

# Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-class Politics

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET  
*Stanford University*

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From my work on my doctoral dissertation (Lipset 1950, 1968) down to the present, I have been interested in the problem of "American exceptionalism." That curious phrase emerged from the debate in the international Communist movement in the 1920s concerning the sources of the weakness of left-wing radical movements in the United States (Draper 1960, pp. 268-72; Lipset 1977a, pp. 107-61). The key question repeatedly raised in this context has been, is America qualitatively different from other industrial capitalist countries? Or, to use Sombart's words, "Why is there no Socialism in the United States?" (Sombart 1976).

In a forthcoming book, I evaluate the hypotheses advanced by various writers from Karl Marx onward to explain the absence of an effective socialist party on the American political scene. (For a preliminary formulation, see Lipset 1977b, pp. 31-149, 346-63.) If any of the hypotheses are valid, they should also help to account for the variation among working-class movements in other parts of the world. In this article, therefore, I shall reverse the emphasis from that in my book and look at socialist and working-class movements comparatively, applying elsewhere some of the propositions that have been advanced to explain the American situation.

A comparative analysis of working-class movements in western society is limited by an obvious methodological problem: too many variables and too few cases. The causal factors that have been cited as relevant literally approach two dozen. Among them are economic variables, such

as the timing of industrialization, the pace of economic growth, the concentration of industry, the occupational structure, the nature of the division of labor, and the wealth of the country; sociological factors, such as the value system (collectivist versus individualist orientations), the status systems (open or rigid), social mobility, religious differences, ethnic variations, rates of immigration, and urbanization; and political variables, such as the timing of universal suffrage, of political rights, and of freedom of organization, the electoral systems, the extent of centralization, the size of the country, orientations of conservative parties, and the nature of the welfare systems in the country concerned.

Obviously, it would be well nigh hopeless to compare systematically western countries on all of the relevant variables (Daalder 1966b, p. 43). To limit the task to manageable proportions, I will concentrate on variations in national environments that determined what Stein Rokkan called "the structure of political alternatives" for the working class in different western countries before the First World War. Although much has changed since then, the nature of working-class politics has been profoundly influenced by the variations in the historic conditions under which the proletariat entered the political arena. Experiences antedating the First World War affected whether workers formed class-based parties and, where such parties developed, whether they were revolutionary or reformist.

Of the factors that shaped the character of working-class movements, two are particularly important: first, the nature of the social-class system before industrialization; second, the way in which the economic and political elites responded to the demands of workers for the right to participate in the polity and the economy (Sturmthal 1953, pp. 17-33; Dahl 1966, pp. 360-67).

With respect to the first, the following general proposition is advanced: the more rigid the status demarcation lines in a country, the more likely the emergence of radical working-class-based parties. Where industrial capitalism emerged from a feudal society, with its emphasis on strong status

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lines and barriers, the growing working class was viewed as a *Stand*, a recognizable social entity. As Max Weber emphasized, *Staende*, or "status groups are normally communities" defined by particular lifestyles, claims to social honor, and social intercourse among their members; as such they provide the direct basis for collective activity. In this respect, they differ from economic classes whose members share a common market situation, for " 'classes' are not communities, they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action" (Weber 1946, pp. 186, 181). Nations characterized by an elaborate, highly institutionalized status structure, *combined* with the economic class tensions usually found in industrial societies, were more likely to exhibit class-conscious politics than those in which status lines were imprecise and not formally recognized. In contrast, in nations that were "born modern" and lacked a feudal and aristocratic past, class position was less likely to confer a sense of shared corporate identity (Hartz 1955, pp. 3-10).

The second proposition maintains that the ways in which the dominant strata reacted to the nascent working-class movements conditioned their orientations. Where the working class was denied full political and economic citizenship, strong revolutionary movements developed (Marshall 1964, pp. 65-123; Dahl 1966, pp. 364-66). Conversely, the more readily working-class organizations were accepted into the economic and political order, the less radical their initial and subsequent ideologies (Mannheim 1936, p. 218).

This proposition subsumes a number of sub-propositions: (1) The denial of political rights in a situation in which a social stratum is led to claim such rights will increase its feelings of deprivation and increase the likelihood of a favorable response to revolutionary and extremist doctrines. (2) The existence of political rights will tend to lead governments and conservative political forces to conciliate the lower classes, thus enhancing the latter's sense of self-respect, status, and efficacy. (3) The development of political parties, trade unions, and other workers' organizations permits the most politically active members of the working class to increase their income, status, and power and in the process to become a privileged group within society and a force for political moderation. (4) A capable lower-class stratum that has been allowed to develop legitimate economic and political organizations, through which it can achieve some share of power in the society and improve its social situation, is potentially less radical in a crisis situation than a comparable stratum that has been unable to develop institutionalized mechanisms for accommodating political demands.

In the remainder of this article, I will present

the evidence that substantiates these generalizations, beginning with variations in social status.

