the Russian party. However it is not solely because of this, but rather because of the extraordinary practical success of Lenin's party organization, that Leninism has become a feature of so many communist movements.

levellers. A radical political *faction among artisans and apprentices in mid-seventeenth-century England, who played some part in the formation of Cromwell's army, and who attempted, during the Putney debates of October 1647, to elicit democratic, *egalitarian policies in the Parliamentarians. They advocated universal suffrage for 'freeborn Englishmen', as a guarantee of government by consent; though it seems that the class of freeborn Englishmen did not include servants or the unemployed. Levellers were as much concerned by the vast disproportions of wealth between the lower and upper middle class, as by the rights of Englishmen and the undemocratic nature of existing political representation. Nevertheless they began a continuing movement in British politics, which was to flow into the labour movement in the nineteenth century, and lead to the distinctive modern forms of socialism in the UK, respecting both liberty and property, but wishing for a constitution which would combine democratic representation with equalized redistribution.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (b. 1908). French social anthropologist. *See* *structuralism.

liberal education. A label, now going out of fashion, for the kind of *education which arose out of the Roman 'liberal arts' (aimed to train the 'orator' or man with the *virtues necessary for public life), and which was regarded as the appropriate education for a *gentleman. The form of liberal education has always been more precisely defined than its content: it consists in attendance at a reputable school and a reputable university, and the dilution of study with recreation of an improving kind, such as music, debating, wide reading, and competitive sport. The content of liberal education has usually been thought to derive from the humanities, on the understanding that the gentleman is a more useful member of his class the more useless his education. However in the US the phrase 'liberal education' is still widely used to describe any form of academic education as distinct from professional training: education designed for the citizen rather than the expert.

The idea has traditionally been that uselessness is an essential precondition of *culture, which is essential both to *rhetoric and to social grace, which are in turn essential to good government. Hence uselessness in education is the greatest utility in public life. None of those conceptions is now very fashionable.

liberal individualism. A term used in the history of ideas in order to denote the combination of *liberal doctrine with a metaphysical grounding in *individualism, on the assumption that the two qualify each other in ways that are both intellectually and historically significant. The outlook of liberal individualism is often ascribed to *Locke and his successors, although some (e.g. C. B. Macpherson: *Possessive Individualism*, 1962) also ascribe it to *Hobbes. It tends to be associated, by those who espouse some form of *historical materialism, with the rise of capitalism, and the market economy, it being supposed that an emphasis on individual rights and freedoms is the functional correlative of the relations embodied in the wage contract.

liberalism. A loose term used to mean a body of modern political doctrine, some parts of which have been given systematic exposition, and other parts of which have been left inchoate or tacit by its adherents. The history of liberalism is contemporaneous with the history of *limited government, i.e. with the successful attempts of those subject to government to curtail its powers, and to secure for themselves *charters, *statutes, *institutions, and forms of *representation, that will guarantee the individual's *rights against the invasions of the *sovereign power. There are recognizably liberal

thoughts expressed in Magna Carta, 1215, although the modern doctrine is usually thought of as a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century creation, partly because of the political theory then produced in support of it, partly because of the rapid changes in political institutions which hastened its advance, and partly because the underlying *individualism received confirmation in so many aspects of economic, social and political life. Principal exponents of aspects of liberalism are *Spinoza, *Locke, *Montesquieu, *Kant, *Bentham, *J. S. Mill, *Jefferson and *Madison, together with many other significant figures of the *Enlightenment and subsequently. It is almost impossible to reduce liberalism to a single theoretical position, although the following ideas are fundamental to most forms of it:

(i) Belief in the supreme value of the individual, his freedom and his rights.

(ii) Individualism, in its metaphysical variant (*see also* *liberal individualism).

(iii) Belief that the individual has *natural rights, which exist independently of government, and which ought to be protected by and against government.

(iv) Recognition of the supreme value of freedom, usually glossed as the ability to secure that to which one has a right, together with the view that government must be so limited as to grant freedom to every citizen; perhaps even that government is justifiable only to the extent that it maximizes freedom, or to the extent that it protects the free individual from invasions of his rights.

