



Dennis Kaltwasser

(Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen)

The Ideology of Rationalist Social Management

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Abstract

It is a core idea of deliberative democracy that universal access to information and the unrestricted exchange of arguments can lead to agreement and compromise, so that the solutions found meet the demands of reason in factual and moral terms. The expertocratic society stands in sharp contrast to this ideal; in this article the concept of the managed society will be traced back to antiquity. In the wake of the Scientific Revolution of the early modern era and the development of a materialistic philosophy, this idea evolved into the illiberal project of establishing a technocratically organized society in which the individual is merely part of a disposable mass. The aim of this article is to outline the broad stream of experto- and technocratic ideology as a totalitarian historical constant. In addition, the influence of this strand of thinking on the elites of contemporary democratic societies will be illustrated.

The urge to save humanity is almost always only a false-face for the urge to rule it. Power is what all messiahs really seek: not the chance to serve.

– Henry Louis Mencken, *Minority Report*

No one is obliged to take part in the spiritual crisis of a society; on the contrary, everyone is obliged to avoid this folly and live his life in order.

– Eric Voegelin, *Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis*

The following is an attempt to profile a historically constant ideological current as the root cause of the present comprehensive crisis in the public sphere. The term “crisis” in this context refers above all to the decline in communication ethics as evidenced by the continued disregard for democratic principles in public communication and the qualitative collapse in collective knowledge formation.¹ The analysis of possible causes of this catastrophic epistemic crisis requires both a thematic and a diachronic broadening of perspective appropriate to the situation. Evolutionary biologist Bret Weinstein expresses this necessity when he says:

If you are in a bad era—an era in which our sense making capacity, our public truth seeking has gone to noise because every single institution that you would ordinarily use to do that job has been captured by something or persuaded of something that has caused it to become perfectly inept—then [...] one does have to be ready to consider a wide range of hypotheses, some of which [...] if not for that persuasive pattern of evidence you might not consider. [...] But given the persuasive pattern of evidence we have to be ready for all kinds of potential explanations. (DH01)

In search of the causes of this process of decay, the following article will use statements of socially, politically and philosophically influential actors and intellectual workers to trace a tradition of thought and its defining elements, which has remained stable in its basic features and core themes across various political as well as economic systems and stages of technological development since antiquity. Its reach extends to the foundations of an illiberal and anti-democratic view of man and the world. Recognizing its impact as a totalitarian, control-oriented counterpart to the ideal of a liberal, participatory social order and communication ethics can, in my view, make an important contribution to the diagnosis of the current situation.

As an initial approach to the subject, important aspects of these conflicting conceptions will be illustrated in the first section using two key documents from the early modern period. In the second section, the crisis of contemporary democratic communication culture is outlined on the basis of ancient Greek principles of democracy. Subsequently, the ethical and (absent) metaphysical foundations that emerged from the Enlightenment and their consequences for post-revolutionary conceptions of society and the image of humanity on which they are based are briefly presented. The fourth section then follows with a flashback in which Plato's *Republic* is presented as an ancient forerunner of modern totalitarian concepts of society. Finally, sections 5 and 6 document the scope of illiberal totalitarian thinking in modernity and its social reach.

1. Two key documents of the early modern period

In 1525, an astonishing document saw the light of day. This period was primarily characterized by the media revolution triggered by the invention of the printing press, the Protestant Reformation it made possible, and also state-building processes that took place in the context of a transition from clerical to secular rule. Against this backdrop, the maintenance of a differentiating feudal society and the resulting tax increases represented an unbearable burden for the peasants. The document in question are the *Twelve Articles of Memmingen*,² in which the peasants formulated their demands to the Swabian Confederation during the German Peasants' War. At the heart of the peasants' demands were human rights and liberties, above all the abolition of serfdom and the restoration of communal rights of use to common lands such as forests and waters for hunting and fishing, which had previously been expropriated by "the lords" (Article 5) in an "un-brotherly" manner (Article 4). Three aspects of the document are noteworthy, which in pre-revolutionary times already foreshadowed a future liberal social order:

- i) the high value attached to the God-given individual rights of freedom and the universality of human dignity ("Scripture tells us that **we are free and we want to be free**" [Darumb erfindt sich mit der geschryfft dass wir frey seyen und wöllen sein]);
- ii) the special status of the claimed right to free elections and appropriate representation ("It is our humble request, our will and opinion, that **we should have the power to elect our parish priest and also to remove him when he disobeys the order**" [Zum Ersten ist unser diemuettig bytt un beger/ auch unser aller will un maynung/ das wir nun fürohin gewalt und macht wöllen haben/ ain ganze gemain sol ain Pfarer selbs Erwoelen und kyesen. Auch gewalt haben denselbigen widerzuentsetzen/ wan er sich ungepürlich

hielt]);

- iii) the willingness to engage in argumentative and legally binding disputes about the basis of these demands (“It is our decision and opinion: should one or more of these articles conflict with the word of God we **will abstain from our request—so long as it is explained to us on the basis of the scripture**” [Zum zwelften ist unser beschluß unendtliche maynug/ wann ainer oder mer Artickel alßhie gesteldt (So dem wort Gotes nit gemeß) weren/ als wir dan nit vermainen die selbigen artickel/ wo man uns mit dem wort Gots für unzimlich anzaigen/ wolt wyr daruon abston/ wan mans uns mit grundt der schriftt erklert]) [emphasis added]. (ZA01)

In contrast to this, we find a radically different image of man and thus a different early modern understanding of the foundations of social coordination in the works of a pioneer of the Enlightenment: Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes’ *Leviathan* was published in 1651, it is considered one of the most important works of political philosophy. Here, man in the state of nature is not seen primarily as a *free* person, but as a *defenseless* creature which in the war of all against all uses reason primarily as a tool to secure its bare survival and possessions. Against this background, the transfer of sovereignty to the protective, all-powerful state appears to be merely a reflex of its instinct for self-preservation; the reasoning behind this decision is purely instrumental. The same applies in this perspective to the architects of state order. Habermas (1974, 43) remarks that “[w]ith a knowledge of the general conditions for a correct order of the state and of society, practical prudent action of human beings toward each other is no longer required”—what is required instead is the “correctly calculated generation of rules, relationships, and institutions”:

[H]uman behavior is therefore to be now considered only as the material for science. The engineers of the correct order can disregard the categories of ethical social intercourse and confine themselves to the construction of conditions under which human beings, just like objects within nature, will necessarily behave in a calculable manner. This separation of politics from morality replaces instruction in leading a good and just life with making possible a life of well-being within a correctly instituted order. (Habermas 1974, p. 43)

This detachment of politics from morality and the fixation on a functioning state system oriented towards stability, which must eliminate disruptive elements by all means, can be seen, among other things, in Hobbes’ recommendation on how to deal with the phenomenon of witch-hunts. For Hobbes, as a man of rationality and empiricism, it was clear that the accusation of sorcery in a fundamentally mechanical world had to lack any basis—he nevertheless approved of the cruel practices of torture and witch-burning:

For, as for witches, I think not that their witchcraft is any reall power; but yet that they are justly punished, for the false belief they have that they can do much mischeife, joyned with their purpose to do it if they can, their trade being nearer to a new religion than to a craft or a science [emphasis added]. (Hobbes 1991 [1651], pp. 7–8)

Hobbes thus transforms the concocted crime of harmful magic into one of mere malicious intent on the part of the accused. In his view, this intention alone, but above all the adherence to a metaphysical (and thus for Hobbes unscientific) world view, should be punished with the aim of enforcing compliance with existing social norms.³ For the sake of the state-stabilizing effect, Hobbes was prepared to ignore rational questions of truth and justice and to overlook the fact that the actual accusation was false and the confessions were

extorted under torture.

The above examples provide an initial insight into the main features of two diametrically opposed conceptions of rational action and its significance for social order. While the peasants in the *Twelve Articles* demand a rational justification for the existing legal practice (*für unzimlich anzaigen, mit grundt der schrift erkleret*) and want to submit to the judgment that would result from deliberation (*wolt wyr daruon abston*), for Hobbes reason only comes into play as the foundation of system architecture and the assessment of disciplinary measures by the social elite; he does not even consider an argumentative and in this sense rational confrontation with the governed subjects. We find the same attitude towards state and individual reason, albeit with a different philosophical foundation, among many others in Hegel, who almost 200 years after Hobbes writes in §258 of his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*:

The state is the actuality of the substantial will, [...] it is the rational in and for itself. This substantial unity is an absolute and unmoved end in itself, and in it, freedom enters into its highest right, just as this ultimate end possesses the highest right in relation to individuals, whose highest duty is to be members of the state. (Hegel 2003 [1832–1845], p. 275)

In the following, the stages in the development of the two schools of thought outlined above and their competing normative views on the use and significance of rationality in the context of social organization will be traced.

2. Democratic traditions in crisis

Hobbes' attitude, like that of Hegel, fundamentally contradicts the self-image that forms the basis of contemporary democratic societies. In a recent seminar on "Language and Democracy", I had the opportunity to talk to the students about man as a political being. We began by considering very fundamentally that all social coordination depends on the agreement of rules for living together. In addition to the question, which aspects of social life can and must be regulated at all, I was particularly interested in which social groups should be involved in defining these rules. Visibly irritated by the question, one student replied: "Well, ideally all of us!" This reaction shows that today there is at least still an idea that "all of us" are able and have the (natural) right and possibly even the obligation to determine the rules of our social existence due to our gift of reason and that this ideal is, at least for some, part of the *common sense* of social organization.

