
To define populism

UNDER THIS TITLE A CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT THE LONDON School of Economics and Political Science between 19 and 21 May 1967.¹

The verbatim report of the conference, of which only a few copies have been made, can be consulted at the Library, London School of Economics and Political Science. The papers presented to the conference, with three further studies, will be published under the title *Populism* by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, and Macmillan, New York. The Humanitarian Trust, London, generously helped with a grant towards the preparation of the proceedings for publication.

The present précis cannot of course follow all the twists and turns of the discussion as it took place. On the contrary it attempts to cut across the categories into which the four meetings divided the subject: ideological aspects, political aspects, historical aspects and general definition. MacRae, Schapiro and Ionescu, who opened the conference stressed from the beginning that this would probably

¹ The participants were: J. Allcock (Bradford), Prof. S. L. Andreski (Reading), Sir Isaiah Berlin (Oxford, *chairman of session*), Dr Conrad Brandt (Oxford), Dr Peter Calvert (Southampton), Nigel Clive (Foreign Office), Maurice Cranston (LSE), F. W. Deakin (Oxford, *chairman of session*), Prof. R. P. Dore (LSE), Geoffrey Engholm (Sussex), E. Gallo (Oxford), Prof. Ernest Gellner (LSE, *chairman of session*), Prof. Julius Gould (Nottingham), George Hall (Foreign Office), C. A. M. Hennessy (Warwick), Prof. Richard Hofstadter (Columbia), Ghița Ionescu (LSE, *rapporteur*), James Joll (Oxford), Ellen de Kadt (LSE), Emmanuel de Kadt (LSE), Dr Werner Klatt, Dr John Keep (School of Slavonic and East European Studies), Francis Lambert (Institute of Latin American Studies), Dr E. Lampert (Keele), Shirley Letwin, Dr L. J. Macfarlane (Oxford), Prof. Donald MacRae (LSE, *chairman of session*), Dr I. de Madariaga (Sussex), Prof. G. F. Mancini (Bologna), Kenneth Minogue (LSE), Prof. W. H. Morris-Jones (Institute of Commonwealth Studies), Dr John Saul (Dar-es-Salaam), Prof. Leonard Schapiro (LSE, *chairman of session*), Prof. Hugh Seton-Watson (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, *chairman of session*), T. Shanin (Sheffield), Geoffrey Shillinglaw (School of Oriental and African Studies), Dr Zoltan Szabo, Prof. Alain Touraine (Paris); Prof. F. Venturi (Torino), Dr Andrzej Walicki (Warsaw), Derek Waller (School of Oriental and African Studies), Prof. Peter Wiles (LSE), Prof. Peter Worsley (Manchester, *chairman of session*).

prove to be an order difficult to keep. There would be a lot of overlapping and in any case it was the object of the conference to see whether a general, comprehensive, definition of populism, as a concept, could be found, or whether the final conclusion would be drawn that the different populisms with their different specific meanings and definitions, should be left unconnected.

Looking at the abundant material produced by the discussion it seemed to the *rapporteur* that perhaps the best synoptical order in which to present it would be:

I. *Types of populism*. The main points made during the discussion on each of the five main types of populism, regardless of when, in the discussion, they were made, are grouped under this heading.

II. *Essential aspects*. Most of the speakers concentrated on singling out those aspects of each type of populism which differentiated that particular type from others, or on those features which were common to all forms of populism. These contributions too have been grouped under one heading regardless of the moment when they arose in discussion.

III. *Towards a definition*. The final section summarizes the contributions, mostly made during the final meeting of the conference, aiming at a final extrapolation and conceptualization. Some attempts at finding a general definition followed these positive summings-up. At the end the conference agreed that perhaps the best definition of populism, as a general concept, ought to be a very short one, but which should at least contain, if not reconcile, the specific features of all the historical and geographic forms of populism.

I. TYPES OF POPULISM

RUSSIAN POPULISM

Andrzej Walicki had tried to present in his paper those ideological aspects of the classical Russian populism which might be of particular importance from a comparative point of view. He believed that there was no definition of Russian populism as a movement. 'Populist' defined not the movement as such but only some aspects of the ideology of the movement. The various populist movements had different social and especially political attitudes. The best definition of populism as an ideology was given by Lenin. The populists according to him were the ideologists of democracy who, having

realized the tragic contradictions inherent in capitalist development, made a big step forward by posing new problems for the attention of society; they combined in their ideology an anti-feudal bourgeois democratism with a petty-bourgeois conservative reaction against bourgeois progress. Three complementary points should however be made to Lenin's definition. First Russian populism was not only a reaction to the development of capitalism inside Russia but also to capitalism outside Russia, falling within the larger problem of Russia and the West. It was one of the first attempts at a theoretical explanation of the specific features of economic backwardness. Secondly, Russian populism was not an immediate ideological expression of the class standpoint of the small producers, it was the expression of the standpoint of the intelligentsia. Finally, Russian populism was not only a Russian reaction to Western capitalism but also and perhaps first of all a Russian response to Western socialism.

(He remarked incidentally that had he been F. Venturi he would have called *Roots of Revolution* 'A history of the revolutionary populist movement in Russia'.)

In Walicki's view populism was not limited to the question of how to avoid and prevent the development of capitalism. This was one phase of the populist movement, not the whole story; it was in fact the first phase which ended with the industrialization of the 1890s. After that came the second phase and following the victory of the socialist revolution the third phase. His remarks were limited to the first phase of populism, 19th-century populism, which could be divided into 'early populism' before the 1870s and 'classical populism' of the 1870s and 1880s.

F. Venturi explained that his book was concerned with the history of a movement, not with the history of the ideas of a movement, nor with the social situation which gave its basis to that movement. He was not sure that Lenin's definition was the most apt because he did not believe that the weapons which are necessary to fight against a movement provide in general the best way to understand it. He thought that Lenin's definition of populism was a perfect instrument for fighting against populism rather than for understanding it. This was why he could not accept it. Lenin was imbued with the great Russian tradition but he could not have a historical or sociological or philosophical point of view agreeing with populism. He knew perfectly well that populism was his own great rival. His views were instruments of political struggle and not a way to understand the facts.

One important aspect of Russian populism was that it constituted a political way of life and a religion, in the sense that one must not only believe in populism, but live as a populist. This attitude had been created by Herzen and here lay the immense difference between populism and the democratic or liberal movement of the 19th century. The Italians who fought for independence and liberty during the Risorgimento fought for their ideas and sometimes died for them; but they did not believe that their whole life had to be modelled on a political creed. That was a new belief which came out of Russia, especially out of Herzen. Hence he did not believe that it was possible to divide classical populism into two parts, with Herzen on one side and classical populism on the other side. They had a moral and ethical attitude in common, and that was the important thing.

Isaiab Berlin questioned Venturi's remarks on Herzen as the man who had infected Russian populists with the essential sense of total commitment, which was indeed a hallmark of Russian populists. 'Total commitment' was a Russian invention altogether. He agreed that Russian populism was not so much a social and economic programme, except in the 1880s and 1890s; at the beginning it was concerned with social salvation and with the need to integrate oneself with the lives of the peasants; it was concerned with the debt owing to the peasants, and the need to repay that debt. This was a specific Russian motif which one did not find among populists elsewhere. But that did not stem from Herzen; it stemmed from Belinsky, more than anyone else. Although not a populist he was the severe moral teacher who introduced this element of stern total commitment in which a man is not allowed to divide himself into various types of activity.

Hugh Seton-Watson stressed that populist movements started with the intellectuals rather than with the people, although the people were drawn in. The concept of 'intelligentsia' was relevant here, and particularly relevant to Russia. He would be inclined to try to limit, but perhaps that was impossible, the use of the word 'intelligentsia' to the particular phenomenon of the position of the educated person of the 18th, 19th or 20th centuries, belonging to the modern intellectual elite of the day, who found himself in a society which was overwhelmingly traditional in background and which was being rapidly and artificially modernized from above. This situation was a special one. The pattern was that the government, ruler, or autocrat

decided to modernize and started it artificially and rapidly. One of the first things which he was bound to do was to create artificially a small modern intellectual elite. This artificially created elite then found itself in the middle of a different kind of society, and all sorts of frustrations and troubles resulted from that. This was the classical Russian example not so much after Peter the Great as in the 19th century – and it had found its classical expression in the Russian movement ‘To the people’. The whole notion of going ‘to the people’ was central and specific to Russia – because the intelligentsia, having been artificially created, was particularly aware of its artificial position and this provided it with an extra incentive to worship, idolize and feel the pangs of conscience towards the people.

John Keep congratulated Walicki for successfully dispelling the myth that there was a hard and fast line of division and conflict between populists, on the one hand, and Marxists on the other. He had rightly pointed out their mutual influence. But two supplementary points might be made; one on the chronological periodization of Russian populism and the other on its content. The period between 1900 and 1918 was particularly important in the history of populist thought in Russia, and represented the classical period of populism. Coming to the content he stressed the individualistic, libertarian and, above all, the moral aspect of populism which was perhaps the key to our understanding of the phenomenon. There was a strong libertarian aspect as well as a socialist element in populism even if they were in contradiction.

T. Shanin thought that Walicki had left out a major body of Russian populist thought which underlined the social and economic ideology of the populist social theorists. The social research developed by so-called statisticians of the *Zemstva* (the regional local authorities) had a clear conceptual content. That was highly significant and possibly the most important contribution of populist thought to the ideologies and images of contemporary Russia.

