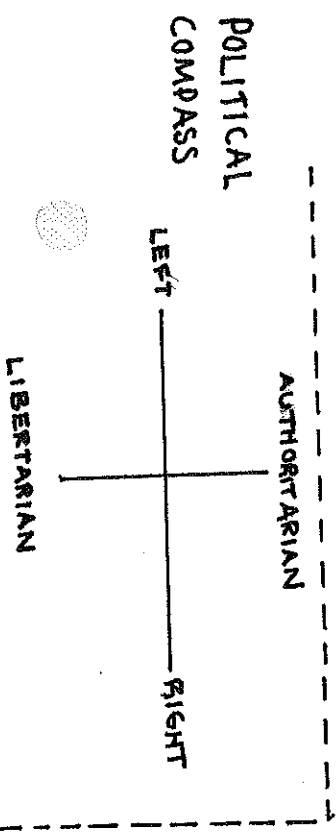
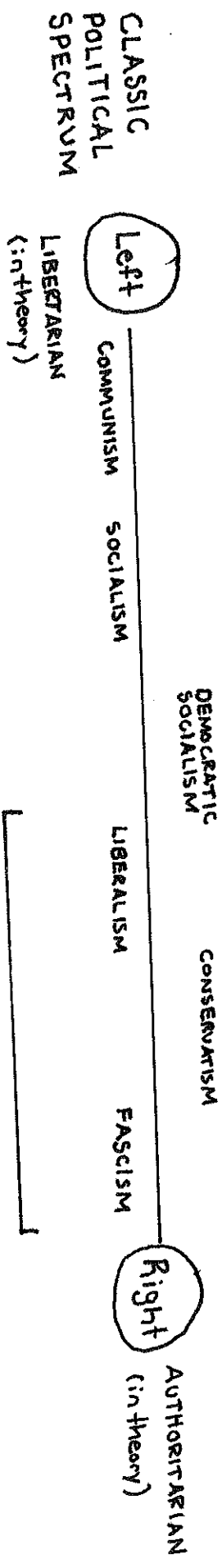
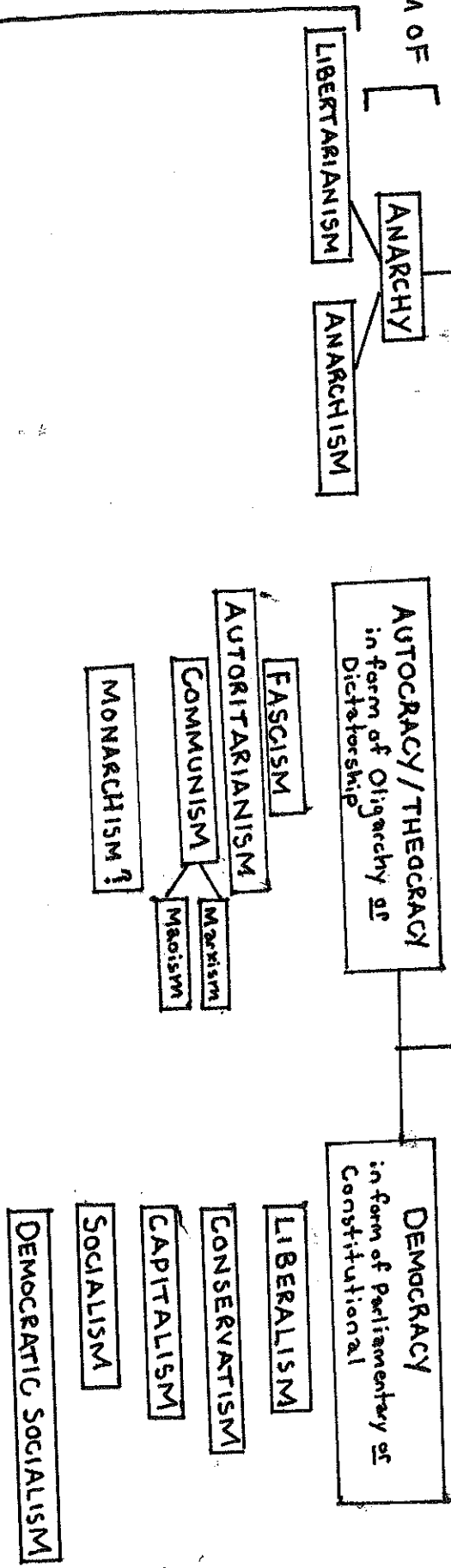
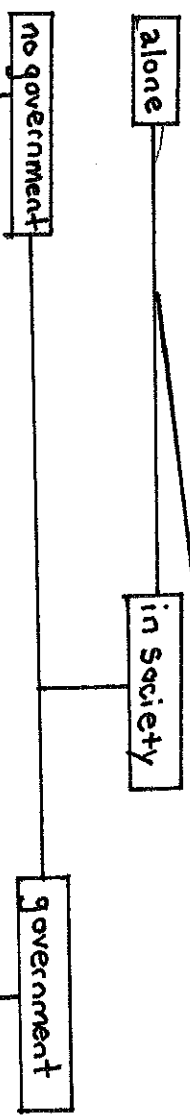
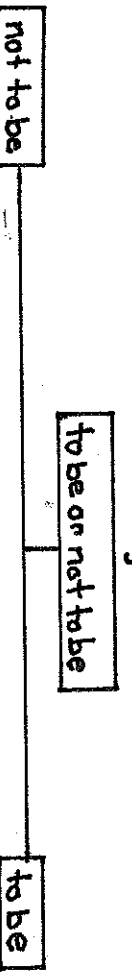
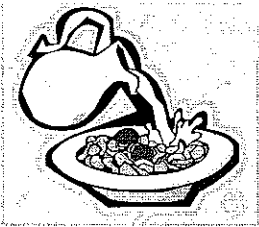