All the above doctrines go together, and form a moral and metaphysical unity. In addition, the following propositions may sometimes be advanced in the name of liberalism (because of the supposed theoretical connection with the above four):

(v) An anthropocentric, rather than theological, view of human affairs, regarding human potential and achievement as the principal locus of *value (*see* *humanism).

(vi) *Universalism: i.e. a belief that rights and duties are universal, and stem from a human condition that transcends place and time. People should learn to renounce their particular local attachments so as to view things from the standpoint of an impartial *legislator.

(vii) Advocacy of *toleration in matters of *morality and *religion.

Liberalism expresses the political theory of limited government, and conveys the political sentiments of the *modern man, who sees himself as detached from *tradition, *custom, *religion and *prejudice, and deposited in the world with no guidance beyond that which his own reason can provide. Hence, if there is a reasoned account to be offered of fundamental human liberties and rights, the individual can judge the *legitimacy of political institutions by the extent of their respect for them, and extend his allegiance accordingly. The fundamental feature of all liberal theories of political obligation is that of overt or tacit consent, and the doctrine of the social contract is the prime example of a liberal theory of government. To make the underlying philosophy coherent it is necessary to say much about both the nature of the human individual, and the nature of freedom. One philosophy which brings these two subjects together is that of Kant, whose theory of the autonomy of the rational agent provides a grounding for all of the propositions given above, with the possible exception of the last. But this last – the advocacy of tolerance – is perhaps the least tenable, liberalism being itself a moral view, and often expressed with a bigoted aversion towards its opponents that is nothing if not intolerant.

One of the important modern problems for liberalism is that of the *free market. It was standardly assumed (or argued) by early liberals that the right of private property, and the freedom of exchange, are ineliminable postulates of individual freedom. If so, a free market seems to be the inevitable result of liberal ideals. (Thus liberalism has often been denounced as 'bourgeois ideology', precisely because it justifies the existence of capitalist production relations.) However, growing acceptance among liberals

of the socialist arguments against accumulation, and of the argument that private property, if left to its normal course, provides freedom for those who possess it only at the cost of unfreedom for those who do not, has led some liberals to renounce their allegiance to the free market doctrines and to attempt to reconcile their beliefs with redistribution and egalitarian *social justice. This has led to the now fairly orthodox *left-liberal position, in which the major theoretical conflicts generated by this transformation are fought out.

The major effort of liberal political theory, apart from that new effort of conciliation between ostensibly conflicting positions, is devoted to the problem of what the English jurist Henry de Bracton (d. 1268) called the 'constitution of liberty': i.e. the framework of political institutions which make limited government possible, and which effectively preserve the individual and his rights from any invasion from above. (The antiquity of liberal ideas in English law is well illustrated by the quotation.)

liberal parties. The political heirs of the *Whigs in England came to refer to themselves in the 1830s as 'liberals', following an established continental usage, and in recognition of a similarity of outlook with those called liberal in France. Throughout the nineteenth century liberal parties were formed in Europe, and the UK 'National Liberal Federation' was formed in 1877, providing the main centre of opposition to the *Conservative Party. The party went into a decline, partly as a result of the ascendancy of the *Labour Party, and despite periodic revivals has not in recent years been a dominant political force, except on those occasions when an electorate wishes to express an attachment to *centre policies, having identified the two major parties as too far to the *left or to the *right of some convenient point of safety.

The US has no major party that calls itself liberal, but its constitution provides a kind of background of liberal principles (in particular the declared protection of *human and *civil rights), which has imposed a uniformity of outlook on the two major parties, compelling them to accept or to seem to accept many of the fundamental tenets of liberalism.