Dr Walicki had referred to the impact of Marxism on populist thought; the influence was mutual, however. There was not just one important Marxist scholar who analysed the Russian peasantry in the 19th century, namely, Lenin, but at least three – Lenin, Gurevich and Rumyantsev. Without the additional dimension of social analysis the scheme of understanding would be regrettably limited.

Leonard Schapiro recalled that all movements or ideologies should be seen in the context of their own particular history. When we spoke of the Russian narodniks which the dictionaries translated as populists, we must remember that all these ideas, all these emotions which grew up in Russia in the 19th century grew up on the soil of Orthodoxy.

Then there was the question of the realities of populist politics. All politics consisted to some extent in establishing some kind of relationship between the leader of a party or of a movement and those whom he claimed to lead. He personally took populism, with John Keep, right into the revolution and even post revolution; 1917 and 1918 must be taken into account because that was when the thing came to the test. That was when the Chernovs and the Kerenskys (Kerensky had a populist background) and a lot of the so-called Cadet members of the provisional government, who were in effect populists in their tradition, had to act. And when they had to act what came to the fore was precisely the anti-elitist tradition of leadership, that on no account must you attempt to impose the doctrine on the people, that the people must learn to speak with their own voice and that you must merely give expression to it – that the people would ultimately always be right. Populism was essentially inconsistent with the kind of realities of politics and of leadership which in the Russian case Lenin's ideas represented.

NORTH AMERICAN POPULISMS

Richard Hofstadter had shown in his paper that the character of American populism derived in great part from the American tradition of entrepreneurial radicalism. The United States had had in place of a peasantry a class of cash conscious commercial farmers. True wealth, the primitive agrarians believed, came from land and labour. The debt of later populism to the Jacksonian heritage was considerable. The history of the populist mind as it expressed itself in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s was increasingly the history of a concern with exploitation through the monetary system, though there were also concerns of considerable importance centring on the control of the railways and the disposal of the public lands. At bottom the populists found a struggle between a basically innocent folk – the vast mass of the working people either in town or countryside – and the sinister special interests, especially the financial interests. The populist conviction that the forces of the enemy were concen-

trated at a single sinister centre led to the belief that it should in time be possible to mount an effective assault on the money power. The 1890s marked the high tide of populism as an independent partisan force. The populist style of mind persisted, having a marked impact on American progressivism in the Roosevelt-Wilson era and even leaving some traces in the New Deal. Some manifestations of its influence would still be found on the American left and perhaps on the right wing as well.

There were some additional characteristics worth mentioning. One of these was the absence in the American case of a prominent theorist, a person who had some stature in the history of international sociology or political theory. This is perhaps significant and not altogether untypical of the course of American thought. It was very hard to think of a great American theorist of populism. Perhaps the most outstanding who might be referred to by some students of populism was Henry Demarest Lloyd who was an interesting man, part muckraker and part socialist and eclectic thinker. Others, like Charles Beard, were affected by the populist ideology after the populist movement was for all practical purposes organized and as a third party was already dead.

Another point to notice was the vague character of the idealized folk in the American pattern. When the populists talked about the virtues of the people they meant not merely people close to the soil, but the urban working-class, the lower middle-class merchants, in fact, almost anybody outside of a very narrowly defined set of elite figures. The anathemized elite in American populist mythology was pretty much restricted to a small group – bankers, monopolists, credit merchants, railroaders, speculators and their ‘hangers-on’, and the leaders of the old political parties who were alleged to have sold out the people’s interest. There was the assumption that the great common national interest embraced almost the entire population in a kind of vast homogeneous mass as opposed to this tiny and sinister counter-elite.

One of the interesting latent assumptions of American populism was the idea that the basic mechanisms of a market society were quite adequate to achieve remedies for the ills which they were trying to redress. The prevailing assumption was that if you could rectify the monetary and credit systems of the country other reforms would follow hard upon that. Populism in the United States took a totally pragmatic view of the use of the state. It was statist in the sense that there were no inhibitions among populist thinkers about the use of

the government, whether on a state or national level, to bring about certain kinds of reforms, and in this respect the inheritance of populism was quite strong. It ran on into the era of the New Deal.

Whether there was a kind of generic affiliation between the early agrarian movements and, on the one hand, McCarthyism and on the other the New Left was a moot point.

Peter Wiles mentioned another purely individualist populism apart from the United States variety, namely Social Credit in Alberta. It fulfilled all his criteria for a genuine populist movement. It was inflationary; it was biblical – it originated in a school of bible knowledge; it looked inward upon itself; it attributed virtue to the simple people; it was anti-establishment, or it was so when it first originated. There were therefore two perfect cases of individualist populism, both from the North American continent.

What of the American Grange movement – which one would surely want to call populist?

Richard Hofstadter recalled that the Grange grew out of an attempt to remedy the fundamentally rootless and non-communitarian character of American rural life. It was started, not by farmers, but by Washington bureaucrats who travelled round the country and persuaded a number of farmers to organize. Its purpose in the first instance was social. It came to be regarded as a political movement because when it developed in the older Middle West it was drawn into the battle with the railways. Then the Grange seemed to have been supplanted by the farmer alliances of the late 1880s and the 1890s. It survived as a set of social clubs mainly in the East.

Peter Worsley thought that there were different categories of North American populisms. He had lived in Saskatchewan under a populist regime. They were theorists, but they were not intellectuals, and they were certainly not taking it to the people. They were drawn largely from the ranks of preachers, methodists and so on.

His fundamental difference with Hofstadter was that the latter probably over-weighted the money aspect of North American populism – the speculative, entrepreneurial, private individualistic, market oriented, capitalistic, small scale economy. That was what it was and what it remained in most cases. Social Credit in Alberta and probably most of the other populisms contrasted vividly with his prime experience of the Saskatchewan movement, which was

physically embodied today, and had been for a couple of decades, in co-operatives. When the movement came to power as a government it eventually became more socialist. Its supporters were not individualists of the private entrepreneurial kind that the populists were in the United States, therefore there was more than one North American populism; or his brand was populism and Hofstadter's was not.

The history of the settlement of the West varied. It was not simply the history of small homesteaders chopping down the bush with their axes. It was a history of the Canadian Pacific Railways and of government support (deliberately provided to keep the Americans out of the West).

The Saskatchewan CCF became more specifically socialist and was one of the cardinal building blocks, with the unions, in the contemporary New Democratic Party which was the leading socialist opposition party in Canada.

LATIN AMERICAN POPULISMS

Alain Touraine said that it was necessary to draw a distinction between two situations and two types of social movements in Latin America – on the one hand there were the so-called populist movements, or *populismo* which were essentially based on urban populations and, on the other, movements based on rural populations, be they the Mexican revolution or some aspects of the Bolivian revolution or part of the Peruvian popular movement. In the latter cases there seemed to be a direct opposition between the vast mass of the peasants, mainly Indians, in the countries mentioned (which have large Indian populations) and the *oligarquia* which was represented by a very traditional elite. In such cases one could have revolutions or pre-revolutionary movements, but it was precisely in those countries where there was already a great deal of movement from the countryside to the cities that a different kind of movement appeared. There were thus now very distinct movements organized around new urban masses.

The political process in Latin American countries was formed by the interaction of three factors. One was the mass movement embracing the new workers. The other two factors were the reactions of either of the two political centres of the middle class: the *oligarquia* or the intelligentsia, to the mass movement of the new workers. On the one side there was a tendency to make an alliance with the

new masses; on the other side there was a tendency to manipulate the new urban masses, not for the sake of their own interests, but in order to restore a certain order. Generally speaking when the alliance with the new masses was more in evidence, it was the intelligentsia who played the main role. When the main problem was the restoration of political order the military took the lead.

George Hall talked about one particular party, *Acción Popular*, the government party in Peru. It was a new party and called itself a populist party. *Belaunde*, the President, was its founder. He embodied what the party stood for. If you were to ask him what its programme was, he would reply: 'The conquest of Peru by the Peruvians.' By this he meant national integration. This implied not only physical integration (the question of communication was uppermost in his mind) but also the question of the return to the glories of the past: the answer to Peru's problems was a return to the great traditions of the Incas and the pre-Inca Indian civilizations of the country. The principal institution which *Belaunde* would wish to see developed was the so-called 'minka', the archaic voluntary communal labour. He called this 'Popular Co-operation'. This was a Peruvian third way, a purely Peruvian solution for a Peruvian situation.

Acción Popular was not anti-foreign, but it was anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist, whether that colonialism or imperialism came from capitalism or communism. *Belaunde* saw a direct link between himself and the people, a mystical charismatic link. The people of the highlands in Peru looked upon him as a strange man from the moon who said things which meant something to them and they believed in him. It worked.

One of the first things that the party had done was to nationalize the Central Bank, and action was also taken against other banking institutions. Under previous governments, the accounts of the central government were held by private banks who used to make a lot of money in this way. This nationalization had been claimed to be the popularization of national financing.

The party came into power on the backs of the military. But *Belaunde* personally was anti-military. He had had difficulties with the military and, on the whole, the military institutions had no part in his general philosophy or ideology.

E. Gallo said that it would be meaningless to label Peronism nowadays as a populist movement. The Peronist movement was a typical

working-class party overwhelmingly based on the support of industrial trade unions. He regarded this situation as valid since the early 1950s. Thus there was only a rather short period of time during which the populist label could be applied (1945-50).

The grounds on which the populist hypothesis had been based were the following: (1) the importance of rural newcomers in the making of the movement; (2) the support given to Perón by groups other than the industrial working classes, i.e., the Army, the Church and a small sector of industrial entrepreneurs, and (3) the nationalistic (pre-industrialist) and authoritarian bias of the Peronist ideology.