This idea has a long tradition. In the early phase of the German pre-revolutionary period, Joseph Görres, editor of the *Rheinischer Merkur*, spoke of the "public opinion" that had emerged and of the "people [that] takes part in the common good; [that] seeks to come to an understanding about what is happening; [that] through deeds and sacrifices has made itself worthy of gaining a voice and influence in public affairs" (Görres 1814). Of course, this idea was neither new at the time nor around 1525; famously we can trace it back to ancient Greece. In the Athenian democracy of the 5th century B.C., for example, the right of all Athenians to speak in the People's Assembly was seen as a constitutive feature of the freedom of citizens on the basis of a generally binding legal system, and there was a ban on the exclusion of citizens. Furthermore, political participation was not only a general right,⁴ but even a duty and an essential part of one's own cultural identity. Consider the following passage in

Pericles' *Funeral Oration* as Thucydides recounts it in The Peloponnesian War:

Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, **are still fair judges of public matters**; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but **as useless**, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and, instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it **an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all**. [emphasis added] Thucydides 2,40 (TH01)

This radical democratic commitment to broad participation in political decision-making is also reflected in the mode of awarding offices. In principle, every Athenian citizen was considered qualified to hold public office. The 700 office-holders were therefore not chosen on the basis of their origin, their expert status or through a selection process, but by lot, which the Athenians regarded as a symbol of civic equality. The need for security, a functioning infrastructure and the proper exercise of office was ensured through full transparency and strict control of the office holders.

Even if modern society has become more complex in its organization, differentiation and institutionalization as a state and the political must be wrested from the resulting power dynamics again and again (cf. Wolin 2019, pp. 248–249; Nordmann 2020, pp. 101–102), the Athenian participatory principles, recognizable for example in the student's above-mentioned *common-sense* assumptions about a core element of democratic practice, prove to be surprisingly persistent in the majority's view of society. They are also visible in current academic-philosophical discourse, for example when Habermas points out that

the moral sense of the 'rightness' of a well-founded norm [...] is exhaustively grounded in the fact that this norm 'deserves' general recognition in the light of good reasons [...] The rightness of norms [refers] to the obligatory or binding force of generalized expectations of behavior which may count on the consent of the possible addressees and affected parties [...]. (Habermas 2016, p. 818)

Prior to the so-called Corona crisis (cf. BP01), this shared attitude was on display most recently during the large scale demonstrations against the transatlantic free trade agreements TTIP and later CETA, in which the absurd degree of secrecy surrounding the contents of the agreements and the anti-democratic nature of the process were addressed and in which up to 320,000 people took part in Germany (DF01). At the time, Bishop Cornelius-Bundschuh of Baden demanded that "international treaties must be negotiated transparently and guarantee the protection of democracy and the rule of law" (TS01).

And yet democracy is in bad shape and the battle for the political is increasingly being fought with unequal means. Crouch termed this state of affairs "post-democracy" as early as 2004 and noted with deep concern:

[W]hile the forms of democracy remain fully in place—and today in some respects are actually strengthened—politics and government are increasingly slipping back into the control of privileged elites in the manner characteristic of pre-democratic times. (Crouch 2004, p. 6)

A few years later, Mies (2020, p. 35) aptly describes the system characterized in this way as a "facade democracy" and Wolin (2015) warned of the rise of an "inverted totalitarianism" as a consequence of a social organization in which democratic participation is increasingly replaced by technocratic management. This assessment can also be substantiated empirically. In their large-scale study *Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens* at Princeton University, Gilens and Page come to a sobering conclusion:

When the preferences of economic elites and the stands of organized interest groups are controlled for, the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy. [...]ur findings indicate, the majority does not rule—at least not in the causal sense of actually determining policy outcomes. (Gilens/Page 2014, pp. 575-577)

These developments do not fit in with the traditional image of a democratically constituted society: one of its central characteristics is (or was until recently) that every citizen has a voice. And furthermore, that social participation and especially the possibility of politically effective participation is not only protected but also required by a functioning state.

3. Materialistic utilitarianism as an illiberal driving force

In light of this remarkable and accelerating rift between democratic self-image and political reality in Western societies, the question arises as to whether this is merely an emergent phenomenon, akin to a cultural accident in slow motion. The democratic principles discussed above are part of the core curriculum of contemporary political education and can be called up at any time.⁵ But the fact that a dominant tradition of thought exists since antiquity and up to the present which is not only hostile to these ideals, but actively aims to overcome them, is much less present in both social consciousness and the hegemonic discourse on democracy. This tradition of thought is not synonymous with a specific political program or a philosophical school, even if philosophers and intellectuals in various social positions have always held these views. Rather, it is a fundamentally illiberal attitude that flows from a reductionist view of humanity and a teleological worldview. Its broad outlines can only be sketched out in the context of this article.

The most important element of this current in the history of ideas is the assumption that the members of a society have different rights due to different intrinsic, mostly intellectual qualities and must therefore take on different tasks; the principle of the natural equality of all citizens and the values of freedom and self-determination associated with it are seen as fundamentally flawed. Thomas Sowell writes about the self-image of this moral-intellectual elite:

Despite Hamlet's warning against self-flattery, the vision of the anointed is not simply a vision of the world and its functioning in a causal sense, but is also a vision of themselves and their moral role in that world. It is a vision of differential rectitude. It is not a vision of the tragedy of the human condition: Problems exist because others are not as wise or as virtuous as the anointed. (Sowell 1995, p. 5)

The counter-model opposite of equal rights and democratic participation consists of a society controlled by elites on the basis of a scientific management ideology. The promise of averting danger and providing security is particularly important in this context, as Sowell goes on to explain:

Despite the great variety of issues in a series of crusading movements among the intelligentsia during the twentieth century, several key elements have been common to most of them:

1. Assertion of a great danger to the whole society, a danger to which the masses of people are oblivious.

2. An urgent need for action to avert impending catastrophe.
3. A need for government to drastically curtail the dangerous behavior of the many, in response to the prescient conclusions of the few.
4. A disdainful dismissal of arguments to the contrary as either uninformed, irresponsible, or motivated by unworthy purposes. (ibid.)

The legitimization of the necessary claim to power is derived on the one hand from an assumed special ability of the ruling class (or, until this social position is achieved: the revolutionary avant-garde) to think rationally—or, in the wake of the Scientific Revolution: to gain ‘scientific’ knowledge on the basis of empirical data—and on the other hand from a materialistically grounded utilitarian moral philosophy, which is, however, often only implicitly assumed. Metaphysically grounded orders of being or moral concepts are rejected as primitive or reactionary. Prominent examples of this are Comte’s remarks on the “theologico-metaphysical explanations” in the “long infancy of Humanity” (1903 [1844], §74) or d’Holbach’s *Système de la Nature*, in which religious moral foundations are categorically rejected as corrupt:

The same blindness may be perceived in the science of morals. Religion, which never had anything but ignorance for its basis, and imagination for its guide, did not found ethics upon man’s nature, upon his relations with his fellows, upon those duties which necessarily flow from these relations, it preferred founding them upon imaginary relations, which it pretended subsisted between him and some invisible powers it had gratuitously imagined [...]. (d’Holbach 1889 [1770], p. 152)

The prototypical utopia of scientific humanism, designed in contrast to metaphysical systems of order, consists of the establishment and development of a ‘sustainable’, technically efficient, post-political and therefore ‘optimally functioning’ social order that focuses on the calculation and allocation of resources⁶ and is kept in a controlled equilibrium on the basis of scientific principles.⁷ For the purpose of legitimizing it, this desired equilibrium has often been associated with a ‘just society’ (cf. Plato’s *Republic*), since the 18th century it is also increasingly associated or even equated with the topos of social justice. From there, a number of other forms of ‘justice’ have been developed as the legitimizing basis of illiberal social control: ecological justice (see BP03), gender justice (see UN01), climate justice (see Macquarie 2022), vaccine justice (see Privor-Dumm et al. 2023), queer justice (see SCSJ: Social Justice is Queer Justice, SC01; Remarks by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden at Pride Celebration, WP01), to name but a few.

