

# Political Illusion and Reality

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## Engaging the Prophetic Insights of Jacques Ellul

Edited by **David W. Gill & David Lovekin**

Are all governments—east and west, Muslim and secular, authoritarian and constitutional, Republican and Democratic—fundamentally the same, all of them under the extraordinary, growing power of “technique” and bureaucracy? Is all politics, then, just an illusory affair of lies, deception, propaganda, partisan passions, and chaos on the surface of government and party? In his vast and penetrating writings, Bordeaux sociologist Jacques Ellul (1912–1994) points in those directions.

*Political Illusion and Reality* is a collection of twenty-three essays on Ellul’s political thought. Veteran as well as younger Ellul scholars, political leaders, activists, and pastors, discuss aspects of Ellul’s thought as they relate to their own fields of study and political experience. Beginning with his 1936 essay “Fascism, Son of Liberalism,” translated and published here in English for the first time, Ellul and these authors will provoke readers to think some new thoughts about politics and government, and think more deeply about the main issues we face in our politically divided and troubled times.

If for Jacques Ellul “La Technique” was already “the wager of the century” in 1954, when he wrote his famous book, in the 21st century it has become a nightmare! *Political Illusion and Reality* allows a new generation to discover what for me was an awakening of conscience and a guide for my activism.

—JOSÉ BOVÉ, ecologist, social activist, and former student of Jacques Ellul

In my years as mayor and on the city council, Ellul accompanied me to the dais, and everywhere I went in my community. This book is a reminder of the spiritual and moral grounding of this great man’s work. Without Ellul and his ideas, I could not have succeeded in helping guide my city in these turbulent times.

—ROBB DAVIS, former mayor & city council member, Davis, California

Once Ellul teaches you to see, you can never see the world the same again. We are, therefore, fortunate to have *Political Illusion and Reality* to help us see Ellul for the extraordinary sociological and theological thinker he was. Be warned, however—seeing the way Ellul sees will not make your life easy.

—STANLEY HAUERWAS, Emeritus Professor of Ethics, Duke University

*Political Illusion and Reality* provides hope for those discouraged by current cruel political realities. A new narrative is proposed here which allows an exit from traditional social contract clichés [and an] “ideological detoxification.” Practical essays demonstrate the relevance of this perspective.

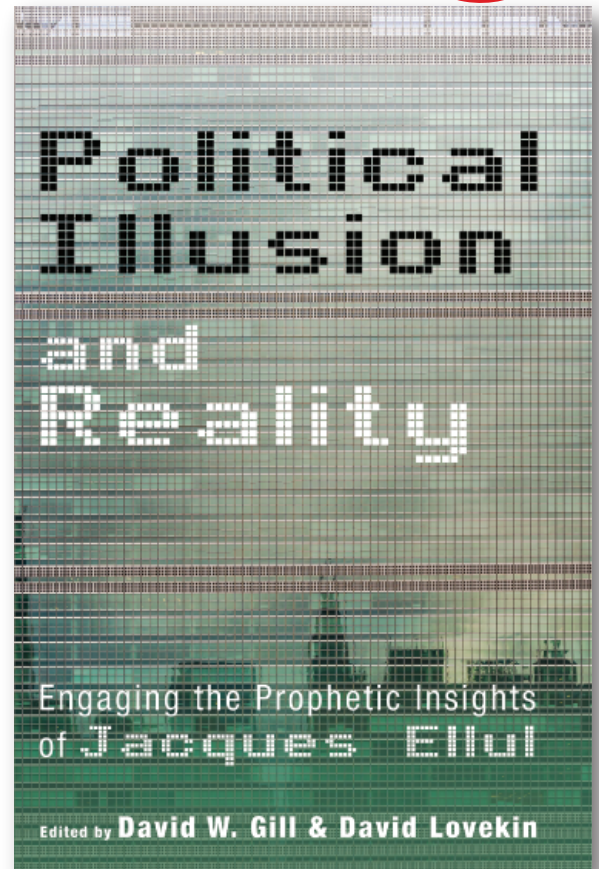
—CAROLE J. LAMBERT, Professor of English, Azusa Pacific University

*Political Illusion and Reality* is a stunning collection of essays by a remarkable community of scholars. I was taken aback by its range and insight, and by its testimony to the continuing vitality and relevance of Ellul’s sociological, philosophical, and theological analyses of the technological way of life within which we are all now enmeshed.

—CARL MITCHAM, International Professor of Philosophy of Technology, Renmin University of China, Beijing

*Political Illusion and Reality* shows us why Ellul’s prophetic analyses of politics, the state, and international relations still matter. In these essays Ellul’s ideas ‘out-narrate’ the existing stories of what is going on and provide multiple concrete examples of how to appropriate and apply his insights.

—SCOTT M. THOMAS, Associate Professor of International Relations, University of Bath, United Kingdom



**David W. Gill** recently retired after forty years as a business school and seminary professor of ethics. He is the author of seven books and the founding president of the International Jacques Ellul Society.

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