C. A. M. Hennessy concentrated mainly on Castroism and the Cuban revolution. Built into Latin American movements, and particularly Cuba, was the myth of the incorruptibility of youth. The part played by the students of Havana University was absolutely crucial to an understanding of this movement. Castro continually went into the university in order to renew contacts with the student body. In a sense, he recharged his batteries by contact with the younger generation.

Secondly, in Castroism there was a very strong ruralist element. But it was all very curious in a Cuban context, because Cuba was one of the most highly urbanized countries in Latin America: some thing like 60 per cent of Cuba was urbanized and yet, of course, the economy was entirely dependent on the export of agricultural crops. Castro had quite deliberately set out to try and break down the psychological barriers which had made the professional classes, the middle classes, extremely reluctant to take up any sort of career in agronomy.

There were lots of aspects to this ruralism and, of course, the guerrilla mystique was merely one of them. This raised one of the very complicated questions in Castroism; the way in which it had become snarled up in the cold war and the way in which the old Cuban Communist Party had tried to impose its own categories on the movement. The traditional communist parties in Latin America were urban; they had shown next to no interest in the rural population and as a result there had arisen a direct confrontation between the traditional communist parties and the Castroist groups.

Another point which could follow here, after mention of the communists, was Castro's extreme reluctance to institutionalize the revolution. This seemed to raise another general point in the analysis of populism. It may be that Castro wanted to avoid the example of

Mexico, but certainly, if one looked at the very curious history of the Cuban Communist Party – the new Communist Party (which was formed five years ago), not the old one – it still had not summoned a national congress; and it was very unclear where the actual focus of power lay outside Castro himself.

Arpad von Lazar had sent a report on *Communitarianism in Latin America* but could not attend the conference. He thought that the idea of communitarianism was a specific and controversial cornerstone of christian democratic ideology in Chile. Ideologists like Julio Silva Solar and Jacques Chonchon thought that capitalism was wrong and inhuman but so was communism. Communitarianism as a third alternative proposed the values of the early Christian societal structure. The accumulation of goods and property had no justification. For the sake of public good society had the right to appropriate private property.

Emmanuel de Kadt said that the characteristics which had been put forward as belonging to populist movements were present among the existing small radical Catholic protest groups in Latin America. The movements in question were elitist movements and in no sense originated from the masses. They romanticized the ordinary and they romanticized the people. Thus in Brazil, during the period of Goulart, one saw the rise of the Movement of Popular Culture (Movimento de Cultura Popular), set up in the first instance by Marxists, but later joined – and developed in a non-Marxist direction – by radical Catholic groups and individuals who gave these efforts a clearly populist twist. It led to a tremendous romanticization of the masses, of the people, of the culture of the people. Furthermore, speaking again in general terms, there was, among these radical Catholic groups in Latin America, a strong stress on direct participation by the people, finding concrete expression in co-operativism and theoretical expression in communitarianism.

AFRICAN POPULISMS

Geoffrey Engholm had submitted, in collaboration with *Ali Mazrui* (who could not attend the conference), a paper on Rousseau and intellectualized populism in Africa.

Empirical populism in Africa had taken a variety of forms, ranging from messianic movements and separatist popular churches in South

Africa and Zambia to general rural discontent in, say, the Congo. But it was a relationship of ideas, the populist elements of African political thought, that they wanted to examine.

Many of the leaders of thought in Africa were also decision-makers in government. Their ideas were sometimes in danger of being under-estimated simply because they were not themselves putting them into practice. An African leader might propound populist ideas and yet pursue different policies. African ideologies could have important populist components even when African policies were not always in accord with them.

It was not merely with the masses that populism concerned itself. It also made assumptions about the worth of the individual, attaching a special value to him. This was not to be confused with the kind of glorification of the individual normally associated with liberalism. What the populist ethic tended to glorify was the *ordinary* individual. Indeed populism was often a romanticization of the ordinary. The concept of *individuality* was more intimately connected with the notion of *distinctiveness* than with that of ordinariness.

The concept of 'the Noble Savage' was to constitute an intellectual tradition which, for the black man, culminated in *Négritude*. The supremacy of the 'general will' in Rousseau was a denial of the validity of pluralistic interests. The wills of competing interest groups could only encumber the discovery of the composite will.

This thesis was one which, in various ways, had been embraced by a number of African leaders. Before independence the idea of a general will was translated into a concept of popular sovereignty to be embodied in a united movement against colonial rule.

The anti-pluralistic implications of the general will took the form of an opposition both to 'tribalism' and to the formation of competing social classes. Here again the myth of a previous age of innocence was often invoked. Certain social characteristics of the past, notably communalism and co-operation, were mobilized to strengthen a new anti-pluralistic ethos.

The whole concept of the Third World signified perhaps the emergence of a new form of populism – global populism. Both the Havana conference of radical leftists and the Geneva conference of governmental representatives of all ideological persuasions were symptoms of a new movement just emerging. It was perhaps the bare beginning of global protest of the indigent against the affluence of the developed world.

For African intellectuals, the concept of the Third World was an

attempt to transcend their old nationalistic bonds of colour and emphasize instead the bonds of shared poverty. Perhaps that is what Senghor meant by 'Afro-Asianism has been superseded, for this form of solidarity should be extended to Latin America and to the *tiers monde* in general.'

John Saul said that one of the aspects of African literature on populism had been a tendency to lump two things together and to talk about movements as populist when in fact what was being discussed was the ideas of a relatively small group of people within the leadership of a specific political movement. He proposed to look at some of those writers who had used the concept of populism as expressing the will of the people. One of the dangers of a term like populism was that it tended to oversimplify and make particular movements more monolithic than they often were. This had been particularly true in Africa and increasingly so, for example, in the study of the nationalist movements.

Various groups, for a variety of reasons, had come together in a movement of nationalism which was articulated as a popular movement at the highest level by the leadership. But in terms of the groups which were involved at the local level it often had very different ends in view than some sort of national popular movement. In fact, the interplay between leadership and mass within a movement of this sort was very important and the terminology of populism had tended to get in the way of uncovering the full complexity of a specific situation.

Frantz Fanon was a thinker of Africa. At least, he was a French West Indian but he was very much working in the African context of Africa. As somebody who seemed to be almost the archetype of a populist thinker Frantz Fanon came as near as anyone who had been to Africa in terms of the formulation of a philosophy. At least in one respect he represented a reaction to the elite and a call on the people in some sense to rise against the colonial powers in the first instance and in the second instance against the elite that was now in control.

One of the important things was the necessity of situating any discussion of populism in the context of a process of social change. In Africa, particularly at the level of the leadership, there was a changing awareness of what was necessary to implement the values which they held. Often a leadership which had this sense of responsibility and solidarity with the people might find that because a process of change was taking place, their backward looking view was

increasingly less related to goals which they would like to implement. There was constant tension between a desire to protect the people against capitalistic incursion, and at the same time the desire to hold on to the values they had. Yet they were aware that the situation was changing, that their relationship to social development was a changing one. This awareness existed in a number of African populist movements, particularly in President Nyerere's thinking, which was changing very rapidly in Tanzania. He thought in terms of the defence of the *status quo* and yet he was continually aware that changes were taking place in his country to which he had somehow to respond.

Finally, African co-operatives were at present a sort of substitute for a system intended to prevent the development of modes of production which led to class differentiation. He was not sure that preventing class differentiation was a possibility. At one point populism must have meant the defence of the virtues of social solidarity, but co-operatives, in terms of this same defence were at best an ambiguous instrument, because differentiation did take place within them. He had seen in Africa, at least in Tanzania, which was a relatively undifferentiated and economically unrevolutionized society, a process by which co-operatives had been taken over by the richer farmers or peasants; and the co-operatives had become, to some extent at least, instruments for further differentiation on their behalf.

He wanted to stress the importance of the subsistence sector when speaking about class differentiations in Africa. One of the most important factors in African agriculture was the subsistence sector. In Africa one did not have large peasants and small peasants in quite the same way as perhaps existed in other societies. There were large peasants, small peasants, market orientated peasants and subsistence peasants. What was happening was not necessarily a class polarization in Africa in terms of any forms of class consciousness. A great number of peasants stayed in the subsistence sector.

Dealing with the problem of class struggle in Africa, which obviously had some bearing on the question of populism, *S. L. Andreski* thought that the explanation of why there was no clear-cut class struggle in Africa was quite simple. It was connected with the problem of the relationship between populism and nationalism, and the fact that the struggle for wealth and other privileges was developing along ethnic divisions. He did not think that subsistence

agriculture accounted for this. The subsistence farmer had plenty of grounds for resentment against the wielders of authority and against the way they were treated by the tax collectors, but the successful individuals who got power lifted up along with them a big crowd of their class brothers who got a share in the spoils, and remained very loyal to their luckier kinsmen. Consequently a clear-cut class struggle could not develop.

ASIAN POPULISMS

W. H. Morris-Jones observed that the conference seemed to have looked at some ideologies and movements as if there were a series of *national* populisms, thus excluding the possibility that different kinds of populist movements could exist in one country at the same time. Yet this was the case in many Asian countries. There were some populist movements of thought embracing total world views, putting the case for the transformation of the nature of society, etc., and there were others which were quite local protest movements against a particular kind of outside domination which could not be coped with or faced. There were little local populisms inside a country, running concurrently with and in no way connected with larger populist movements.

