

Jean-Jacques Raynal, Histoire des grands courants de la pensée politique, Hachette Supérieure, Paris, 2006, 2nd edition, 160 pp.

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ABSTRACT: This book is the study of the evolution of political thought currents from ancient Greece to the so-called Third Way. Raynal, who was a lecturer in the Law Faculty of the University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour, focuses on Thomism, Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, Fascism, Nazism, Technobureaucracy, Ultraliberalism, Chauvinism, Colonial Imperialism, Social Democracy, Labourism, etc. It does not deal with the history of political ideas or doctrines but with ideological and political currents. Raynal's approach is different from that of other very well known handbooks in France, such as Philippe Nemo's or the one directed by Jean Touchard. The latter still being the best one and proof of that is the fact that it is still being republished in France and it has been translated into Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

KEY WORDS: Thomas Hobbes, Jean Bodin, Edmund Burke, Harold J. Laski, Françoise Mitterrand, Carl Schmitt, Charles de Gaulle, Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism, Leftism.

The author, Jean-Jacques Raynal, lectures in the History of Political Ideas in the Law Faculty of the French University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour. The History of Political Ideas is a subject with a long tradition in France's legal studies, which is usually divided into two parts and taught in two different academic years. On the one hand, the History of Political Ideas until 1789 and, on the other, the History of Political Ideas from the Revolution until the end of the XXth century. Indeed, it is quite an ordeal to write a one-hundred-and-sixty-page handbook which covers from Pericles to the Third Way, put forth by Anthony Giddens in 1998, but we find it appropriate since it is extremely concrete and, therefore, may become a useful and clear tool for the History of Political Ideas student.

St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Bodin, Jacques Bossuet, Edmund Burke, Louis de Bonald, Auguste Comte, Hippolyte Taine, Ernest Renan are some of the authors who parade through the first pages of this book.

Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels's Elitist theories along with James Burham and Max Weber's Technocracy and Techno-bureaucracy, as well as Zbigniew Brzezinski's Technotronic revolution and David Easton's Cybernetic formulations applied to Politics are clearly and elegantly put forward.

Raynal cannot help but pay attention to Joseph de Maistre, who is a renown and significant figure in the areas of social thought, philosophy of Law, and history of political ideas, being one of the greatest fighters against the godphobia inherited from the XVIIIth century.

Philosophy and the Enlightenment, in what is called the assault on Absolutism, are also included with Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire, Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He, then, reviews the crisis of Liberalism, Léon Bourgeois's Radicalism, John Maynard Keynes's Neo-Liberalism, and Raymond Aron, Karl Popper and the ultra-liberal Friedrich August von Hayek and Milton Friedman's criticism to Totalitarianism and the Welfare State.

The essentials of French and German nationalisms during the XIXth and XXth centuries, Charles de Gaulle's Nationalism and the grandeur of France are outlined. There are other issues succinctly pointed out by Raynal, such as Benito Mussolini's Fascist Corporatism and George Sorel's influence on his thought, Fascist Voluntarism, the Italian empire ideally trying to rebuild the Roman Empire through its colonial conquests, the rejection of Socialism, and the assessment of intermediate bodies which led to the

constitution of the Chamber of Fasci and Corporations, in addition to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

When Nazism is tackled, to which quite a few pages are dedicated (pp. 65-68) if we consider the brevity of the book and the fact that it covers more than two thousand years of history, attention is focused on Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), as it could be expected, on the attractiveness of his ideology in times of crisis in Germany, the principles of Nazism: one people, one State, one head (Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer), Racism, the Führerprinzip and the Totalitarian State, but Dr. Goebbels is forgotten and Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), who was a professor in the University of Berlin and made the most successful legal and political achievements within Nazism, is not mentioned. Schmitt was arrested by the Russians, in April 1945, and by the Americans, in September 1946, being sent to a concentration camp. He was interrogated several times, more specifically, by Robert Kempner on three occasions in April 1947, and the Nazi Carl Schmitt avoided every single question with amazing cynicism. When he was asked by Kempner: «Did you seek to achieve a new international legal order in accordance with Hitlerian ideas?», Schmitt answered: «Not in accordance with Hitlerian ideas and not sought to achieve but diagnosed». Schmitt tried to justify that he had fallen from grace within the Nazi regime in 1936, but there were some aspects which remained unclear such as the lectures delivered by him after 1936 in Budapest, Bucharest, Salamanca, Barcelona, Coimbra, the German Institute in Paris (which was a very significant centre for Nazi espionage, where he had been invited by Dr. Epting), etc. Schmitt described himself as an intellectual adventurer and considered a myth had been created around him: «The Dr. Carl Schmitt myth is pure myth. Carl Schmitt is quite a peculiar individual, not just a professor; he is also a composite of various other individuals. I observed this when I was interrogated by Dr. Flechteim». After avoiding Robert Kempner's impertinent questions with great intellectual ability, at a certain point of the interview, he stated: «I wanted to give the term National Socialism my own meaning», because Schmitt kept assuring that in 1936 had given up the National Socialist sin, a fact which, according to many of his publications after this date and his theories regarding the Jewish people, remains completely unclear. The Nazi Schmitt's most pristine and totalitarian political thought has been unveiled with the help of many publications from France during the last twenty years.

This handbook on the history of political thought currents pays particular attention to Islamic Totalitarian Theocracy models, which have never been included in classical French handbooks on the history of political ideas. Raynal writes about the Taliban ideology in Afghanistan, the terrorist movements linked to al-Qaida, the Iranian revolution model, and about the idea that «temporal power should darken before spiritual power» (p. 31).

As far as Socialism is concerned, Raynal points out that François Mitterrand was a Third Way, but which does not coincide at all with Anthony Giddens's idea of a Third Way between right and left, as a Social and Democratic centre. On the contrary, the French Socialism which made Mitterrand the President of the Vth French Republic in 1981 was «the symbol of an alternative» of society as a whole, where there were ministers who belonged to the French Communist Party in the Government of the Republic and a significant increase in nationalization and a democratization of access to culture. It is also different from British Labour or from Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) and the London School of Economics and Political Science founders' approach to Socialism.

Obviously, Jean-Jacques Raynal's handbook is in no way comparable to the classical book on the history of political ideas, directed and coordinated by Jean Touchard, which has been translated into Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

And no-one could say it comes close to the history of the evolution of political ideas contained, above all, in the second volume of Philippe Nemo's book. Even Jean-Luc Chabot's work has a depth which cannot be found in Raynal's.

Other summary books such as Dimitri Georges Lavroff's have been widely accepted but other classical works on the subject, as is the case of Georges Lescuyer and Marcel Prélot's book, have ennobled French research on the history of political ideas. Nevertheless, Raynal is the author of a suggestive book with a certainly original subject distribution. [Recibido el 6 de febrero de 2011].