Almost a century before the emergence of the technocracy movement in the 1930s,⁸ we already find the concept of social engineering by an expert class in socialist pioneers such as Auguste Comte, the founder of the positivist school of thought and the academic discipline of sociology. In his 1844 *Discourse on the Positive Spirit*, a text which was deeply steeped in scientific beliefs, Comte laments

the insufficient extension of Natural Philosophy, which was still supposed to have nothing to do with the most important and difficult of all investigations, those, namely, which directly concern human society. [...] As long as the rational way of regarding the actions of man upon nature remained essentially confined to the inorganic world, the interest taken in science would be comparatively languid. When once this immense gap shall have been sufficiently filled up (as it is beginning now to be) it will be seen that this great practical purpose, if kept in view, will have a most important effect in habitually stimulating the loftiest speculations and often even in giving them a better direction, by suggesting the subjects most worthy of investigation. For art will then be

no longer merely geometrical, mechanical or chemical, etc., but also political and moral; and indeed, this will be its chief field, since the principal work that Humanity has to perform must, in all respects, consist in the continual improvement of its own nature, both individual and collective [...]. [emphasis added] (Comte 1903 [1844], §22)

In the application of such a scientifically grounded social technique, the individual with his needs and idiosyncrasies, with his wishes, convictions and ideas, no longer has a place.⁹ Consequently, in Comte's positivistic view

Man, properly so called, does not exist. Man in this sense is a creation of the imagination. It is only Humanity that can exist, since our whole development, under every aspect, is due to society. If the idea of Society still seems to many people to be an abstraction having no existence except in the mind, this is because they are still under the influence of the old philosophy. Really it is the idea of the Individual that is an abstraction [...]. (ibid., §56)

However, if society is not constituted as the result of individual perspectives and their political negotiation, then in this collectivist and positivist perspective 'science' can and must take over the direction and organization of political and economic life. This radical rejection of participatory principles is all the more remarkable when one considers that a few years earlier in France, the feudal society had been replaced by an ostensibly bourgeois-liberal one with spectacular brutality against the former authorities. Walter Ulbricht expresses this scientific conviction as one of the many heirs of Comte's positivist thinking when he claims that

the development of the socialist system, above all the implementation of the economic system as a whole, is to a growing extent a matter of scientific leadership. [...] We orient ourselves on the conscious scientific control of complex processes and systems by the people and for the people. We make use of cybernetics in this sense. (Walter Ulbricht, May 2nd, 1968; quoted in: Brzezinski 1970, p. 170)

Here it becomes obvious that "by *the* people" cannot mean scientific control "by *all the* people" in any meaningful interpretation, but instead, leadership by a scientific elite. The subjugation of the individual to the dictum of a caste of experts and the exercise of coercion is morally unobjectionable in this technocratic-collectivist perspective, as it is based on legitimizing rational principles and serves progress that cannot be questioned. This also justifies the extrinsic translation of the interests which individuals express into the "true" interests of the managed classes. Trotsky expressed this idea clearly in *Pravda* in 1920:

Since the Soviet state organises work in the interests of the workers themselves, compulsion is in no way opposed to the personal interests of the worker but, on the contrary, entirely coincides therewith—on condition, of course, that labourpower is used intelligently and economically. (On The Labour Army, *Pravda*, No. 63, MX01)

Comte's intellectual companions included John Stuart Mill (who wrote in a letter to Alexander Bain about Comte's *Discourse on the Positive Spirit*, "I think it very nearly the grandest work of the age"¹⁰) as well as Henri de Saint-Simon. In his *Letters from an Inhabitant of Geneva* (1803), we find an unshakeable belief in progress and the primacy of science and art, as well as concrete plans for a social stratification model and a claim to leadership by the intellectual class:

I address my remarks to different sections of humanity, in which I distinguish three classes. The first, to which you and I have the honour to belong, marches beneath the banner of human progress: it consists of the scientists, the artists, and of all men of liberal ideas. On the banner of

the second class is inscribed 'No innovation.' All the property-owners who do not qualify for the first class belong to the second. The third class, which rallies to the word 'equality,' comprises the rest of humanity. To the first class I say as follows. [...] You, the scientists and artists, and those of you also who devote something of your energies and means to promoting enlightenment, are the section of humanity who possess the greatest intellectual force, and are best fitted to grasp a new idea. [...] Let the mathematicians, who are in the vanguard, begin! Scientists and artists, examine with the eye of genius the present condition of the human mind. You will perceive that the sceptre of public opinion is in your hands; seize it, therefore, boldly. (Quoted in: Markham 1964, p. 2)

However, the expertocratic vision formulated in Saint-Simon's letters is not limited to a purely intellectual supremacy of the class of scientists and artists in public discourse. For this class—and thus, as is so often the case: for himself—he also strives for an elevated social status and a temporary¹¹ position of material and therefore political power:

If you adopt [my plan] and maintain it, you will place permanently in the hands of the twenty-one most enlightened men the two great weapons of domination—prestige and wealth. The consequence will be, for many reasons, rapid progress in the sciences. It is a fact that, with every advance in the sciences, discovery becomes easier; so that those who, like yourselves, can only devote little time to your education, will be able to learn more, and, as you become more educated, you will diminish the domination gained by the rich. You will soon see, my friends, excellent results. (Op. cit. pp. 8–9)

Later, Saint-Simon states in *Du système industriel*: “The problem of social re-organization must be solved for the people. The people themselves are passive and listless and must be excluded in any consideration of the question.” (quoted in MacIver 1922, p. 240).¹² It is of particular importance here that Saint-Simon apparently sees no contradiction between the “liberal ideas” of the members of his first social class “under the banner of human progress” and the categorical exclusion of “the people” from political participation due to a lack of qualifications.

A further indication that this attitude is a historical constant of progressive thought is provided by Edward Pease, secretary of the extremely influential socialist Fabian Society (e.g. geopolitical: Lord Balfour, Royal Institute of International Affairs; academic: London School of Economics, Rhodes Trust; journalistic: *The Guardian*; political: founding of the British Labour Party; cultural: George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells), in his *History of the Fabian Society* (1916), in which he writes about the reception of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*:

[T]he seed sown by Henry George took root, not in the slums and alleys of our cities—no intellectual seed of any sort can germinate in the sickly, sunless atmosphere of slums—but in the minds of people who had sufficient leisure and education to think of other things than breadwinning. (Pease 1916, p. 19)

Annie Besant, also a member of the Fabian Society and later president of the Indian National Congress, also expressed this view in *The Future Socialism*:

A democratic Socialism, controlled by majority votes, guided by numbers, can never succeed; a truly aristocratic Socialism, controlled by duty, guided by wisdom, is the next step upwards in civilization. (Besant 1912, p. 22)

This elitist understanding of liberalism and progress stands in stark contrast to the assumptions of classical liberalism about the inalienable rights of the individual to freedom and self-determination, from which a right to participation is also derived.^{13, 14}

The obligatory orientation towards a common good that appears almost self-evident in many utilitarian works and thus without alternative, as well as the philosophical foundations

of its determination, can be seen as a decisive factor for the emergent totalitarian character of ideologies and social systems based on it. Saint-Simon, whose work exerted a great influence on Marx, also sees the singular task of social organization in promoting “as quickly and completely as possible the moral and physical welfare of the most numerous class” (quoted in Markham 1964, 83; cf. also d’Holbach 1889 [1770], pp. 149-156). In sharp contrast to this concept of a rationally justifiable self-evident common good, in the determination of which “the people [...] must be excluded in any consideration of the question”, Schumpeter objects:

To try to force the people to embrace something that is believed to be good and glorious but which they do not actually want—even though they may be expected to like it when they experience its results—is the very hall mark of anti-democratic belief. [...] There is [...] no such thing as a uniquely determined common good that all people could agree on or be made to agree on by the force of rational argument. This is due not primarily to the fact that some people may want things other than the common good but to the much more fundamental fact that to different individuals and groups the common good is bound to mean different things. This fact, hidden from the utilitarian by the narrowness of his outlook on the world of human valuations, will introduce rifts on questions of principle which cannot be reconciled by rational argument because ultimate values—our conceptions of what life and what society should be—are beyond the range of mere logic. (Schumpeter 2003 [1943], pp. 237-251)

Jeremy Bentham, a contemporary of Saint-Simon and Comte, is regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism. A brief look at his empiricist treatise of a moral and legal philosophy oriented towards the common good, which was published a few years before the French Revolution, can illustrate the totalitarian core of this moral philosophy, which at first glance appears to be philanthropic. In his *Introduction to the Principals of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham starts from the materialistic assumption that human life is determined exclusively by two basic constants, namely the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In Bentham’s view, these two are the only “sovereign principals” that guide action in ethical and practical terms:

It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. (Bentham 2000 [1781], p. 14)

The moral evaluation of human action is therefore solely the result of its consequences for the quantifiable ‘happiness’ or ‘pleasure’ (current lingo: ‘well-being’) of an amorphous and anonymous majority defined in this way. Bentham remarks on this:

VI. An action then may be said to be conformable to then principle of utility, or, for shortness sake, to utility, (meaning with respect to the community at large) when the tendency it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any it has to diminish it.¹⁵ [...]

X. Of an action that is conformable to the principle of utility one may always say either that it is one that ought to be done, or at least that it is not one that ought not to be done. One may say also, that it is right it should be done; at least that it is not wrong it should be done: that it is a right action; at least that it is not a wrong action. When thus interpreted, the words ought, and right and wrong and others of that stamp, have a meaning: when otherwise, they have none. (Bentham 2000 [1781], pp. 15-16)

Bentham uses the following sections XII to XIV of the chapter on the *Principle of Utility* to show that there can be no *rational* objection to his argument, for example on the basis of individual experience or metaphysically informed values (cf. Bentham 2000 [1781], pp. 16-17)—the totalitarian character of his moral philosophy is unmistakable in these first paragraphs

already.