The main populist strain of thought in India at the moment was that associated with Jayaprakash Narayan and his writings, which were mainly influential, if at all, in Northern India. These were certainly wide-ranging radical ideas. But some of the sentiments to be found in the writings of Tamil separatists in the south seemed to have strong populist strains quite unconnected with Narayan and more limited in scope.

Populist thought was more than an idealization of village life. It was a demand that village life should be everything that it patently was not. Populist thinkers asked for a communitarian society in the most sharply divided of all conceivable societies. They saw it also as opposed to a Western atomically individualized society. They had chosen the one clearly losing battle they could have chosen either against the way in which a village society was traditionally divided, or against the way in which that village society was changing. It was actually changing in the direction of ruthless individual definition. They propounded the notion of a participating, as opposed to a representative, democracy in a situation where the clearest feature was profound apathy. This connection between populism and frustration was of an intrinsic kind.

There was also another contradiction, that between praise of the unsophisticated and simultaneously a claim that what was being put forward was a scientific and rational programme, because it conformed to something which was latent at least in human nature. This certainly happened in the Asian situation, because many populists were ex-Marxists and they were not yet willing to abandon the prestige which attached to the scientific and rational claim. The main claim which they made was that their thought was scientific and that what they were putting forward was a solution not to a particular problem but to a total world problem and that out of their thought could come the salvation not only of India but of the world.

Derek Waller and *Geoffrey Shillinglaw* had submitted a report on Maoism as populism, considering first its possible origins in Mao-Tse-Tung's thinking, and the character of the state form as he envisaged it; and the populist and anti-populist elements in Maoism, as revealed in his attitude towards the peasantry. They believed that Mao did derive from Li Ta-chao, prior to 1925, a kind of populism in the form of a rather vague nationalist idea of 'a union of the popular masses'. But the *hsia-fang* or 'sending-down' of cadres and intellectuals to the rural areas was not thought of as a movement 'to the people'. The physical labour involved in it was meant to be of benefit to the cadres and intellectuals.

It could be argued that Mao exhibited a populist trait in that although he did not seek after the simple agrarian socialism of some of the Russian populists, he did anticipate that China could by-pass the capitalist stage of development by substituting a 'new democracy' for the bourgeois-democratic stage of Marxist historical development. But in Mao's view post-revolutionary dictatorship was only exercised against those who did not 'belong to the ranks of the people' - that is those who were not included in the four-class bloc of workers, peasants, petty and national bourgeoisie. Mao's concept of the state form was 'popular' rather than populist.

Mao realized that the peasantry had the will to rise and rectify local abuses of political and economic power, even if this involved destroying the local power structure; but he also fully realized the whole social, economic and psychological 'backwardness' and conservatism of the peasants. In the early period after the CCP came to power there were some traits which could be described as broadly populist policies: the slogan of 'the land to the tiller', the recognition of the fact that an economically differentiated society would (within

limits) continue to develop in rural China. But in 1958, at the moment of communization, Maoism manifested its most anti-populist characteristics. The industrial oriented thinking, the emphasis on the needs of production as opposed to the needs of the producer, the stress on the authority of the organization as opposed to the personalized authority of the peasant community led to the extolling of the militarization of the peasantry.

John Saul thought that the dichotomy enunciated by the previous speakers: that Maoism was a compound of a view of the virtue of the people at the same time as a device for production, and that finally the desire for production led to a rather harder line in the countryside, left out an important third dimension. This was the awareness in China of the very fact of social change. The emergence of class differences was the social change which was being particularly articulated in China. The third dimension of Maoism was that somehow by identifying with the *status quo* you could not really be saying anything about social realities because what was happening was that social reality was changing.

Conrad Brandt thought that there was undeniably a populist streak running through Mao Tse-Tung's thinking which occasionally coloured it to the point of making it seem a-Marxist. But for everyone of Mao's 'populist' boasts about more than six hundred million Chinese standing solidly united, there were many more admissions, Marxist in spirit, of struggle behind that unity. Though not a class struggle, properly so called, it was its direct descendant: a struggle of the 'people' against 'anti-people' who wished to return to capitalism. The will of the people, as expressed by Mao, remained in this sense proletarian; but it was not *Narodnaya Volya* any more than the Red Guards were populists.

L. J. Macfarlane reacted very strongly against the idea of treating Maoism as populism. Mao's attitude to the peasantry went beyond that taken by Lenin, but it was based on the attitude taken by Lenin. It was a question of tactics. He did not think that the ideas of a new democracy, of a bourgeois democratic revolution in Maoism could be interpreted in terms of populism. They were only a transitional stage to socialism. Everyone was clearly to be under the firm control of the CCP, and no one was more clear in this than Mao himself.

Derek Waller stressed that the answer to the question whether Maoism was a form of populism was a qualified 'no', but a no nevertheless. He would like now to add to the paper they had submitted the point that China would fairly clearly fall into the category of states which were on the periphery of economic power. This had been made explicit in Lin Piao's 1965 statement on the global situation – that China, Latin America, Asia and Africa formed part of the world's countryside on the periphery of the economic power of the cities of the world: Western Europe and the United States. Generalizing from their own historical experience the Chinese communists saw the future of the world as one in which the countryside surrounded the cities.

Hugh Seton-Watson thought that to regard Mao Tse-tung's communism as populist was absolutely impermissible. Here was the case of a tremendously efficient technique for mobilizing the people, but the aim was not to worship the people in any abstract sense. There was no idolization of the simple virtues of the people inherent in Maoism, even though one might find some traces of it in its terminology.

II. ESSENTIAL ASPECTS

Most of the contributions included in this sub-section, attempt to define, within severe limitations of space, those specific aspects of populism which could provide the basis for a conceptual examination.

S. L. Andreski thought that six meanings had been given to the word populism by the different authors. One was that populism was any kind of movement aiming at the redistribution of wealth, regardless of how this was done. The second that it must be some movement of protest or social claims on the part of the lower classes. A third meaning was that it was a movement of protest of the rural classes in particular. A fourth meaning was that it was peasantist in character, according to the traditional pattern. The fifth that it aimed at the preservation of a rural way of life, not just at an improvement in the peasants' status. The sixth meaning was that it was some kind of idolization of the traditional peasant way of life.

The other general point was the problem of the discrepancy between words and deeds. Such discrepancy was never absent but it

varied enormously. Some people took their ideologies seriously while others did not; under certain circumstances ideologies made a serious impact, in others they just elicited lip service. Clearly there was some correspondence between the content of an ideology and the structure of society, but one would have to try to ascertain the factors which determine its nature and intensity.

Hugh Seton-Watson remarked that one element without which there could be no populism was idolization and worship of the people. The people were the repository of certain basic virtues which had become lost or perverted. This purity was contrasted with the vices of the elite, the particular kind of vices held against the latter depending on the situation.

This idolization was not the same either as flattery of the people or demagoguery, nor was it the same as the process of mobilizing the people. Communists and other mass movements, perhaps fascists, extol the people but only in order to mobilize the masses.

The difference between Marxism and populism was obvious. Marxism and all rationalistic political ideologies had as their aim scientific criteria measured by intellectual categories and not just a worship of the people. Idolization of the people might be a sort of deviation from that element in Christianity which stressed the humble and meek at all costs. In such a conception squalor and misery were virtuous in themselves. Maybe this went back through Christianity to an earlier Judaic tradition.

He thought that the expression 'people' should be defined more precisely. Although they were taken to mean the same thing, the words: people, *narod*, *peuple* and *Volk* meant quite different things. Finally he stressed again that the ideologies of populism originated with intellectuals, from the 'intelligentsia'.

Peter Worsley showed in his paper that in his book *The Third World* he had proposed the following four key components of populist ideologies:

(1) The socio-economic classes are not the crucial entities they are in developed countries. Class struggle is irrelevant.

(2) The major antagonisms are between the society as a whole and the outside world, ex-colonial or any powers. Racial sovereignty and continental identity are emphasized.

(3) The party is the agency of liberation and the party-state the agency of development. However great stress is placed upon co-

operation and communitarian forms of modernization, and mixed economy is accepted.

(4) A philosophy is sometimes elaborated which links party, nation village-life and self-activity into an ideological complex.

Populism was a development ideology *par excellence*. It was an ideology of transition from 'rural idiocy' to modernized society. Yet despite this stress upon development, populist governments have never achieved, or certainly sustained the mass mobilization, even less the modernization they dreamed of. The fault was in the international distribution of economic and political power. The market was the key constraint.

However, despite these general failures in practice the social development programme was worthy of attention insofar as populism was an activist ideology which seriously attempted to involve people in running their own lives. This marked it off from purely authoritarian types of social control in *stationary* societies, as well as from authoritarian styles of mobilization for development. Populism was an ideology for small rural people, insofar as it rarely seemed to penetrate very far in society. Unlike other ideologies it failed to become an ideology of the masses. It seemed to have a habit of being a *révolution manquée*, a transitional phase to other kinds of institutionalized revolutionism. It was more often potential than realized.

Alain Touraine remarked that a characteristic of populism was its numerous internal contradictions, such as for instance these two essentials: Populism was a movement or an ideology defending some traditional values and at the same time directly oriented towards problems of economic and social change. It was both backward and forward looking. Secondly, as *Seton-Watson* had already shown, it was about peasants but not by the peasants.