The politics of modern liberal parties tend to be open and corrigible. In so far as anything general can be said about them, it is that they have stood mostly for *free trade, *capitalist development, pacific attitudes in international relations, political *reform within the framework of enduring *institutions, extension of the *franchise, the support for *civil rights, *human rights, and *minority rights, and, in recent years, a qualified support for the *mixed economy. They have also shown support for *decentralization, and *community politics, and, at times, *democratization of industry and commerce.

liberation. The act of freeing, e.g. a *slave from his bondage, an individual from his *conscience, a nation from its conquerors, an oppressed class from its rulers. Modern usages concentrate on two contrasting kinds of movement: those designed to liberate the human individual from supposedly irrational and oppressive taboos and conventions; and those designed to overthrow supposedly oppressive regimes. (Roughly these may be contrasted as movements against *repression and movements against *oppression.) To the first kind belong women's liberation (although radical *feminists diagnose the condition of women in such a way that their movement is more naturally seen as of the second kind), 'gay liberation' and so on; to the second kind belong the 'wars of national liberation' undertaken in the name of a nation, or a people (although sometimes in the name of an oppressed working class or peasantry). It is an important doctrine of *Marxism-Leninism that such wars are justified, even when conducted by an outside party, provided that they have the liberation of the proletariat as their aim. This can be seen as a new addition to the doctrines of *just war; alternatively it might be seen as an extension of those doctrines (endorsed in existing international law) which permit intervention in the affairs of one state so as to liberate another that is in its thrall. The aim in the war of liberation is to intervene in the affairs of a state so as to liberate the *civil society that lies in its bondage. Since a society, unlike a state, is not a legal *person, and has no rights in international law, the doctrine by implication throws aside the question of legality, and applies the idea of justice independently. This provides one of the many illustrations of the way in which *international socialism is, ultimately, committed to an idea of *natural justice.

libertarianism. 1. The form of liberalism which believes in freeing people not merely from the constraints of traditional political institutions, but also from the inner constraints imposed by their mistaken attribution of power to ineffectual things. The active libertarian is engaged in a process of *liberation, and wages war on all institutions through which man's vision of the world is narrowed (some would say focused) – among them the institutions of *religion, and the *family, and the customs of social, especially sexual conformity. Libertarianism is not so much a doctrine as an attitude, condemned by some as mistaking licence for *liberty, praised by others as the new temper of *humanism.

2. In economics, a radical form of the theory of **laissez-faire*, which believes that economic activity must be actively liberated from the bondage of needless political constraints in order to achieve true prosperity.

3. Often used as a name for the metaphysical theory that *determinism must be false, on account of the fact of human *freedom.

liberty. While 'liberty' (Latin root) is synonymous with 'freedom' (Saxon root), it has legal and historical associations that have caused it to be discussed in different contexts, and to accrue to itself different connotations. A theory of liberty is a theory of *political* *freedom; but it helps to clarify matters if the following historical applications of the idea are first attended to:

(i) Liberty and liberties. The 'liberties of the subject' under UK law are not guaranteed by any particular statute, but are implied in a general principle (itself an immemorial *custom) that anyone may do what he likes, so long as no law prevents him, and that the attempt to prevent him, in the absence of a law, is either a civil or a criminal wrong, itself a valid cause of legal action. Periodic attempts to embody the 'liberties of the subject' in a statute (from Magna Carta, 1215, to the Act of Settlement 1701) have provided a repertoire of *rights, some of which entered the *Bill of Rights attached to the US constitution; they have also helped to give legal cogency to the view that *natural rights are respected in UK law. (*See also* *freedoms.)

(ii) Liberty and licence. An *ad hoc* distinction is often made (borrowing terms put to contentious use by *Locke) between liberty and licence, the first being a necessary condition of human fulfilment, the second a sufficient condition of human degeneracy. Intuitively the distinction is easy to grasp: it is an infringement of my liberty to prevent me from walking out of my house, but only the removal of licence to prevent me from then abusing, assaulting or murdering my neighbour. But the theory of this distinction remains one of the deepest intellectual preoccupations of liberalism. Both liberty and licence consist in extension of permission (or removal of constraint), but the intuition is that sometimes this extension is right, sometimes wrong: if, however, that is *all* that can be said, the invocation of liberty becomes vacuous, either as the justification of a particular legal code, or as the assertion of an enduring human *value. The most plausible step in a theory of the distinction is to say that liberty is the permission to do what you have a *right to do, while licence is the permission to do what someone (usually someone else) has a right that you do not do. This shifts the discussion to the theory of rights, and is one ground for thinking that the idea of free-

Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1982).