What is the good life?



Political Ideologies and Economic Influences

The political spectrum is heavily influenced by economics. Adding economics to politics is as natural as adding milk to cereal. Needless to say, matters can be complicated. For example, you might want to improve your health by cutting the fat in your diet. Instead of using homogenized milk on your cereal, you start to use skim milk. This is likely a wise idea but how effective will the reduction in milk fat be to your health if the cereal you are eating is high in sugar, transfat, and tropical oils? Not unlike the low fat milk/sugar cereal analogy, there are certain political ideologies that seem incongruous with their economic counterparts.



Here are the main political ideologies when viewed through an economic lens.

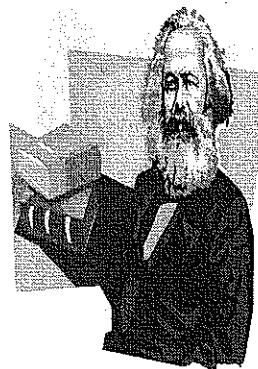
Communism: far left

On the far left of the economic/political spectrum is communism. Based on the philosophies of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Tse-tung, communism sees those in control of the means of production as the controllers of society. Revolutionary communism attempts to bring about equality in society by radical means – the seizing of power from the bourgeoisie (middle class) and investing it in the proletariat (the working class). Marxist ideology is unlike the communism that survives today. He conceded that the proletariat would have to assume a temporary dictatorial control of the state until a classless society would take hold. Marx is most remembered for his revolutionary slogan: “Workers of the world unite: you have nothing to lose but your chains.”

MARX



Mao Tse-tung Lenin



- * Control MOP = social control
- * economic equality by RADICAL MEANS
- * strong central authority
- complete economic planning
- totalitarian
- 2 opposition silent

Communist ideology calls for a strong central government with full authority to plan economic growth. Although the proletariat is the de facto beneficiary, they do not participate in government.

Aside from controlling the economy, communist governments also control what citizens watch, read and hear in an effort to control the influence of the bourgeoisie. Media is controlled by the central government in the name of the common good. In addition, political opposition is not tolerated. Most communist states are also officially atheist. In Marx's words, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... It is the opium of the people." This quotation is usually shortened to: Religion is the opiate of the masses.

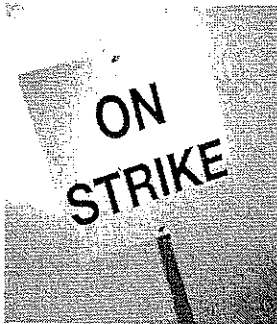
Communist governments have worked to achieve the Marxist goal of economic equality. They provide health care, housing, pensions, education, and employment to all citizens. There exist disparities within this system however. Opponents to this philosophy are usually silenced and some members of society are "more equal than others."

Most communist states that exist today are totalitarian regimes: Cuba, North Korea, China and Vietnam.

The theories of Marx which he outlined in *The Communist Manifesto* are rarely components of modern communist regimes.

Socialism: middle left

Socialism is based on the economic and political philosophies of Karl Marx. This philosophy was developed more fully by Thomas More in his book *Utopia*. The roots of socialism are set in the 16th century. It favours public ownership of the means of production. Socialists favour democratic and peaceful means of achieving their goals – "the ballot, not the bullet." Socialists advocate political action, labour parties, trade unions, labour action, and strikes. Once elected, they allow political opposition.



Rather than strive for complete economic equality, socialist philosophy strives to close the gap between the rich and the poor. It favours government funding for education, housing, health, employment and pensions.