There were three inter-related elements in the social situation which produced populism. First there was a social category which was half-way engaged in a process of economic change, a category which was defined not by economic circumstances or as an interest group, but was in a process of collective social mobility, be it upward or downward. Secondly, in such situations the economic power seemed always to be alien to the society with which it was directly concerned; the most obvious example was a colonial situation in which economic power belonged to foreigners but an analogous situation could exist in a relatively traditional dual society where the power of the oligarchy could appear to be a foreign power for the

rest of the society. As a result in such societies there was a great discrepancy between economic power and political organization. Some centres of influence such as intellectuals, politicians, and military people who did not constitute a social class, intervened in the middle. The third element was the manipulative role of some elements of the middle class, whose position was always ambiguous, who made an alliance with the masses against the oligarchy and at the same time tried to maintain or restore a kind of social equilibrium and political integration.

Andrzej Walicki thought that the basic elements were as follows: Populism was the socialism which emerged in backward peasant countries facing the problems of modernization. It must be a peasant oriented socialism, usually idealizing the peasants. It was expressed and organized by the intelligentsia. It represented a curious blend of the tendency towards modernization with an idealization of a great past. A further distinction needed to be made between populism and peasantism. Populism was a socialist phase of peasantism. Like socialism, populism was a global ideology, not merely a political or economic programme. There was nothing like this in simple peasantism, which did not involve socialist dreams.

Donald MacRae in his paper on *Populism as an ideology* stressed that populism was primitivist, but in a special way. The good time which was to be restored was that of the peasant community or the village or sturdy yeomen. It was not tribal society that was longed for but an agrarian *Gemeinschaft*. Populism was against 'rootlessness'. It valued fraternity.

Populist ideology was yet another attempt to escape from the burden of history. Hence came the conspiratorial element so strong in American and much post-colonial populism. The mobile townsman, the stranger, the Jew, the European, the banker, even the internal foreigner – the Easterner in America or the Westerner in Russia were the usurpers and the conspirators. Faced with conspiracy the populist could demand the highest principles in the behaviour of others while being absolved himself, until the conspiracy was destroyed, from such standards. Populism was anti-Darwinist. It predicated that the best were not the fittest to survive unless enabled to do so by some apocalyptic act of restoration.

The theory of personalism was most typical of populism. Populism claimed that the individual should be a complete man. Com-

plete men, living ideally in independent agrarian virtue, would agree one with another. The paradigmatic man of populism, unlike his communist cousin, was fixed, static, engaged on his Faustian quest to conquer all nature. Because he was perfect he was free.

Populism was not intellectual and it was Utopian. It combined rebellion against the alienated human condition and faith in belonging to a consensual community which could only perish by integration. It was therefore profoundly a-political. Its programme was one of restoration. It went beyond democracy to consensus; it called on the state to inaugurate the restoration but it distrusted the state and the bureaucracy.

Peter Wiles thought that populism was a moderate anarchy. It was more anti-establishment than anarchist in principle. He would not want to define it as socialism. Russian populism was socialist populism, and United States populism was capitalist populism; British populism was the usual British compromise. It concerned small enterprises as a general rule, but not only peasants. Populism always believed in monetary expansion. The Russian populists resisted the adoption of the gold standard. The American populists were pro-silver. The Birmingham populists were against bankers. If you had a small enterprise you liked inflation because your own personal income depended upon it. Peace and isolationism were part of populism and belonged to the definition of the word. Also part of the definition was that populism could not exist without religion, at least without acceptance of religion rather than belief in it personally.

L. J. Macfarlane wished to concentrate on denying that populism could be treated as an ideology. The most that could be said was that there were certain movements with common features, characteristics and situations and therefore there were certain ideas which could be seen in most of them. This might entitle one to classify them as populist movements, but certainly not to say that they had a common ideology.

F. Venturi agreed with *Walicki* that one must think of populism in socialist terms. It was not true to say that populism was socialism and that you could just put them both under one label. One must look to populism as a phase in the general development of socialism. Populism was both backward and forward looking but this was also

true of socialism at certain moments, for instance the socialism which came out of the French Revolution, which was the origin of the ideology of Baboeuf and of the agrarian socialism of England at the beginning of the 19th century. One should think of the importance of the peasants in the new deal of the socialists in France after the Commune. There was an important element of populism in Jaurès.

Donald MacRae disagreed with the identification of populism and socialism, although all populisms appealed to the state to rectify a situation they disapproved of. All populism was certainly statist in this sense, which constituted one of the points of differentiation between socialism and most things which had been legitimately called anarchism and distinguished it from some forms of communitarianism. But first, since populism was statist in a real sense of the word, one must say that even if populism could be individualistic it was always against any form of competitive individualism, not merely competitive individualism in an economic sense, but in all spheres and areas of life.

As far as differences between populism and Marxism were concerned he wanted to stress that in the earlier, romantic Marx there were elements which, if they were not populist were extremely compatible with populism. It was these elements which had re-emerged and which perhaps were transforming some of the demonstrations of Marxist politics today and might also be associated with the incorporation of populist elements in, for instance, the general Maoist position.

G. F. Mancini drew attention to populist attitudes in contemporary communist parties. By far the most important example of political populism in Italy had been the Communist Party since the end of the second world war. The inspirer of this attitude was Gramsci. He was not a fully fledged populist but there was an evident and powerful populist trait in Gramsci's later thinking. His notion of the party as the modern 'prince', the elitist concept of creating and directing a popular and national coalition was definitely populist. He prompted Italian intellectuals to 'go down to the people however backward and conventional they may be'. From 1945 to 1965 the Italian Communist Party turned its back on the industrial proletariat. All its energies were devoted to the women, for example, as a down-trodden section of Italian society, to the small retailers and to the self-employed farmers. Now that the percentage of the population

engaged in agricultural activity had dropped to about 22 per cent the party had returned to the factories with a new approach.

James Joll intervened to extract the anarchists from discussion, since they did not belong there. The psychological attitude and in many cases the social situation of anarchists were similar to those of the populists. But there was in anarchism, and especially in Spanish anarchism, a desire to leap at once into a totally new world which bore no relation to past experience because it added a new dimension to human social organization. The anarchists had a picture of a new social order about which they were reasonably clear; they had a clear plan of social organization and a clear idea that this must be carried out by individuals and not, in any circumstances, by the state. The populists had clear ideas about the new values which they wanted to introduce and were comparatively indifferent to the means by which these changes were brought about.

Hugh Seton-Watson said that if, as he had suggested before, one meant by 'populist' the ideology of worshipping the people, then one could not have populist regimes. Once they were in power, they were no longer populist. The business of running a government was quite different from the business of admiring an ideal people. A government in power which appealed to all sorts of mystiques in order to whip up popular enthusiasm was not populism. Populist ideologies and parties could exist but not populist regimes.

There were also populist elements in movements which were not populist. The success and dynamism of the Communist Party in Yugoslavia in the 1930s was attributable to students and young people who were essentially populist in their outlook and behaviour and yet were in the service of a Marxist movement. Another example of a populist mentality which might seem odd was a Fascist Party, the Rumanian Iron Guard. It came into being as a gang of thugs but it became a mass movement recruiting young people who were indignant at the sufferings of the impoverished and ill-treated peasants. Social revolution was associated with Fascism and with Nazi Germany, which was viewed as a protector from the traditional enemy, Russia. Anti-semitism, endemic in Rumania, increased the attractiveness of fascism.

He proposed a comparison between the Russo-Balkan prototype and the Afro-Asian prototype of populism. Whereas the former was concerned above all with service to the people, the latter was much

more concerned with modernization; the earlier one was concerned with justice and the latter was concerned with efficiency. There was the passion for justice on the one hand and the desire for modernization on the other.

F. Venturi remarked that the great agent of the corruption of socialist populism was nationalism. Nationalist movements and populist movements must be contrasted. They were opposites. When they met, as in Peru, the socialist side, the most important side, of the populist ideology, was corrupted. These two elements were close to each other but when they converged, and when the social side of the story faded away, corruption set in.

Peter Wiles proposed that more emphasis should be placed on the word 'co-operation' and that it should be defined as the agreed ownership, on a small scale, in localities, in a democratic manner, of some of the means of production. There was a large amount of purely co-operative populism. Once that word was firmly defined was there a case for saying that there was any socialist populism at all? Was not even Russian *narodnichestvo* co-operative and profoundly non-socialist as defined?

Peter Worsley thought that this was a matter of definition. He had always understood the element of co-operation, of participation, of democratic involvement to be a cardinal part of what was meant by socialism and not merely centralized state control planning. A phrase like 'social ownership' or 'public ownership' was a much wider concept than state control. State control was not socialism. There were all sorts of state control.

Z. Szabo said that in the Hungarian populist movement of the 1930s there was no worship of the people. A movement emerged in 1937 with a complete political programme. It asked for the complete transformation of society in Hungary in a socialist way. The Hungarian experience had proved that populists seemed to be more at home in movements than in political parties.

S. L. Andreski said that the experience of Polish populism confirmed Venturi's remarks and was a good example of how nationalism turned populism into something else. The Polish populist writers changed and transfigured the possible class interpretation in-

to a national interpretation. The Polish Peasant Party, when it was formed later, remained a very narrowly based class party. There was little collaboration between the intelligentsia or the middle class and the Peasant Party. They had to produce their own intelligentsia, mostly sons of peasants who had been to school.

Peter Calvert suggested that the discussion had perhaps been carried on at three levels: populism with a capital 'P' in the United States and Russia; authentic populist movements in South-East Europe, Latin America, etc.; and a populist element in the politics of other parties. It seemed that populism strictly defined was a movement which tended to exist in different ideological climates and to take on the colour of the environment, but basically it was a rural movement seeking to realize traditional values in a changing society. As a political movement populism in the United States, in Saskatchewan and in Mexico, for instance, seemed to have been essentially a moral rather than an ideological construction. A populist movement could form a government; there could be a populist government within a system of society which was accepted more or less generally; but one could not have a populist regime as such because the characteristic of a populist movement was to take on the ideological colour of its surroundings. To that extent populism was a non-ism in the sense that it was not an ideological phenomenon.

