

# Ideological Moments

Peter Porter

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The history of emancipation.  
Overtaken, riding uphill.

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To wither away the state must grow a tumour.  
This lesson is from Capitalism.

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Infinity is Nothingness reversed.  
Nothingness is Infinity continued.

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Wittgenstein thought wealth a defilement.  
Another disappointed inheritor!

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Capitalism, claims Kolakowski,  
is a perfect fit for Human Nature  
while Socialism is Impatience's ideal.  
Thus Selfishness shall make us live  
and Magnanimity enslave us.

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Arts Administrators,  
more numerous than Artists:  
Labour Legislators,  
more timid than The Chartists.

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Born on the Left  
he had to think well of his fellowmen.  
Born on the Right  
he tried to think well of his enemies.

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Those who believe in something  
and those who believe in nothing  
say they despise the credulous  
who will believe in anything.

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The way to Hell is paved with good inventions.  
Misprints are Truth's non-contributory pensions.

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Classical Poetry didn't rhyme  
although, of course, its language did.  
The choice before today's Sublime  
is adding to or getting rid.

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I saw him looking lonely,  
The big man in a blazer,  
Reading *Il Gazzettino*  
In the Sala di Attesa.

Now, where's the ideology  
In writing things like this?  
John Berger would know how to  
Reveal what is amiss.

A rentier is framed by  
His clothes, his seat, his habits.  
So Gainsborough would paint this one  
Pot-shotting only rabbits.

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Pascal spoke in Mathematics  
Of Reason and of Love,  
He warmed his hard theology  
At Descartes' glowing stove  
Knowing he could never rhyme  
Down Here with Up Above.