In their mind, the privileges and tasks of the social and intellectual elites outlined here are thus derived from their claimed exquisite rationality and their resulting responsibility for the utilitarian well-being of society. (This requires an important qualification, though: it should be noted that the well-being in question is not that of the currently existing society, but rather that of a fictitious *future* society.) On the arduous road to Utopia, fate has entrusted them with the management and shaping of life itself. In *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*,¹⁶ Lifton gives a precise description of the self-image and motivation of this elite and their perspective on their fellow human beings:

Ideological totalists do not pursue this approach solely for the purpose of maintaining a sense of power over others. Rather they are impelled by a special kind of mystique which not only justifies such manipulations, but makes them mandatory. Included in this mystique is a sense of “higher purpose,” of having “directly perceived some imminent law of social development,” and of being themselves the vanguard of this development. By thus becoming the instruments of their own mystique, they create a mystical aura around the manipulating institutions—the Party, the Government, the Organization. They are the agents “chosen” (by history, by God, or by some other supernatural force) to carry out the “mystical imperative” the pursuit of which must supersede all considerations of decency or of immediate human welfare. (Lifton 1989, p. 422)

Historically, views on which aspects of social and personal life should be controlled by the elite and which means are permissible for this purpose have in many cases gone far beyond questions of secrecy or the curtailment of participatory rights, they instead range from outright lies, propaganda, psychological manipulation and the external control of the most intimate aspects of life to the control of the body and ultimately the right to life itself. It is precisely these ideologically based claims that today make a decisive contribution to the decline of democratic communication culture discussed above. The emergence and stages in the history of this ideology are outlined below.

4. Flashback: Plato’s Republic

A fundamental aversion to democracy and the overt will to run a totalitarian society can already be found in Plato. In his dialogue *Republic*, written in 375 BC, he criticizes democracy above all for its unbridled desire for freedom:

I suppose that when a democratic city, once it’s thirsted for freedom, gets bad winebearers as its leaders and gets more drunk than it should on this unmixed draught, then, unless the rulers are very gentle and provide a great deal of freedom,¹⁷ it punishes them, charging them with being polluted and oligarchs. [...] do you notice how tender [this thirst for freedom makes] the citizens’ soul, so that if someone proposes anything that smacks in any way of slavery, they are irritated and can’t stand it? (563b).

In order to circumvent this problem, Plato designs an ideal state as a descriptive object of comparison in his search for the nature of justice. His model of the state is rooted in the assumed needs and consumer desires of the citizens of the “opulent” (in contrast to the frugal) city. It is developed in a dialogical process. In conversation with Plato’s brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus and a few others at the beginning of the second book, Socrates is transformed from an inquiring philosopher to an enlightened teacher. He opens the discussion with reflections on the necessities of daily life such as food, clothing and housing

and then moves on to the citizens' more far-reaching desires for prosperity and culture, for example in the areas of poetry, theater or culinary delights. The seemingly compelling orientation towards an unspecified maxim of efficiency is assumed, which is used to justify a moral obligation to create a specialized labor force due to people's different innate talents. These considerations ultimately lead to a stratified society in which three distinct classes of citizens are each supposed to fulfill their own tasks and have different privileges.

Plato's first class are the workers which constitute the broad base of the social pyramid. This includes farmers, the manufacturing industry, trade and logistics as well as day laborers. Based on the prime consideration of how the work could be done as efficiently as possible ("more plentiful, finer, and easier"), the idea that "each of us is naturally not quite like anyone else, but rather differs in his nature; different men are apt for the accomplishment of different jobs" (370b) plays an important role. In this context, it becomes clear for the first time that the Platonic citizen owes his right to exist in society not to his creator or his inalienable human dignity, but to his usefulness in the production process, when we read about wage labourers: "[T]here are [...] other servitors who in the things of the mind are not altogether worthy of our fellowship, but whose strength of body is sufficient for toil;"¹⁸ (371d). In the Platonic city people bear the obligation to work according to their innate talents. The members of the working class are thus not, as with Pericles, "occupied with the pursuits of industry" but still "fair judges of public matters" as free citizens. Instead, they are reduced to these activities and, more importantly, their utility value. Nor are they free to choose their occupation, for "we prevented the shoemaker from trying at the same time to be a farmer or a weaver or a housebuilder; he had to stay a shoemaker just so the shoemaker's art would produce fine work for us. And in the same way, to each one of the others we assigned *one* thing, the one for which his nature fitted him, at which he was to work throughout his life [...]" (374c).

The second class—the guardians—emerges in the *Republic* as a consequence of expanding consumption in the city, which in Socrates' argumentation makes war necessary for the conquest of new land and the defense of one's own national borders. In contrast to the more practical treatment of the workers, Plato devotes himself in great detail to the selection, education, leadership and social organization of this second class. As with the workers, the social position of guardian must first be filled strictly on the basis of natural talent and aptitude. Here, too, it is not an autonomous decision of the citizens; this privilege falls again to the philosophers: "Then it's our job, as it seems, to choose, if we're able, which are the natures, and what kind they are, fit for guarding the city." (375a). This is followed by a detailed discussion of the appropriate education of the guardians. The first aspect of education that must be controlled by the philosophers is, analogous to the education of children, which stories the guardians are allowed to listen to, so that they do not absorb "into their souls opinions [...] opposite to those we'll suppose they must have" (377b). Plato lets Socrates conclude from this:

First, as it seems, we must supervise the makers of tales [myth-makers]; and if they make a fine tale, it must be approved, but if it's not, it must be rejected. We'll persuade nurses and mothers to tell the approved tales to their children and to shape their souls with tales more than their bodies with hands. Most of those they now tell must be thrown out. (377c)

What is remarkable in this context is that the need for censorship in education also extends to (potentially) true events, thus anticipating the modern concept of 'malinformation'.¹⁹

Even more astonishing, however, is the idea of withholding true but dangerous information from the general public but, if necessary, discussing it with selected wealthy citizens in secret society meetings:

And Cronos' deeds and his sufferings at the hands of his son, not even if they were true would I suppose they should so easily be told to thoughtless young things; best would be to keep quiet, but if there were some necessity to tell, as few as possible ought to hear them as unspeakable secrets, after making a sacrifice, not of a pig but of some great offering that's hard to come by, so that it will come to the ears of the smallest possible number.²⁰ (378a)

These reflections on secrecy and censorship are supplemented by productive aspects of narrative management, for example when Socrates urges educators to conceal quarrels between the gods, maintaining that "it's just such things that must be told the children right away". He also suggests that "as they get older, the poets must be compelled to make up speeches for them which are close to these [things]" (378b). The same applies to stories about Hades and his horrors: in order to take away the fear of death from the guardians in war, Hades should instead be praised in poetry, and in order for this to happen, "concerning these tales too, it seems we must supervise those who undertake to tell them" (386b).

The "Noble Lie", which Plato has Socrates defend in the third book, can be seen as even more fundamental in this respect. It refers to two counterfactual founding myths that are to be told to the citizens in order to establish a specific culture and thus ensure the governability of the city:

"Could we," I said, "somehow contrive one of those lies that come into being in case of need, of which we were just now speaking, some one noble lie to persuade, in the best case, even the rulers, but if not them, the rest of the city? [...A thing] that has not happened in our time—and I don't know if it could—one that requires a great deal of persuasion." (414b)

These myths are intended to establish two beliefs and associated values among the citizens, namely that they (i) regard the earth as their common mother and (therefore) their fellow citizens as their family members and (ii) accept without resistance the status and role in society assigned to them by birth and natural endowment.²¹ That this is a manipulative lie and thus a form of propaganda from the perspective of communication ethics is freely admitted in the text by Socrates himself and also by Plato apologists. Alan Bloom, for example, comments on this in the preface to the second edition of his translation:

This whole question of lying has been carefully prepared by Plato from the very outset [...] Now, finally, it is baldly stated that the only truly just civil society must be founded on a lie. Socrates prefers to face up to the issue with clarity. A good regime cannot be based on enlightenment; if there is no lie, a number of compromises—among them private property—must be made [...]. This is a radical statement about the relationship between truth and justice, one which leads to the paradox that wisdom can rule only in an element dominated by falsehood. [...] And perhaps the peculiarly modern phenomenon of propaganda might become clearer to the man who sees that it is somehow related to a certain myth of enlightenment which is itself brought into question by the Platonic analysis. [emphasis added] (Bloom 1991, xviii)

In book V, Plato finally deals with questions of intergender relationships and family organization. In a first step, Socrates argues with some effort that women, just like men—this time despite their different natures—should assume the role of guardian. From the form of their common training and accommodation, it further follows that the guardians are not allowed any private property, that they own "nothing private but the body, while the rest is in common" (464e). Since the guardians are the best of all citizens (457b), only they

(for seemingly self-evident reasons) should be allowed to enter into sexual relationships with each other.