Emmanuel de Kadt thought that there were really two major sets of populism which had a large number of characteristics in common but which differed considerably. Perhaps the main difference was that on the one hand one had a kind of protest or marginal populism, a populism of people who seemed to have nothing to lose and a lot to gain. On the other hand there was a government, a state or an integrative populism, populism of people who seemed to have a lot to lose. The major differentiation of these two types of populism was the nature of the expected movement of the masses, whether they were peasant or urban. In the protest or marginal populist movements there was an authentic identification of the ideologists with the masses and a feeling that the masses should somehow participate fully in creating a new kind of society. In the governing or integrative populisms there was more rhetoric than ideology, and more mobilization of the masses than a true feeling of letting the masses find their own destiny.

Leonard Schapiro thought that it was when it came to leadership, and to the relation between leadership and masses that one found the great divide. The populists acted for the people; the others were really manipulating the people to get their votes and to carry out some kind of policy. That seemed to him to be the essential difference which in the search for definitions ought not to be left out of account.

L. J. Macfarlane suggested that one should look at populism from two angles. One would be to look at the strength of the various populisms, their strength as a movement or as an ideology. The other would be to look at the stage of development at which different populisms could find themselves. Strong populist ideologies had well differentiated sets of ideas, which aimed at an integrated, satisfied community involving changes in its whole life. In the case of weak populist ideologies one dealt with people concerned usually with very immediate sorts of issues, a comparatively narrow range of grievances and expectations. The stages of populism coincided with the stages of industrialization: a reaction against the prospects or the early effects of industrialization; or of those unable to protect their interests in an industrialized society; or today of movements in poor countries aiming at rapid industrial development.

Kenneth Minogue said that he would like to make some general remarks about ideologies. He suggested that an ideology was a response to a sense of bafflement, in particular the sense of bafflement which came to people who had moved out of traditional societies, in which everything seemed fixed, into a world which they found it difficult to understand. Furthermore, an ideology emerged at the moment of secularization. It seemed to him that one of the absolute presuppositions of populism, as of any kind of ideology, was secularism: people must have moved out of a world where religion infiltrated all areas of life. They must have started to draw a distinction between religion and the world of work and practical achievement.

One of the favourite explanations of the ideological style of politics was to suggest that it was suitable to people who did not like making choices. The function of an ideology was to give the appearance of necessity to the decisions men take. Furthermore, it was characteristic of ideologies to see the world as in a stage of becoming.

Ideologies were about transformation and they must nominate an agent who would transform the world. The state, the race, the class, the individual (as in anarchism), the will (as in fascism), the nation and indeed the people were all such transforming agents.

He wanted to suggest one abstract schema. This concerned the question of equality. It seemed to him that when tradition broke down, people began to acquire certain notions of what this new world was all about. They acquired, in particular, the notion of equality, something which they did not have at all before. In the new situation some were the superior in certain respects: wealth, prestige and perhaps most of all education; and others were the inferior, the poor, those who had bad jobs, and so on. Inequalities in modern societies presented people with a psychological problem of how they adjusted to them. Those who were low down felt resentful at the system. But what was equally true was that those who were superior, the rich and the well educated, also suffered from some sort of feeling that equality was the norm and inequality was something wrong. This feeling of unease which afflicted the superior might involve other motives: for example, the attempt to impose a static picture upon reality.

What he suggested as a result of this abstract schema was that populism arose when the superior and the inferior came together in an attack upon the inequalities of society in an early stage of the breakdown of tradition. Very commonly one of the things which characterized populism was that it was the superior who made the first move: that in a way they might have to drum up discontent with inferiority before the movement could get under way. Indeed, in a sense, all ideologies were made by the superior on behalf of the inferior. But this seemed to him to be particularly true of populism.

Angus Stewart who had presented the paper on the *Social roots of populism* began by arguing against over-scepticism about the possibility of using the term 'populism' in a general sense at all. He pointed out that the dangers of over-generalizing and of making assumptions about the motives of the supporters of populist movements existed equally in the case of many other movements such as McCarthyism, Poujadism and Nazism. In relation to these other movements there was a similar problem of over-simplification and a failure to recognize differentiation, both in relation to an 'elite', the groups who led such movements, or who articulated ideas which

were influential in producing such movements, *and* in relation to the *support* for such movements.

The appropriate strategy to meet these difficulties was not simply to recognize the complexities of specific situations. One could meet this point by noticing the need to make distinctions between types. The drawing of such distinctions between types would only be possible, however, after some sort of analytical model had been constructed.

Stewart argued that this model would be the more useful the greater the extent to which it referred to what he saw as basic features of populist movements, ideological syncretism and a coalitional base. The ideological synthesis typical of populist movements sought to integrate around traditional values a society *exposed to*, but not necessarily *part of*, social change. The beliefs contained in populist ideology had a dual function of 'solutions to critical dilemmas' and 'mobilizing agents'. The nature of the synthesis reached in any particular case would depend in part upon the level of development of the society.

It was the other basic feature, a coalitional character to which he had wished to draw attention in referring to the 'rural' background of the emergence of Peronism. That is, one wanted to emphasize in this context the role of recent rural migrants in the total mass base of the Peronist movement. He stressed that his immediate concern was not with the particular details of any movement, but with a particular approach to the analysis of such movements, with the study of processes relating to the genesis and developmental sequence of populist movements. He instanced the fact that there was a populist movement in Germany, not merely in the 1920s but earlier, which was assimilated into the fully-fledged Nazi movement.

It might well be the case that the coalitional character of populist movements was purely a matter of aspiration in some cases. It was his impression that insofar as there had been a populist movement in Russia, rather than a discussion of ideas, its base was substantially located in urban areas. Although this base in urban areas was quantitatively very small, there had been some attempt thereafter to make contact with other sorts of older movements in the rural areas. This attempt had been unsuccessful, but was there – at least in aspiration.

The coalitional character might also be 'imposed' on the situation. That is, in carrying out this analysis, one might impose a coalitional

character in the sense that one pointed to differentiated interests and quasi-groups within the society under study. This was particularly important in talking about African populism.

It would be anticipating political consequences resulting from or contemporaneous with differentiation, to say that following independence even a relatively small degree of economic development would produce differentiation and, as a consequence, a coalitional base to the movement-party. Whether or not this coalitional base was formally institutionalized and whether it led to class polarization or had some other structural consequence was an open question. The possibility that not only class polarization, but also the presence of relatively permanent conflict groups might be avoided by whatever means raised another problem. For instance, what type of production would be necessitated by a society which was not stratified? Obviously some African leaders were attempting to 'implement' such a state of affairs.

He had drawn attention in his paper to the distinction between 'manipulative' and 'spontaneous' populism. We should try to construct a model in which one would have the necessary elements for saying in what sort of situation one or other of these two 'types' would be most likely to arise. By concentrating upon the processes of institutionalization in different contexts one could go a good way towards handling the problem of ideological chameleonism.

It had been suggested that one might study populism by looking at the contexts in which particular ideas emerged, but if one adopted this approach one had the problem that some of the movements discussed under the heading of populism took over and made use of a particular configuration of ideas which were already around. What one wanted to look at was the relationship of these ideas to the position of particular social groups, the factors influencing the interaction of these social groups and the consequences of that interaction for the social and political system in which it occurred.

III. TOWARDS A DEFINITION

Peter Worsley remarked that from the way the discussion had progressed one might think that populism was the biggest growth industry. It led everywhere. It was an exploding universe and it would continue to explode sideways unless the problem of conceptualization was tackled. He thought that it was perfectly legitimate to define populism in the broadest terms. But although broad the

definition should be precise. Massness, radicalism, orientation to dramatic change, particularly the advent of capitalism, location among the small people, the participatory concept, all these were elements which could be utilized. But it was very difficult with the broad, latitudinarian definition to draw any kind of boundary.

The main division of thought seemed to him to be as follows. First there was the difference between those who emphasized that populism was a strand within socialism and those who would extend the label to cover many kinds of radicalism, including right wing forms of radicalism – Poujadism, Nazism, McCarthyism – and the North-American phenomenon of the entrepreneurial, capitalist farming operation. A second difference arose between those who insisted on the global *Weltanschauung* characteristic of populist ideology and those who saw it as a hotchpotch of synthetic and badly assimilated elements. There was a further division of opinion and analysis between those who would locate populism or identify it specifically as a peasant or rural phenomenon and those who would extend it to embrace various forms of non-rural society.

There were five common elements for which he sensed some general support. There was the reaction to capitalism. Then there was the reaction to externality. There was also massness, at least in aspiration if not in realization. Fourthly there was what was described as the Janus syndrome: populism looked back in order to look forward. Finally it was an ideology elaborated usually by the intelligentsia and other elements for or on behalf of the masses.

Ghița Ionescu was still not sure, at the end of the conference, whether a definition would emerge from it. As the *rapporteur* he thought that a definition was not essential. The discussion, like the play, had been the thing. And in any case, provided an agreement could be broadly reached on what seemed to him to have been the six issues most debated by the conference, a broad and preferably short definition could still be proposed by someone.

One controversial issue was whether populism was primarily an ideology (or ideologies), or a movement (or movements). Personally from what he had heard during these forty-eight hours he thought that the majority was inclined to lean towards the ideological aspect.

