

SUMMARY

Political theory and Political Ideas. By Olavi Borg

This is to examine critically the occasional use of the concept »political theory» in political science and, particularly, the relation of this concept to political ideas. One is inclined to think that the concept »political theory» should refer especially to political ideas. This is an obvious conceptual confusion and still rather a dangerous one, because behind this confusion lies the crucial difference between the scientific and the normative constructions. This confusion is perhaps mainly the result of the negligent use of the word »theory» and the consequent diversity in the meaning of this word. Partly, at least, the correct scientific use of this word is aggravated by its connotations in common language. Connotations as »speculative», »abstractive», »general» and so on, must be carefully separated from the strictly scientific value of this term, which is completely determined by its structure and function in the procedure of science.

As to their form, genuine scientific theories always have a similar structure: the fundamental concepts and definitions, and the hypotheses derived from these. This concept-construction serves as a methodological tool in the procedure of science: it limits and orientates observations and is a means of clear and consistent interpretation. But theory is also the object which is aimed at by science, although not the final one, which is a scientific truth. As an aim of science, theory is connected with an attempt of obtaining a law after the verification of most of its hypotheses. A genuine theory can not include value judgements and is not directly connected with scientific truth because of its methodological nature. But its very nature forms the ties to scientific truth, which in its essential features, is not immutable and incorrigible.

Political ideas include concept-constructions, many of which resemble the genuine theory. Most of these, however, are not truly theoretical propositions, neither genuine theories. Perhaps most political ideas only speculatively describe the author's own value preferences or those of social classes and groups and, as such, are no theories at all. Political ideas are, as rule, based on value judgements which also imprint the respective theoretical assumptions. Therefore, one often infers from value judgements to empirical facts, or *vice versa*. This is not allowed in an objective science but is, indeed, frequently done in political philosophy. Theories found within this sphere are consequently normative, not scientific. There are, of course, genuine theories too. Aristotle is, maybe, the first name to be mentioned in this connection and then, for instance, that of Machiavelli and Montesquieu. In fact, it is not always easy to identify normative theories, mainly because statements concerning empirical facts and value judgements are very closely entangled with each other. The task is enhanced by the fact that value judgements can be expressed in very many different and often implicate ways. In addition to genuine and normative theories, still a third kind of theory-construction exists among political

ideas. These may be called dogmatic or closed theories. They resemble very much genuine theories as regards their structure and functions. Essentially, the theories of this kind are not normative in character but, in fact, tend to be actual descriptions or predictions of empirical reality. In a sense of the word they are scientific indeed, but not, however, genuinely scientific. *Why?* Simply because they do not meet the necessary conditions required from a scientific theory. The closed theories, for instance, do not, in most cases, make a clear difference between theoretical and empirical propositions, because statements essentially methodological are considered, in these constructions, as propositions concerning relations of empirically defined variables. And, furthermore, these propositions are even dealt with as actually verified hypotheses or as no less than an already accepted scientific law. The assumption of dialectical evolution in Marxist theses is an illuminating example of this kind confusions. Actually similar confusions are not at all infrequent in the realm of social sciences but, of course, they may be corrected, or at least, they are open to free scientific discussion and criticism. Quite another is the situation concerning Marxist theses, for instance, which for the rest are the best and perhaps apart from religious dogmas, the only representatives of totally closed theories. They derive from some fundamental concepts and definitions which are not open for discussion, in the sense that, they may be corrected. The whole construction thus gets quite a dogmatic character. Consequently the truth of the results reached by such theoretical constructions is entirely and logically determined by the *apriori* assumptions involved in these theories. As we mentioned previously, the genuine scientific theory is also connected with scientific truth, not however, directly, but through the procedural ties of science. These, in turn, may be altered by new observations, which is not allowed in connection with dogmatic theories. Thus, be these theories called scientific, the word science has meaning, entirely different from the one, we traditionally attach to it.

The Influence of Political Parties in Municipal Administration. By Toivo Holopainen.

Although some theorists and also some parties have opposed the influence of political parties in municipal administration, party politics have already forced their way deep in to the municipal life. Municipal elections are next to party elections, and also the most important administrative officers are elected (especially in towns) according to political views. Municipal administration has become a passage through which the parties have reached their direct influence in municipal administration to-day. In the latest years the parties have also attended more attention in municipal politics than earlier. Before municipal elections in 1960 all participant parties (nine) published either a special municipal platform or a municipal election platform. From those platforms can easily be verified, that all parties declared themselves as supporters of municipal self-government in force. But the platforms show also the farthestmost goals of the parties. The conservative parties support municipal self-government for historical reasons, as a corner-stone in the democratic system in force, when to the communist parties municipal self-government only means a tool in democrasing society. The platform of the Finnish Communist Party declares expressly that municipal self-government is (to the party) a tool in striving for a class-less state.

The relation between state and municipal government is the most central problem in Finnish political life to-day. In extending its activity towards a so-called care- or welfare-state, the state has thrustured upon the municipals a great deal of obligatory

duties, in which also the way of execution is often clearly dictated. This evolution has in general meet very strong resisitance. Of the Finnish parties it was most strongly opposed by the extreme parties, the Conservative Party and the Communist Party. Even other parties, except the Agrarian Party and socialdemocrats, do not agree with the strictly dependence of municipals to the State as it in Finland has been carried out. In the Agrarian Party some contradiction can be obtained, but specially the press of this party finds the latest development necessary. The socialdemocratic stays strongly behind such a evolution, but even this party — as all the else parties — likes to establish boundaries to the limitation of municipal self-government in municipal administration.

The Tripartite State Power. I. By Kauko Sipponen.

The summary of this article will be published in connection of the second part in the next number of POLITTIKKA.