At this point, Plato begins his direct attack on the unity of the family and incorporates racial and eugenic considerations into elite control over the lives of the guardians. First, he demands that “[a]ll these women are to belong to all these men in common, and no woman is to live privately with any man. And the children, in their turn, will be in common, and neither will a parent know his own offspring, nor a child his parent.” (457c). In order for all this to succeed, the rulers must not allow the guardians to “have irregular intercourse with one another [...]” (458e). Instead, they will control those “sacred marriages” in specially organized ceremonies that will be “most beneficial.” Plato explains this pursued greatest blessing using the example of the breeding of hunting dogs. Although the animals were already of a “noble breed”, it was important to only mate the best specimens with each other: “And if they weren’t so bred, do you believe that the species [...] of dogs would be far worse for you?” (459c). From this it follows, according to Socrates, that

there is a need for the best men to have intercourse as often as possible with the best women, and the reverse for the most ordinary men with the most ordinary women; and the offspring of the former must be reared but not that of the others,²² if the flock is going to be of the most eminent quality. (459e)

To ensure that the number and ‘quality’ of the unions and the anonymity of the offspring come under the altruistic control of the philosophers, Socrates provides for a cleverly manipulated lottery regime so that the “inferior seeks to blame fate and not the rulers in every marriage”. As with the “Noble Lie”, there is also a utilitarian justification for the deception: “It’s likely that our rulers will have to use a throng of lies and deceptions for the benefit of the ruled. And, of course, we said that everything of this sort is useful as a form of remedy.” (459d). A final aspect that will continue to capture the imagination of the elites starting from the early modern period at the latest (see next chapter) is quantitative population control: “The number of the marriages we’ll leave to the rulers in order that they may most nearly preserve the same number of men, taking into consideration wars, diseases, and everything else of the sort; and thus, our city will, within the limits of the possible, become neither big nor little.” (459e) Raising children in the family is, as already mentioned, undesirable and in any case impossible under these circumstances. So, when children are born (and are allowed to live because of their ‘quality’), “they (will) be taken over by the officers established for this purpose”²³ (460b). So much for Plato’s plans for the life of the guardian class. Other peculiarities, such as a state-run breastfeeding service for the guardians’ babies (cf. 461a) and the ordered forced prostitution to reward war heroes (cf. 460b, 468b) hardly seem worth mentioning against this monstrous background.

Finally, the third class of philosopher-kings (to which Plato himself belongs, of course, just as Saint-Simon or Comte will later belong to the class of the scientists²⁴), due to their rationality and their exclusive access to the Forms—and thus, in the Platonic doctrine, to reality itself (cf. book VII)—ultimately has no less a task than saving the world. In practice, this means the vocation to manage society on the basis of rational planning. It goes without saying that an absolute claim to power is derived from this gigantic task:

„Unless,” I said, “the philosophers rule as kings [...] and political power and philosophy coincide in the same place, while the many natures now making their way to either apart from the other are by necessity excluded, there is no rest from ills for the cities, my dear Glaucon, nor I think for human

kind [...]. (473d)

It is this last idea in particular that crops up again and again in the political philosophy of the 20th and 21st centuries. In the following, this will be documented using selected examples.

5. Sustainability and population control

The elite ideology outlined in the previous sections and its inherent illiberal communication ethics can indeed be seen as a cause of the current society-wide epistemic crisis. However, as we saw in the last section, the management claim of the expert class is not limited to questions of the collective constitution of knowledge. Rather, the striving for control over shared knowledge can be understood as part of a larger need for control that also encompasses the physio-biological domain and ultimately life itself. In the following section, this will be documented as an example for the areas of population control and eugenics.

5.1 The spectre of overpopulation

As Plato's *Republic* made clear, the 'correct' population size also plays an important role in the utopian organization of society. The decisive modern impetus for this aspect of planning came from Thomas Malthus, an economist at the British East India Company. In 1798, Malthus argued for the first time that population figures always tend towards geometric growth, while agricultural resources tend towards arithmetic growth, which must lead to a foreseeable food crisis. He believed that social engineers should use these crises to scientifically manage the size of the 'human herd'. Clearly, Malthus was not concerned with reducing mortality in the population, but with maintaining control over the population by favoring the 'right' causes of death. In the 2nd edition of his *Essay On The Principle Of Population* (1803), Malthus explains that

marriages and births depend principally upon the deaths, and that there is no encouragement to early unions so powerful as a great mortality. To act consistently, therefore, we should facilitate, instead of foolishly and vainly endeavouring to impede, the operations of nature, in producing this mortality; and if we dread the too frequent visitation of the horrid form of famine, we should sedulously encourage the other forms of destruction which we compel nature to use. Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, we should encourage contrary habits. In our towns, we should make the streets narrower, crowd more people into the houses, and court the return of the plague. [...] But above all, we should reprobate specific remedies for ravaging diseases. [...] [If we were to fail] political evils would probably be added to physical. A people goaded by constant distress, and visited by frequent returns of famine, could not be kept down but by a cruel despotism. [emphasis added] (Malthus 2018 [1803], pp. 407-408)

Based on these assumptions, Malthus also made concrete proposals to politicians, which were later taken up by the British Empire:

I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring, that no child born from any marriage, taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate child born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance. [...] With regard to illegitimate children, after the proper notice had been given, they should on no account whatever be allowed to have any claim to parish assistance. [...] The infant is, comparatively speaking, of no value to the society, as others will immediately supply its place. (Ibid., pp. 423-425)

The implementation of Malthus' "science" of population control in the form of the Poor Laws of 1838 ensured that no state support beyond workhouses was provided for the mass of the impoverished population. Between 1845 and 1851, for example, the repeal of the Corn Laws and the Irish 'potato famine' led to one million Irish people starving to death while food was exported under military guard (IH01).

This Malthusian view of life, society and the freedom of the individual has strongly influenced broad currents in the history of political ideas, especially leading representatives of British socialism in the first half of the 20th century. Further evidence of this can be found in the following section on eugenics, where the British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell, a member of the Fabian Society, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950, is quoted as an example. In *The Effects Of Science On Society*, Russell writes on the subject of population control:

What is the inevitable result if the increase of population is not checked? There must be a very general lowering of the standard of life in what are now prosperous countries. [...] In the end there will be a uniformity of misery, and the Malthusian law will reign unchecked. (Russell 1968 [1953], p. 102)

For Russell, too, the solution to this problem lies in state control of population size:

The nations which at present increase rapidly should be encouraged to adopt the methods by which, in the West, the increase of population has been checked. Educational propaganda, with government help, could achieve this result in a generation. (Ibid., p. 103)

Since Russell prefers state-organized birth control as an effective means, he considers other methods, such as those suggested by Malthus, only as a second-best solution:

I do not pretend that birth control is the only way in which population can be kept from increasing. There are others, which, one must suppose, opponents of birth control would prefer. War, as I remarked a moment ago, has hitherto been disappointing in this respect, but perhaps bacteriological war may prove more effective. If a Black Death could be spread throughout the world once in every generation survivors could procreate freely without making the world too full. (Ibid.)

After the looming dangers of famine (Malthus) and wars of distribution (Russell) were initially used to legitimize population control, a new threat, this time global, came into play with the environmental movement of the late 1960s, which was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. Important publications of the time included books such as *The Limits to Growth* by the Club of Rome, *The Unfinished Agenda* by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and *The Population Bomb* by Paul Ehrlich, of which more than two million copies were already in circulation in its 19th edition by 1988. Ehrlich's *Population, Resources, Environment* (1970)²⁵ states:

[T]he size of the human population must be brought under rational control [...] The number of children that couples may have will not simply be the number of children they desire, but will take into account the children's future well-being, as well as social and physical environmental factors. [...] In order to achieve population control, extraordinary changes in human attitudes—attitudes produced by eons of biological and cultural evolution—will have to occur. These changes will inevitably trouble men's minds; death control goes with the grain, but birth control goes against it. Changing people's views of birth control and family size to coincide with the goal of a better future for all mankind is one of the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced. (Ehrlich 1972 [1970], p. 273)

The systematic change of attitudes in the population on the subject of reproduction and birth control envisaged here—a change which "will inevitably trouble men's minds"—cannot be

achieved through deliberate, democratically organized communication. It requires, as Russell notes, strategies of educational propaganda. Elements of such strategies include the escalation of the securitization rhetoric (cf. Broecker 2022) through the construction of ever new threat scenarios and the creation of enemy images based on them. In Ehrlich's version, humanity is still supposed to be the beneficiary of the defensive measures—at least in an abstract sense. But by 1991, one year before the “United Nations Conference on Environment and Development” in Rio de Janeiro under the leadership of Maurice Strong, a close friend of David Rockefeller, it had already mutated into an enemy, as King and Schneider, authors of the Club of Rome, write in *The First Global Revolution*:

In searching for a new enemy to unite us, we came up with the idea that pollution, the threat of global warming, water shortages, famine and the like would fit the bill. In their totality and in their interactions these phenomena do constitute a common threat which demands the solidarity²⁶ of all peoples. But in designating them as the enemy, we fall into the trap about which we have already warned, namely mistaking symptoms for causes. All these dangers are caused by human intervention and it is only through changed attitudes and behavior that they can be overcome. The real enemy, then, is humanity itself. [emphasis added] (King/Schneider 1991, p. 115)

While the factual basis of such hysterical propaganda seems downright absurd in most cases, it is still capable of creating an overarching highly anti-human discourse formation that is extremely effective in supporting the population management goals formulated by Malthus or Russell, including the idea of the ‘reduction of the herd’. An impressive example of this is provided by a book review of Bill McKibben's *The End Of Nature* in the Los Angeles Times by biologist David Graber, who remarkably is himself a father:

McKibben is a biocentrist, and so am I. We are not interested in the utility of a particular species, or free-flowing river, or ecosystem, to mankind. They have intrinsic value, more value—to me—than another human body, or a billion of them. Human happiness, and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet. I know social scientists who remind me that people are part of nature, but it isn't true. Somewhere along the line—at about a billion years ago, maybe half that—we quit the contract and became a cancer. We have become a plague upon ourselves and upon the Earth.²⁷ (LT01)

5.2 From eugenics to transhumanist delusion

If one sees the population of a city, a country or the planet not as a group of individual persons, endowed with human dignity and the inalienable right to self-determination and participation in society, but instead as a herd—as a kind of disposable mass over which the philosopher king, the intellectual, the expert, the party or the state has ultimate power—then the question of how to improve the quality of the herd arises in addition to the question of the correct population size. As we have seen, Plato in the conception of his just city already attached great importance to the problem of proper breeding. In the 19th century it is again Thomas Malthus' whose writings provide an important inspiration for another theorist of the British Empire: Charles Darwin. As he writes in his autobiography in 1876:

In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic enquiry, I happened to read for amusement Malthus on Population, and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long-continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new

species. Here, then, I had at last got a theory by which to work; (Quoted in: Barlow 1958, p. 120)

Darwin drew inspiration not only from Malthus, but also from Russell Wallace and above all from his cousin Francis Galton, who in turn coined the term “eugenics” in his 1883 work *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*. Galton also established the Eugenics Records Office at University College London in 1904 and wrote a eugenic utopian novella entitled *Kantsaywhere* in the last year of his life (cf. Gillham 2001, pp. 98–99). With reference to these two authors as the basis of his theory, Darwin wrote in 1871 in *The Descent of Man*:

With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. [...] Thus the weak members of civilised societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed [emphasis added]. (Darwin 1871, p. 168)

In *The Psychology of Socialism*, Gustav Le Bon provides an overview of the impact of eugenic ideas and the cited Darwinian figure of thought on the elite discourse towards the end of the 19th century from an affirmative perspective. One example of many is Edmond Schérer, theologian, literary critic and son of the Swiss banker Eugène Rodolphe Henri Schérer, who writes in *La démocratie et la France*:

Today we keep alive a multitude of creatures that nature has condemned, stunted children, weak, half-dead, and we consider it a great victory to prolong their days like this, and a great victory this very modern preoccupation of society. (Schérer 1884, p. 81–82)

Le Bon himself elaborates on this “preoccupation” as follows:

The danger of the stunted degenerates, alcoholics, epileptics, lunatics, etc., is that they multiply to excess and produce a mass of individuals too inferior to adapt themselves to civilization, and consequently become its inevitable enemies. (Le Bon, 2019 [1898], 282)

As already mentioned, the eugenic ideology based on Darwinian principles was first taken up and popularized by the intellectual establishment of British socialism. These included luminaries Beatrice and Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, Harold Laski, John Maynard Keynes, Aldous and Julian Huxley, Charles Galton Darwin and Bertrand Russell, among others. The eugenic ideas of the British intellectual elite thus had a considerable influence on social policy in the first half of the twentieth century and eugenic societies were founded in most Western countries. An admission by the English writer D. H. Lawrence shows just how far this presumption went; he formulated his vision in 1908 as follows:

If had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace, with a military band playing softly, and a Cinematograph working brightly; then I'd go out in the back streets and main streets and bring them in, all the sick, the halt, and the maimed; I would lead them gently, and they would smile me a weary thanks; and the band would softly bubble out the ‘Hallelujah Chorus’. (Quoted in Carey 1992, p. 12)

The motivation for such cruel ideas was the conviction that the future society to be built by enlightened elites would have to be freed from the ballast of the physically, mentally or morally inferior if it was to function efficiently. George Bernard Shaw agrees:

The only fundamental and possible socialism is the socialisation of the selective breeding of man. (JF01)

Shaw was a member of the Royal Society, the Eugenics Education Society and the Fabian Society; he was a Nobel Prize winner, an admirer of Stalin, of the early Mussolini and—up to 1935—of Hitler; he was also the author of the founding program of the British Labour Party. In addition to his fondness for human breeding, like Lawrence, he embraced the idea of euthanasia and he also favored the death chamber as an effective means for social improvement:

A part of eugenic politics would finally land us in an extensive use of the lethal chamber. A great many people would have to be put out of existence simply because it wastes other people's time to look after them. (TC01)

Julian Huxley, chairman of the London Zoological Society, first secretary-general of UNESCO and brother of Aldous, who in turn was a close friend of D. H. Lawrence and strongly influenced by him (cf. Vitoux 1974), also shares this view. He wrote in 1930:

What are we going to do? Every defective man, woman and child is a burden. Every defective is an extra body for the nation to feed and clothe, but produces little or nothing in return. (HE01)

In the context of this broad overview, the subsequent numerous stages of eugenic ideology can only be hinted at: (i) the US eugenics laws in 32 states (1907–1932), (ii) the resulting 70,000 forced sterilizations, (iii) the eugenic program of Margaret Sanger and the renamed 'American Eugenics Society' of 1922, (iv) the German 'Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses' of 1933, which was based on the American model, and (v) the horror of National Socialist 'Rassenhygiene'.

Two years after the war, Huxley, who was also an ardent admirer of Darwin (cf. Huxley et al. 1958), drafted a manifesto entitled *UNESCO: Its Purpose and its Philosophy*, in which the most important goals of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are set out. It had not escaped Huxley's attention that the horrors of the Nazi eugenics program had become a PR problem and he saw it as an important task for UNESCO to solve this problem:

To adjust the principle of democratic equality to the fact of biological inequality is a major task for the world, and one which will grow increasingly more urgent. [T]he inequality of level or standard is undesirable, and the [...] primary aim of eugenics should be the raising of the mean level of all desirable qualities. While there may be dispute over certain qualities, there can be none over a number of the most important, such as a healthy constitution, a high innate general intelligence, or a special aptitude such as that for mathematics or music. At the moment, it is probable that the indirect effect of civilisation is dysgenic instead of eugenic; and in any case it seems likely that the dead weight of genetic stupidity, physical weakness, mental instability, and disease-proneness, which already exist in the human species, will prove too great a burden for real progress to be achieved. Thus even though it is quite true that any radical eugenic policy will be for many years politically and psychologically impossible, it will be important for UNESCO to see that the eugenic problem is examined with the greatest care, and that the public mind is informed of the issues at stake so that much that now is unthinkable may at least become thinkable. (Huxley 1947, p. 21)

In order to give the ideology of eugenics a new, palatable image, he repackaged it as "evolutionary humanism". The thinly veiled aim of using this term was to shape the image of 'humane' eugenics by associating it with the human rights movements after the Second World War. In the 1950s, he defined eugenics as socially progressive by fitting it into the logic

of the new welfare states: it offered 'solutions' to poverty and disease at a time when the eradication of disease dominated the international agenda. Huxley also cleverly linked eugenics with a series of reform movements such as the popularization of birth control and the reform of abortion law (cf. Weindling 2012, p. 481).²⁸

In 1957, in *New Bottles for New Wine*, Huxley finally devised the concept of 'transhumanism' as a new label for an old project,²⁹ the quintessence of which he summarized as follows:

It is as if man had been suddenly appointed managing director of the biggest business of all, the business of evolution [...] he is in point of fact determining the future direction of evolution on this earth. That is his inescapable destiny, and the sooner he realizes it and starts believing in it, the better for all concerned. [...] We shall start from new premisses. For instance, [...] that quality of people, not mere quantity, is what we must aim at, and therefore that a concerted policy is required to prevent the present flood of population-increase from wrecking all our hopes for a better world; (Huxley 1957, pp. 13–17)

At the beginning of the new millennium, this adapted ideology of transhumanism, which presupposes ingenious and therefore god-like engineers of life, is omnipresent. Policy Horizons Canada, 2021, for example, explains which bio-digital convergence projects the Canadian government is pursuing and “how the convergence of digital technologies and biological systems is becoming a part of our future, and how it may impact our lives” (PH01). In *Forbes*, Sarwant Singh, Senior Partner of the WEF and member of the Global Agenda Council, reported in 2017 on *Transhumanism And The Future Of Humanity: 7 Ways The World Will Change By 2030*. He writes:

[O]ur Visionary Innovation Group looked at three fundamental pillars of humanity and how they will evolve over the coming 10–15 years: our bodies, our thought, and our behavior. After identifying the driving forces that will transform these fundamental pillars, we extracted key themes emerging from their convergence. Ultimately our goal was to determine the ways in which the changing nature of humanity and transhumanism would affect individuals, society, businesses, and government. (FB01)

And Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari, a permanent guest at table of the global elite in Davos, asks gleefully in 2018: “Will the future be human?”