But some of the speakers seemed to have meant by this, and that was a second issue, that populism was a sort of recurring mentality, appearing in different historical and geographic contexts as the result of a special social situation, for instance the situation of change

faced by a society in which, as Touraine described it, the middle social factors were either missing or too weak.

Thirdly, the element of political persecution-mania was more acute in the political psychology of populism than in many other political psychologies. The political psychology of populism was imbued with the feeling that identifiable or unidentifiable conspiracies were at work, deliberately and tenaciously, against the 'people'. The basic attitude was one of defence against the unknown outside forces.

As such populism was characterized by a peculiar negativism. Many speakers had stressed that it was *anti*: anti-capitalistic, anti-urban, as well as xenophobic and very often anti-semitic. It carried with it great doses of blind hatred.

In contrast, and this was the fifth point, it seemed to him that one of the large areas of agreement of the conference was the fact that populism worshipped the people. But which 'people'? Surely not the proud *demos* of the Greeks or anything like the *Herrenvolk*. The people the populists worshipped were the meek and the miserable, and the populists worshipped them because they were miserable and because they were persecuted by the conspirators. The fact that they were more often than not embodied in the peasantry was because the peasants were and are, in any underdeveloped societies, the most miserable of the lot – and the more miserable they were the more worshipped should they be.

Finally this recurring mentality disappeared usually by absorption into stronger ideologies or movements. But here he disagreed with those who thought that it could lead only to, or was merely a phase of, socialism. There were three possibilities. In some cases it could lead to socialism. In other cases it led to nationalism. And, as for instance in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the century, it led to peasantism. This third possibility should not be overlooked.

Maurice Cranston suggested an approach to the question of definition more cautious and perhaps more cheerful than Ionescu's. Perhaps a clue could be got from Wittgenstein's later theory of meaning, where it was not so much a matter of looking for some kind of denominator or hard core of meaning, but looking for family resemblance where one gets things which seem to fall into families: *A* resembling *B* and *B* resembling *C*, but all three having nothing in common.

John Saul was uneasy about this concentration upon ideologies. It was something which he and others might feel was not legitimate. One of the things which had been raised very clearly was the way in which these ideologies could be used. In some movements there were 'people who really identified with the 'people'; in other movements there were people who manipulated these ideas. If one concentrated upon the ideology without situating it, both in terms of the changing society and in terms of the political movements with which it was related, one would not be speaking about populism.

Hugh Seton-Watson thought that Ionescu's scheme was a good one to work on but the essence was the ideology: what were the essential features of the populist mentality and the populist ideology. It had to be assumed that it was a genuinely held ideology. Manipulation by others obviously was another dimension and one should keep it distinct.

He wanted to clear away a little dead wood and to single out a few elements which were *not* specific to populism. One was the fact of appealing to the transitional new urban poor. That was true of populism but was not specific to populism. Another point was the presence of the peasants. All revolutions included peasants. The fact that Mao, for instance, appealed to the peasants and used peasants had nothing to do with populism. The third point not specific to populism was the defence of the people against capitalism. Of course, the populists were anti-capitalists, but so were all forms of socialist parties in the early days of socialism, so were the Marxists in the later days and so were the communists in their still later days.

Continuing what Schapiro had said earlier, he thought that it would have been useful to distinguish between *elite* and *elitism*. The element of elite surely entered into populist movements. But the elite did not need to be elitist. The distinction between an elite playing a role and an elite having elitist aims was significant. The *Narodnaya Volya* was elitist in its methods, but not elitist in aim. The fascist parties, on the other hand, were all aiming at an elitist hierarchical society as the end as well as the means.

The last piece of dead wood he wanted to attack was the widespread misuse of the word populism itself in connection with governments in underdeveloped countries for which some respectable label was required. It seemed to him that possibly this had come from use by American social scientists studying underdeveloped countries. They had taken a word from the American experience,

derived from an understanding, possibly imperfect at that, of American populism with its peculiar characteristics. They had applied this word particularly to what they found in Africa – something which he thought should more honestly be described as authoritarian nationalist despotism.

Werner Klatt thought that the difference between populism and peasantism which Ionescu had mentioned lay in the difference of leadership. In the peasant parties one found men who were actually peasants, or former peasants. The intellectuals who conceived the idea of populism were invariably urban intellectuals.

F. *Venturi* agreed with Seton-Watson that the uprooted peasants who came to the towns did not provide the natural normal basis of a populist movement. Proof could be given from Italy where for instance half of his own town, Turin, was formed of peasants from the south and yet no populist movement was emerging. But the history of Russia made one think that in its particular case the movement of the peasantry led to populism. The peasants not only brought to the urban environment the fact that they were uprooted, but also their own institutions.

Donald MacRae wanted to say a little about ideology which was relevant to what Ionescu had said. His own view was that humanity, perhaps regrettably, had a very limited repertoire of elementary ideas, many of which were extremely old, archaic and primitive. The number of ideas, of themes or items which combined and recombined was limited. He would suggest that ideologies could be formed in the same way as a ballet, with dancers waiting in the wings and reappearing in different costumes, but in perpetual movement of some kind.

Andrzej Walicki wanted to propose, for the sake of the model, an ideal type of populism:

First, it was a peasantist oriented socialism, the characteristic feature of which was a combination of backward-looking Utopianism with modern socialism. It meant a combination of modern socialism with an idealization of pre-capitalist relations.

Secondly, it was characteristic of backward countries in confrontation with developed capitalistic countries. This point was very

important and it was a bridge between Russian populism and populism in the countries of the third world.

The third point, bound up with the second, was that because populism emerged in backward countries in confrontation with developed capitalist states, the intelligentsia played a very large role in the leadership of the movement and in the formulation of its main ideas. The members of the intelligentsia, being the product of Westernization, felt themselves alienated and put forward the idea of returning to the people who had roots in the soil.

Fourthly, the last feature was the possibility of identifying capitalism with something coming from outside and hence the possibility of combining populist ideas with nationalism, with xenophobia and so on. In the final analysis he agreed with Ionescu that there were three ways out of populism: modern socialism, peasantism and nationalism.

Donald MacRae said that he wanted to go back to ideology as a defining point and go through some of the items which might help to bridge something which was genuinely bridgeable, and worth bridging, and that was the Russo-American gap on this point. One should take ideology as the reality and say that a movement is a populist one when the character of its existence, its acts and its propaganda contained a majority of the following elements:

1. The idealization of a *Volk*, and it had to be a particular one, not idealization of *the* people, but of *a* people.
2. Primitivism, meaning that the future was to be an improved archaic past.
3. Statism: the state was justified in its intervention if this was designed to restore society to health.
4. Although it was statist it was even more social: it stressed that society was more important and existed prior to the creation of the state and it was stronger than and embodied more values than the state. The state was the instrument of society.
5. It was personalist: it expressed a belief in man whole and pure.
6. Xenophobia.
7. Hatred of an advanced stage of the division of labour, of advanced social differentiation, occupational differentiation, or multiplication of social roles.
8. Anti-militarism, but not pacifism.
9. Preference for inflation, easy credit, currency reform, rather than economic planning – and against competition.

10. Belief in conspiracy. This went along with the xenophobia, but not all xenophobia was conspiratorial and not all conspiracy theories were xenophobic.

11. Apocalyptic dreams. These might involve the dreams of a particular populist redeemer, a particular kind of populist hero or a particular sort of Rousseau or 'legislator'.

12. Belief in spontaneity. The whole man was a spontaneous mass of untutored and immediate virtue.

13. An affiliation with religion. This applied more surely to the Russian than to the American type. The origin in one case was Orthodoxy and in the other American Protestantism.

14. Anti-elitist but inspired often by an elite, and prepared to use, an elite in the destruction of an elitist situation.

S. L. Andreski thought that the contrast between American and Russian populism was striking. One emanated from the class concerned, the other was engineered by the intelligentsia. One defended the existing and high status of the farmers, while the other strove to improve the condition of the oppressed peasants. One showed a clear commitment to a clear form of political organization, the other vaguely wanted to help the people and to tell them what to do. He suggested that if there was to be a definition which included both, it should be a very general one, something like, 'Any movement which strove towards the protection of the interests of the rural population', or something of that sort.

Isaiah Berlin, who was the chairman of the last session, proceeded to the final summing-up of the main points made during the discussion, seeking first the common points and then the variations.

'Supposing', he said, 'we say that what is common to all populisms everywhere – this cannot be true, but let us try it on – is, first, a vague notion and vague name for it, which is intelligible to everybody here, the notion of *Gemeinschaft* – that is, that famous integral society which everybody talks about, some sort of coherent, integrated society, which is sometimes called *Das Volk*, which has roots in the past, either imaginary or real, which is bound by a sense of fraternity and by a desire for a certain kind of social equality and perhaps liberty – but of the two equality is probably nearer its heart than liberty – and which is opposed to competitive, atomized society, although in the American case it obviously believes in

limited competition which is regulated in some so-called "natural" fashion as against all kinds of "unnatural" distortions of it.'

'It is broadly speaking apolitical: that is to say, it is not principally interested in political institutions, although it is prepared to use the state as an instrument for the purpose of producing its ends. But a state organization is not its aim and the state is not its ideal of human association. It believes in society rather than in the state. Moreover all these movements believe in some kind of moral regeneration. I am sure that this is common to them all.'

'In some sense they are dedicated to producing spontaneous, natural men who have in some way at some time become perverted by something. There must have been a spiritual fall somewhere. Either the fall is in the past or it is threatening – one of the two. Either innocence has been lost and some kind of perversion of men's nature has occurred, or enemies are breeding within or attacking from without. Who the enemies are, we do not need to specify. That will depend upon the specific situation.'