- * public ownership of MOP
- * democ. means of achieving econ. equality
- * pol. opposition permitted
- * not complete economic equality but close gap

Democratic Socialism: centre

Also known as social democrats, democratic socialists are placed to the right of socialism and the centre of the political/economic spectrum. In a more cynical way, democratic socialists are known as champagne socialists. They do not insist on total public ownership of the means of production as much as they favour a mixed economy that permits private ownership and enterprise.



Democratic and peaceful approaches to politics are stressed. Human rights and freedoms are the most important focus of social democratic governments. They favour initiatives and programs that help people at the lowest economic levels. These initiatives include: a minimum wage, universal health care, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, parenting benefits and housing subsidies. To pay for these social welfare initiatives, social democrats favour graduated taxes: the more you make, the more you pay. Canada is a country largely based on the philosophy of social democracy.

Enterprise
Socialism

↳ mix public
& private
ownership

↳ HR impt.
focus

Capitalism: right of centre

Capitalist societies favour the free market. Advocated in the 18th century by Adam Smith, capitalism sees individuals who follow their own selfish economic interests as being beneficial to society. For capitalism to work, no single business should control any industry and set prices artificially high. Government must regulate and enforce fair competition; otherwise, it should have minimal intervention.

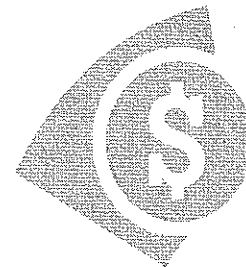
Smith was reacting to the 18th century philosophy of mercantilism that encouraged strict government intervention in the economy. Too often government involvement in the economy was over burdened by bureaucracy and became too expensive.

minimal gov't
intervention
↳ exception
fair competition

↳ dampens
econ. activity
growth

↳ individual/
private self
interests

best
stakeholder



According to Smith, government should maintain the armed forces, supervise the administration of justice, and run certain public works and enterprise: airlines, oil companies, electrical generating stations, and liquor stores.

The laws of the marketplace will create a balance between supply and demand. In addition, all consumers benefit when the free market produces the best quality product for the lowest price. Less government intervention means that less tax needs to be collected to support the government. Lower taxes allow for more consumer spending and therefore greater economic activity. More economic activity means more employment opportunity.

Capitalism embraces the belief that the individual is much better at making economic choices than the government. Lack of government intervention is criticized by many who fear that greed will lead to the abuse of workers, the poor and underprivileged of society.

Fascism: the far right



Fascism blends authoritarianism, state ownership and capitalism. Fascism began in Italy after WWI and was codified in Germany under the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. His brand of fascism is often called racist fascism. Fascism completely subordinates the individual in favour of the state. Corporatism, which sees each member of society organized into supposedly representational associations based on profession or vocation, exists. Free enterprise is allowed, but the state maintains ultimate control.

Society is organized in a hierarchical manner. Without doubt, the leaders of the government are the most powerful and sit at the top of the hierarchy. If the nation is ruled by racist doctrines, the group said to be undesirable resides at the bottom. Likewise, if economic fascism is the order, the poor will find themselves at the bottom. Order, nationalism, opposition to communism, and loyalty to an all powerful leader are the philosophies of fascism. Only one political party is allowed. Moreover, all dissenters are punished with violence or threat of violence. The good of the nation is the main focus of fascist regimes. Nationalism and the strength of the military are also extolled.

State paramount
↳ indiv. subordi

ultimate control
of free enterprise

rigid/hierarchical
social/economic
structure

no opposition
pol.

extreme nationalism

totalitarianism
① police state
② surveillance
③ censorship

IDEOLOGIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The following are several of the most common political and economic ideas that were floating around Western Europe in the 20th Century.

Democracy

- a political system
- a type of government in which citizens elect their government through the election of representatives

Capitalism

- an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, production, and distribution
- free enterprise system with the absence of economic control of the government
- often linked to democracy
- everyone looks out for himself

Monarchism

- belief in the importance of hereditary monarch as a symbol of national and imperial unity
- focus on monarch brings loyalty and order

Authoritarianism

- leader who has absolute power and is not constitutionally responsible
- Totalitarian, and Fascist regimes

Socialism

- belief in the equality of all
- workers are no longer exploited, they control their own political and economic life
- opposite of Capitalism
- a political and economic belief
- a milder form of Communism

Communism

- a political and economic system that is the opposite of Capitalism
- social change advocating a classless society
- the end of the exploitation of the workers for the benefit of the upper class
- public ownership of almost all property, and the sharing of the products of labour
- no nations, no religion, and no classes (upper, middle, and lower classes)
- "Workers of the World, Unite!"

Anarchism

- rebellion against authority, complete political and social freedom
- the belief that government is corrupt and must be overthrown