We are probably one of the last generations of Homo sapiens. Within a century or two, earth will be dominated by entities that are more different from us than we are different from Neanderthals or from chimpanzees because in the coming generations we will learn how to engineer bodies and brains and minds. These will be the main products of the economy of the 21st century economy. (YH01)

The question of alternative plans for the future, parliamentary control or at least a democratic vote on all these developments does not seem to be on anyone's mind—the material constraints seem to be overwhelming. Against this backdrop, Fukuyama's warning about the consequences of this development seems all the more relevant:

Behind the notion of equality of rights is the conviction that we all possess a human essence whose significance is more important than the obvious differences in skin color, beauty and even intelligence. This essence, and the view that the individual therefore has inherent worth, is at the heart of political libertarianism. But changing this essence is at the heart of the transhumanist project. When we begin to transform ourselves into something superior, what rights will these improved creatures then claim and what rights will they possess in comparison to those left behind? (Fukuyama 2004, p. 42)

6. Propaganda and information control from the 20th century to the present

It is obvious that the elite's image of man and society documented up to this point is also reflected in their ideas about access to information and participation in political decisions. Here, too, it is worth taking a look at the recent history of ideas to contextualize the current crisis of the public sphere. As early as the first newspapers of the 17th century, which made news of 'matters of state and scholarship' accessible to the general public, there were calls for censorship and the interest of 'the common rabble' in political contexts was polemically combated. Balthasar Sinold gen. von Schütz, theologian and privy councillor to Count Christian August von Solms-Laubach, expressed this in an exemplary way in 1698 in *Das Courieuse Caffee-Haus zu Venedig*:

I must [...] confess [...] that the excessive lust for newspapers/ is such a harmful disease/ which brings much harm to the commonwealth through its abuse. [...] It is nothing more common/ than for the peasants to hold a collegium curiosum in the tavern about the postal newspapers/ and to have them spelled out by the most talented of their lot/ if one were to ask them afterwards/ what they understood from it/ it would consist of nothing else/ than having heard of Rome [...] or a few other places [...] so/ that it would have been far more advisable for them/ to have fought [...] with a wooden axe [...] on a good oak tree/ than to spoil their noble time with such things/ which extend far beyond the peaks of their thatched roofs. (CV01)

Similar notions can be found among the architects of the modern propaganda apparatus of the 20th century. Neither revolutions nor the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere or the formal constitution of democratically constituted states were able to change this attitude of the intellectual elite, which has apparently remained unchanged for thousands of years. Prominent members of the US Committee on Public Information (CPI), for example, which convinced the American population to enter the war in 1917³⁰ in a gigantic propaganda campaign, are remarkably open about this. Edward Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and uncle of Marc Randolph, the founder of Netflix, wrote in 1928 in *Propaganda*:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. [...] In almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons [...] who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind. (Bernays 1928, p. 9)

To legitimize this covert anti-democratic form of government, Walter Lippmann, also a member of the CPI and co-founder of the Council on Foreign Relations, draws attention to the dangers he assumes of an uncontrolled democratic process:

A false ideal of democracy can lead only to disillusionment and to meddling tyranny. If democracy cannot direct affairs, then a philosophy which expects it to direct them will encourage the people to attempt the impossible; [...] The public must be put in its place, so that it may exercise its own powers, but no less and perhaps even more, so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd. (Lippmann 1993 [1925], p. 145)

According to Lippmann, the targeted use of propaganda for the purpose of controlling public opinion fundamentally changes what is to be understood by 'democracy' in the future:

[P]ersuasion has become a self-conscious art and a regular organ of popular government. [T]he knowledge of how to create consent will alter every political calculation and modify every political premise. Under the impact of propaganda [...] the old constants of our thinking have become variables. It is no longer possible, for example, to believe in the original dogma of democracy; that the knowledge needed for the management of human affairs comes up spontaneously from the human heart. (Lippmann 1998 [1922], p. 248–249)

Fifteen years later, Harold Lasswell, who during World War II served as head of the Study of War Time Communications department in the Library of the American Congress and from 1955 on held the office of president of the American Political Science Association, wrote the entry on ‘Propaganda’ in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*:

Propaganda as a mere tool is no more moral or immoral than a pump handle. [It] is surely here to stay; the modern world is peculiarly dependent upon it for the coordination of atomized components in times of crisis and for the conduct of large scale “normal” operations. [...] The modern conception of social management is profoundly affected by the propagandist outlook. Concerted action for public ends depends upon a certain concentration of motives. The propagandist is accustomed to go directly to the springs of motivation and to utilize governmental patterns only incidentally as expedience dictates. [...] This regard for men in the mass rests upon no democratic dogmatism about men being the best judges of their own interests. The modern propagandist, like the modern psychologist, recognizes that men are often poor judges of their own interests [...] The older democratic doctrines allowed the nominal leader to escape his task of leadership by some procedural rigmarole: a “general will” was supposed to be “out there,” and the leader’s duty was to watch carefully for it to manifest itself through the machinery of balloting and legislative discussion. The focus of attention was shifted away from administration and reflection to hocus pocus [The propagandist, on the other hand,] believes that one of the most potent causes of social change is the problem attitude itself, which so often produces the goal symbols capable of guiding adjustment. This means that the propagandist is able and anxious to apply the methods of scientific observation and analysis to the processes of society [...]. (Lasswell 1937, pp. 525–527)

Following the war and the experiences with the propaganda apparatus of the National Socialists, this revised conception of democracy among the elite did not change. For example, the British historian Sir Lewis Namier, who had worked in the Ministry of Propaganda and Information and in the Political Intelligence Department of the British Foreign Office, made this assessment in his work *England in the Age of the American Revolution* in the second edition of 1961:

[W]hatever theories of ‘free will’ theologians and philosophers may develop with regard to the individual, there is no free will in the thinking and actions of the masses, any more than in the revolutions of the planets, in the migration of birds, and in the plunging of hordes of lemmings into the sea. (Namier 1961, pp. 40–41)

Countless statements of this kind continue to be made in the following years right up to the present day. A central figure in the context of the US government’s influence on social media platforms, Richard Stengel—employee of the State Department and author of *Information War* (2020)—can serve as another example. At a conference of the aforementioned Council on Foreign Relations on the topic of ‘Combating Disinformation and Fake News’ in May 2018, he said without a hint of irony:

[My] old job at the State Department was what people used to joke as the chief propagandist job. [...] Propaganda—I’m not against propaganda. Every country does it, and they have to do it to their own population [...]. (RS01)

As—among many other examples—the so-called ‘panic paper’ of the German Federal Ministry of Health, the publications of the SPI-B, the ‘Nudge Unit’ of the British government, from 2020 (cf. Kaltwasser 2022, pp.100–101) or the House Select Committee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government clearly show, this attitude consistently determines the communicative practice of democratic governments in Western societies.

Finally, Minister for Economic Development and Trade of Russia and Chairman of the Board of the Russian Sberbank, Herman Gref, who aptly frames the self-image of the technocratic elite outlined in this article, will have his say. At the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg in 2012, Gref, who is also an Agenda Contributor and member of the World Economic Forum’s Board of Trustees, made a statement during a panel discussion with the telling title *Wisdom of the Crowd or the Authoritarian Genius?* in response to a contribution by Tim Kelsey, who served as Chairman of the Australian Digital Health Agency until December 2020:

You suggest putting power—real power—in the hands of the people. If everyone could participate directly in social management, what would we manage? Once people understand the basics of their identity, it will be extremely difficult to control them, that is, to manipulate them. People don’t want to be manipulated when they have knowledge. [T]his insight [was] secret knowledge for three thousand years because people understood what it meant to take the veil from the eyes of millions of people and make them independent. How would you still be able to control them? Mass management requires an element of manipulation. How can you govern a society in which everyone has equal access to information, in which everyone has the opportunity to judge the information directly, to receive information that is not prepared by state-trained analysts, political scientists and giant machines that lower themselves onto people’s heads—mass media which are ‘independent’ but whose job is still to maintain [social] strata? [...] Your proposal scares me and I don’t think you understand what you are saying. (HG01)

This about sums it up.

7. Conclusion: Images of man and society in conflict

It is a core idea of deliberative democracy that universal access to information and the unrestricted exchange of arguments can lead to agreement and compromise, so that the solutions found meet the demands of reason in factual and moral terms. At the heart of this assumption is the legitimizing ideal of public deliberation on political issues. These principles are indispensable as the basis of a free society with human dignity as its most important value. The expertocratic society stands in sharp contrast to this ideal; as has been shown the concept dates back to antiquity. In the wake of the Scientific Revolution of the early modern era and the development of a materialistic philosophy, this idea evolved into the illiberal project of establishing a technocratically organized society in which the individual is merely part of a disposable mass. During the 20th century, this management ideology became the common basis of various competing collectivist social concepts such as socialism, fascism, national socialism and also managerial (nominally: liberal) democracies. Their common core consists of the idea that grievances in a society can only be identified by an intellectually superior rational elite and eliminated through bureaucratized or—as today—algorithmic planning. In order for the envisaged utopian social system to function, the freedom of the individual must be curtailed, if not extinguished. The unmistakable totalitarian core common to these designs—also since antiquity—stands in stark contrast to the principles of a truly

liberal, democratically organized society, in which the freedom of the individual and the principle of self-government are protected by law.