'The enemy may be capitalism, it may be foreign states which have forms of political, social or economic organization which threaten the spontaneous integral group and the sense of brotherhood which unites them. It still unites them, or once united them, so that one can now resurrect the unity from the past.'

'Populism certainly does not believe, so far as negative propositions are concerned, in the uniqueness of historical stages in the sense in which, say, most historicists believe that nothing from the past can ever be rescued: that what has happened once has happened once and for all, and, therefore, that there is no way of looking back to the past to try to salve its values. It may believe in the translation of these ancient values into contemporary terms, but it believes these values to be rooted somewhere in the past; they cannot be brand new. I do not think I know of any populism which assumes that man was born in a low undesirable state and that the golden age is somewhere in the future – a novel situation which has never shown any sign of existence in the past. Some degree of past directedness is essential to all populisms.'

'This seems to me to be one of the roots of American populism – it is one of the causes, for example, of the indignation say, in the relatively undeveloped Middle West, against all kinds of phenomena which its spokesmen regard as hostile – the excessive civilization of the East Coast, its centralized capitalism, Wall Street, the cross of gold, frivolous, polite, smooth forms of insincere behaviour on the

part of Harvard or Yale university professors, or smooth members of the State Department, contrasted with the free, spontaneous, natural behaviour of uncorrupted men, cracker-barrel philosophers in the village drug store, from whom simple wisdom flows, uncorrupted by the sophistication of the Eastern cities, the result of some kind of degeneration of a political or of some other kind. This is common to all the populisms: that is, the central belief in an ideal, unbroken man, either in the present or in the past, an ideal type towards which men naturally tend, when no one oppresses or deceives them.'

'Having established all this very tentatively as common to all these various forms of populism, let me add this. One must again return to the notion of the people. Who the people is will probably vary from place to place. On the whole, it tends to be, as somebody said quite correctly, those who have been left out. It is the have-nots, in some sense. It is peasants in Russia because they are the obvious majority of the deprived: but it might be any group of persons with whom you identify the true people and you identify the true people with them, because the ideology of populism itself springs from the discontented people who feel that they somehow represent the majority of the nation which has been done down by some minority or other. Populism cannot be a consciously minority movement. Whether falsely or truly, it stands for the majority of men, the majority of men who have somehow been damaged.'

'By whom have they been damaged? They have been damaged by an elite, either economic, political or racial, some kind of secret or open enemy – capitalists, Jews, bureaucrats, etc. Whoever the enemy is, foreign or native, ethnic or social, does not much matter.'

'One more thing can be said to be true of all populisms. That is, that in some sense it would be true to say that it occurs in societies standing on the edge of modernization – that is to say, threatened by it, or hoping for it; it does not matter which, but in either case uneasily aware of the fact that they cannot stand still; that they will have to take steps towards meeting either the challenge or the danger of modernization, whether at home, on the part of classes or groups in their own country who are pushing towards it, or on the part of persons outside it, whose economic and social development is of such a kind as to threaten them if they do not in some way catch up or create some kind of walls with which to resist them. This seems true of all the varieties of populism.'

'Then we come to the variations. For example, there is on the one hand the root of socialism and on the other hand the root of peasantism. These are alternative roots, and therefore, alternative species of the same thing. Again, you could probably say that there are certain other variants – for example, elitism. Some forms of populism believe in using elites for the purpose of a non-elitist society and some object to it on the ground that even using elitism as a means leads to elitism in the end.'

'Some populists believed in an elite, some did not; some believed in it as an instrument, a means to the end, so that to a large extent this was a tactical difference and not a real one. Of course, all these movements and ideologies wished to produce a fraternal, equal society, and not a hierarchical or deferential one. Therefore they must be distinguished from other forms of what might be called romantic archaism or romantic nostalgia for a glorious golden past. There are dreams of a golden past in which men are anything but socially equal or self governed.'

'Now as to religion. Affiliation to a religion is, I think, a specific property of perhaps some streams of Russian populism – but populism obviously need not be religious. American populism has surely been tinged with Protestantism. But I daresay that if you found some bone dry atheists to be members of a populist movement you would not exclude them on the ground that religious faith was at the heart of such an outlook, that it was at the very least a secularized form of an essentially religious movement.'

'Then there is the apocalyptic dream and the hero: yes, all populisms, it seems to me, are voluntaristic and anti-necessitarian. They do not accept an inevitable pattern of history. They believe that it is possible by means of a spontaneous gathering of the wills of the good to leap into the new society and create these new men. They all believe this. They do not believe in a historicist time table. They do not believe in necessary stages of historical development which causes this to grow from that, and that to grow inexorably from something else – a predictable ascent up a tremendous historical ladder, the rungs of which are unalterable, which makes it Utopian or impossible to do certain things until the uniquely appropriate stage is duly and inevitably reached. This, after all, is one of the chief differences between every form of Russian populism and every form of Russian social democracy and Russian Marxism.'

'There is one further point: false populisms. We need not spend too much time on this because I think that on this we have reached

general agreement. False populism is the employment of populist ideas for ends other than those which the populists desired. That is to say, their employment by Bonapartists or McCarthyites, or the "Friends of the Russian People", or fascists and so on. This is simply the mobilization of certain popular sentiments – say hostility to capitalism or to foreigners or Jews or hatred of economic organization or of the market society, or of anything you like, for undemocratic ends. The mobilized feeling can be genuine. This pseudo-populism does not necessarily involve cynical employment of tactics of a "double-think" kind. It is clear that some of the demagogues of this type – Poujadists, Greenshirts, social creditors and the like – did in fact sympathize with some populist sentiments, but employed them for the purpose of creating some kind of elitist or socially or racially unequal regime, something totally incompatible with the fundamental faith – if not with fraternity then, at any rate, the passionate egalitarianism – of the real populist movements. That is enough to distinguish, for example, Bonapartism or Greek tyrannies, which were in a certain sense also revolts against the aristocracy, against traditionalism, against hierarchical and deferential systems, from populism proper. This probably applies equally to modern "tyrannoi" like Nasser, or Nkrumah, or Ayub Khan.'

'It is reasonable to say that, historically speaking, populism like all ideologies is created by ideologists. Ideologists are, on the whole, educated or half educated persons, and educated and half educated persons, particularly in Russia, tended to turn into an intelligentsia for certain historical reasons.'

'One of the motives of most populist movements is the desire on the part of the creators of populism itself to be re-integrated into the general mass of the people from which they have become divided by their education, by their social position or by their origins.'

'Therefore, all populisms – I offer this as a general proposition about populism – distinguish between the alienated good and the alienated bad: the alienated good are persons who have become alienated as a result of historical circumstances, but are in a state of contrition. That is to say, they are repentant, they wish to repay their debt to society and re-integrate themselves into the mass of the people. They wonder, like Chernyshevsky, whether they sufficiently express the will of the people because they feel that they are not members of the people. They live at a distance from the masses and, therefore, they are always worried, honourably worried, about

whether they are sufficiently penetrated by the spirit with which they wish to be at one.'

'This is the topic of the debate by Russian populists: do we "go to the people" to tell them what to do, or to learn this from them? What right have we to tell the people what to want? The only populists completely outside this are those who like Tkachov, expressed the greatest possible contempt for the masses and wished to save them against their will; one day no doubt the people will be wise and rational, but we must not listen to what the peasants – stupid, reactionary, dull – say today. This, however, was, before Lenin, a comparatively marginal case.'

'This kind of populist who has a ferocious contempt for his clients, the kind of doctor who has profound contempt for the character of the patient whom he is going to cure by violent means which the patient will certainly resist, but which will have to be applied to him in some very coercive fashion, is on the whole ideologically nearer to an elitist, fascist, communist, etc. ideology, than he is to what might be called the centre core of populism. But such theorists exist. They exist and they have to be accommodated somewhere on our map. For Lenin, Tkachov was a populist, and his authoritarianism is in part derived from that tradition.'

'There is one specific populist attribute which may or may not be universal – of that I am not sure. That is the advocacy of a social and economic programme for the single purpose of avoiding the horrors of industrialization and capitalism; it does not entail a passion for integralism, nor the visionary new-mediaevalism of William Morris, it has nothing to do with Morris dancing, or arts and crafts or Ghandi's spinning wheel, or a return to the Middle Ages; it is simply a sober theory of how we are to avoid the horrors of what is happening in the Western world. This is the kind of populism which was professed by sober statisticians and economists towards the end of the 19th century in Russia, who were not necessarily partisans of some kind of *Gemeinschaft*. This was a perfectly rational social doctrine, founded, or at least aspiring to rest, on sober calculation and estimate of the facts: simply a social policy coexisting with other social policies, something which, I should have thought, was probably most prevalent in backward countries as Russia was in the 19th century, or the Balkans, not therefore equally prevalent in the United States and, therefore, representing a particular attribute of a particular populism at a particular time in a particular place.'

After further discussion the conference agreed that a short formulation proposed by *G. Hall* was probably the best general definition of the populist movements. It said:

'Populist movements are movements aimed at power for the benefit of the people as a whole which result from the reaction of those, usually intellectuals, alienated from the existing power structure, to the stresses of rapid economic, social, cultural or political change. These movements are characterized by a belief in a return to, or adaptation of, more simple and traditional forms and values emanating from the people, particularly the more archaic sections of the people who are taken to be the repository of virtue.'

But everyone also agreed that the subject was much too vast not merely to be contained in one definition, but to be exhausted in one discussion.

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