The aim of this article was to outline the broad stream of experto- and technocratic ideology as a totalitarian historical constant. In addition, the influence of this strand of thinking on the elites of contemporary democratic societies has been illustrated. In an analysis of the foundations of the current societal crisis, these factors must, in my opinion, be understood and taken into account as primary obstacles to the democratization of the public sphere and the protection of the dignity of the individual.

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- 1 Patterson (2021) interprets this phenomenon as the advent of a new ‘dark age’: “Innumerable ideas which are assumed to be rigorous are often embarrassingly wrong and utilize concepts that an intelligent teenager could recognize as dubious. [...] Whether it’s the Copenhagen interpretation, Cantor’s diagonal argument, or mod-ern medical practices, the story looks the same: shockingly bad ideas become orthodoxy, and once estab-lished, the social and psychological costs of questioning the orthodoxy are sufficiently high to dissuade most people from re-examination.”
 - 2 The *Twelve Articles* were impressive already for the fact that they were printed in an edition of 25,000—a gi-gantic number at the time—and distributed throughout the Holy Roman Empire.
 - 3 For a discussion of further evidence supporting this interpretation, see Bostridge 1997, pp. 38–40.
 - 4 Notwithstanding the well-known restrictions: Women, slaves and metics did not have the same political rights as Athenian men. These restrictions are certainly relevant in terms of emancipation and human rights, but the core of the democratic idea and its fundamental opposition to an expertocratic social architecture is nevertheless clearly recognizable.
 - 5 The Federal Agency for Civic Education [Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung] points out in its introduc-tion to the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany, that “[d]emocracy [...] is kept alive above all by the citizens, they are the basis of state power. In elections and referendums, through social and political engagement, and through their interest in the issues under discussion, they lay the foundation for a function-ing state.” (BP02)
 - 6 Cf. for example SDG 12.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (“Material footprint per capita”) or the principles of the Technocracy Inc. movement: “Technocracy finds that the production and dis-tributions of physical wealth on a global scale for the use of all citizens can be accomplished only by an accounting of technology—a holarchical style of governance of efficiency and function; A technate.” (TI01) Brzezinski (1970) calls this the “technetronic era”.
 - 7 Sherrard (2007 [1976], p. 73) aptly characterizes the consequences of the negation of metaphysical or spiritual knowledge and the resulting development of scientific humanism when he writes: “Nothing belongs any longer to the sphere of the gods or to the sphere of the supernatural. There is nothing and nowhere which must not be investigated and if possible exploited. Neither the ocean bed nor the stars can escape. Nor—so long as they can be shown to be efficient in the sense of being the best and most effective means for achiev-ing a certain measurable purpose—can these systematic invasions be stopped or repudiated. If efficient tech-nical means for achieving something exist or can be produced, then these means must be put into action irrespective of what this thing is or of what the cost may be in human terms.”
 - 8 In response to the question “What Is Technocracy?”, the magazine *The Technocrat* (1937), published by Technocracy Inc., writes: “Technocracy is the science of social engineering, the scientific operation of the en-tire social mechanism to produce and distribute goods and services to the entire

population of this continent. For the first time in human history, it will be done as a scientific, technical engineering problem.” (TT01)

- ⁹ Refraining from such considerations is in any case part of the core of materialist thought, as Lenin writes in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*: “Materialism, in full agreement with natural science, takes matter as primary and regards consciousness, thought, sensation as secondary” (1972 [1908], 38).
- ¹⁰ Cf. Pearce 2015, p. 446
- ¹¹ The transitory nature of this conferred social power anticipates to a certain extent the later Marxist idea of the magical dissolution of the state in the final stage of communism. Engels writes about this in 1878 in the An-ti-Dühring (3rd section, “Theoretical”): “The first act in which the state really comes forward as the repre-sentative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished,’ it withers away.” Famously, this withering away has never been observed.
- ¹² In relation to the ideas discussed by Saint-Simon, MacIver (1922, p. 241) observes: „Much of his writing on this point has what we would now call a true Marxian ring about it and it becomes obvious where Marx found some, at least, of his inspiration. Further, we could almost say that the idea of a government of experts specially concerned with economic questions could be considered as a forerunner of the present Soviet system such as is aimed at in Russia, with its crude beginnings in the Paris Commune [...].“
- ¹³ Cf. the American *Declaration of Independence* of 1776: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” (DI01) Referring directly to this, Lincoln admonished in his *Gettysburg Address* of 1863: “[G]overnment of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”
- ¹⁴ On the other hand, such an elitist understanding of liberalism fits perfectly with the current disdain for all manifestations of so-called ‘populism’.
- ¹⁵ This principle, suggestively intertwined with its anchoring in rational thinking, was popularized in the Star Trek film *The Wrath of Khan* (1982), among others, by the character of Spock, who sacrifices himself for the crew of the Enterprise in an iconic scene with the words: “Logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few”, to which Captain Kirk replies: “Or the one.” To be fair, it must be mentioned that in the subsequent film *The Search for Spock* (1984), this principle is reversed in the context of Spock’s rescue. Nevertheless, the reversal is consistently characterized as irrational (“Humans are sometimes illogical”).
- ¹⁶ In the preface to the 1989 edition, with regard to his investigation of National Socialist ideology Lifton remarks: “I observed that a certain kind of totalist ideology—a biologized view of society or, as I called it, a ‘biomedical vision’—together with the institutions that accompany it, can move ordinary people to commit murderous acts.”
- ¹⁷ In the introduction to the 1946 edition of *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals* Benda (1978 [1946], pp. 14–15) describes this aversion of the elites to the ‘granting’ of freedoms: “Moreover, it cannot be denied that democracy, precisely by virtue of its octroi of individual freedom, implies a moment of disorder. ‘If in a state,’ wrote Montesquieu, ‘you hear no noise of strife, you may be sure that there is no liberty in it.’ [...] In contrast, the ‘orderly state’, precisely because it is concerned with ‘order’, grants

no rights to individuals—at most to those of a class. It can imagine nothing other than conditions in which some command and others obey.”

- ¹⁸ This raises the question of what should happen to those who have neither mental nor physical strength.
- ¹⁹ *Malinformation* refers to true but ‘potentially harmful’ information (for a recent example of censorship of *malinformation*, see Michael Shellenberger’s testimony on government-led censorship of articles on vaccine adverse events before the *House Select Committee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government* (MS01, 44)), see also Broecker (2024).
- ²⁰ Participation in the *World Economic Forum* meeting in Davos in 2023 cost USD \$19,000 per ticket, but requires membership (USD \$52,000 per year). Participation in meetings behind closed doors requires Industry Associate status (USD \$137,000 per week, YF01). Participation in Bilderberg conferences cannot be bought at all; even for journalists, it requires a personal invitation and compliance with the Chatham House rules. (CH01)
- ²¹ Popper therefore analyzes the Platonic state project, among other things, as an attempt to turn away from the newly emerged open (democratic) society and as an attempt to restore a closed community in which status and role in society are fixed (cf. Popper 1957, pp. 343–344); for a discussion of the significance of these Platonic ideas for the management of corporate culture, see Shaw (2021).
- ²² Here we also receive the obvious answer to the question posed above about what should happen to those who have neither intellectual nor physical strength to contribute to the community: they will be left to die.
- ²³ Historically, the education of children by the state is a remarkably stable idea, cf. for example the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, II.
- ²⁴ The claim to leadership that arises from this class affiliation is embodied today by figures such as NIAID Director Anthony Fauci, when he says of himself: “It’s easy to criticize me, but they’re really criticizing science because I represent science. That’s dangerous.” (PC01)
- ²⁵ Among the authors of a later edition from 1978, now under the new title *Ecoscience*, is John Holdren, advisor for science and technology under US President Barack Obama from 2009 to 2017.
- ²⁶ The emerging reinterpretation of the concept of ‘solidarity’, which played an important role as a tool of behavioral economics in the context of the coronavirus crisis, is already visible here.
- ²⁷ The whole corruption of deterministic thinking (or in this case: blatant Gnostic mysticism) is interestingly reflected in a reply to Graber’s review in one of the following issues, which states: “If we are a cancer, as Graber says, it is a natural cancer, one that was programmed into Earth’s genetic system from the beginning and is now being triggered—5 billion cells and escalating. We aren’t responsible. The Creator is. We’re just following orders, just executing the game plan.”
- ²⁸ Another short piece of recent history can illustrate how widespread eugenic ideas are in democratically governed states: By 1976, around 63,000 women in social democratic Sweden had been sterilized by the state, which had set up a special Institute for Racial Hygiene. In Norway it was 40,000, in Denmark 6,000. Teenagers as young as 15 were sterilized, some without the consent of their parents, for such banal shortcomings as short-sightedness or because they allegedly had no judgment or “no discernible concept of ethics” (cf. JF01).
- ²⁹ The practice of relabeling for the purpose of camouflage is also evident in the academic arm of the eugenics movement, for example when the journal *The Eugenics Review* (1908–1968) from the Galton

Institute reset its issue numbering in 1969 and henceforth appeared under the name *Journal of Biosocial Science* published by the prestigious Cambridge University Press.

³⁰ US President Wilson was elected in 1914 on a campaign promise not to involve the USA in the First World War. The American public was vehemently opposed to intervention at this time.

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