### Status Systems

The proposition that rigid status systems are conducive to the emergence of radical working-class movements may be illustrated by contrasting the development of workers' parties in North America and Europe. In countries such as the United States and Canada, which did not inherit a fixed pattern of distinct status groups from feudalism, the development of working-class political consciousness, the notion of belonging to a common "class" with unique interests, required an act of intellectual imagination. In Europe, however, workers were placed in a common class by the stratification system (Epstein 1980, pp. 134-35). In a sense, workers absorbed a "consciousness of kind" from their ascribed position in the social structure. As Val Lorwin notes: "Social inequality was as provoking as economic injustice. Citizens of a country that has not passed through a feudal age cannot easily imagine how long its heritage conditions social attitudes. . ." (Lorwin 1954, p. 37; Sturmthal 1953, p. 18).

The early socialists were aware of the problem that the lack of a feudal tradition in the United States posed for them. In 1890, Friedrich Engels argued that Americans are "born conservatives—just because America is so purely bourgeois, so entirely without a feudal past. . ." (Engels 1936, p. 467, see also p. 501). The Austrian-born American socialist leader, Victor Berger, also accounted for the weakness of socialism as a result of the fact that "the feeling of class distinction in America . . . has not the same historic foundation that it has in Germany, France, or England. There the people were accustomed for over a thousand years to have distinct classes and castes fixed by law" (quoted in Friedberg 1974, p. 351). In 1906, H. G. Wells, then a Fabian, explained the absence in America of two English parties, Conservative and Labour, in terms of the absence of a "medieval heritage" of socially dominant and inferior strata (Wells 1906, pp. 72-76; Hartz 1955, pp. 50-64).

The absence of feudalism in the United States and Canada, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, sharply differentiated the working-class movements in these countries from those on the European continent. In North America, socialist parties were either very weak (the United States) or emerged late and remained small (Canada), while in Australia and New Zealand, working-class labor parties have always been much less radical than most of the socialist parties of continental Europe.

Still, the early existence of a powerful Labor party in Australia may seem to challenge the hypothesis that the absence of feudalism and aristocracy undermines class-conscious politics on the part of workers (Epstein 1980, p. 137). The pattern of politics in Australia, however, was profoundly influenced by the fact that it was largely settled by nineteenth-century working-class immigrants from industrial Britain, who brought the strong class awareness of the mother country with them (Ward 1959, p. 18; Rosecrance 1960, p. 121).

Many Australian immigrants had been involved in Chartist and similar working-class movements in Britain (Ward 1959, pp. 14-16, 157-58; Rosecrance 1960, p. 121). Hence, Australia imported the class values of the working class of the mother country. The emergence of class politics in Australia, in contrast with the North American pattern, also reflects the fact that the rural frontier in the Antipodes was highly stratified with sharp divisions between the owners of large farms and a numerous farm labor population (Sharp 1955, pp. 371-72). But despite strong class feelings, which facilitated the emergence of a powerful labor party, it was not Marxist, and hardly socialist or otherwise radical (Cole 1956, p. 853; Murphy 1975, p. 9; Epstein 1980, p. 137).

The case of New Zealand was somewhat different. Less urbanized than Australia, with a larger proportion of small, family-owned farms, its early British-derived two-party system of Liberals and Conservatives resembled that of the United States. The Liberals appealed to the small holders and the workers. The Labour party was weak until the post-World War I period. As in Britain, anti-union legislation induced the unions to try to elect Labour candidates. After having achieved the position of a strong third party in the 1920s, the New Zealand Labour party won power in 1935, capitalizing on the discontents of the Depression. Its electoral program in that year was characterized "by the omission of socialism and the substitution of measures which revived the old Liberal tradition" (Lipson 1948, p. 230).

In Europe, on the other hand, as Friedrich Engels noted, throughout the nineteenth century "the political order remained feudal" (cited in Mayer 1981, p. 131). Writing in 1892, he emphasized: "It seems a law of historical development that the bourgeoisie can in no European country get hold of political power—at least for any length of time. . . . A durable reign of the bourgeoisie has been possible only in countries, like America, where feudalism was unknown. . ." (Engels 1968a, p. 394).

As Joseph Schumpeter pointed out, in much of Europe, the nobility "functioned as a *classe dirigeante*. . . . The aristocratic element continued

to rule the roost *right to the end of the period of intact and vital capitalism*. . ." (Schumpeter 1950, pp. 136-37, emphasis in original). More recently, Arno Mayer has brilliantly detailed the ways in which "the feudal elements retained a formidable place in Europe's authority systems," down to World War II (Mayer 1981, p. 135; Bell 1973, pp. 371-72).

Although from the perspective of this article, the sharpest contrast in the political impact of varying status systems lies in the differences between the working-class movements of the English-speaking settler societies and those of continental Europe, there was great variation in the political behavior of the working classes within Europe that also may be related to differences in status systems.

Germany, whose socialist party was the largest in Europe before World War I, has frequently been cited as the prime example of an industrial society deeply influenced by the continuation of feudal and aristocratic values. Writing in the late 1880s, Engels stressed that Germany was "still haunted by the ghosts of the feudal Junker" and that it was "too late in Germany for a secure and firmly founded domination of the bourgeoisie. . ." (Engels 1968b, p. 97). Max Weber pointed to the continued emphasis on "feudal prestige" in Imperial Germany in explaining the behavior of its social classes (Dahrendorf 1967, p. 50). As Dahrendorf has noted: "If one wants to give the social structure of Imperial Germany a name, it would be a paradoxical one of an industrial feudal society. . ." (Dahrendorf 1967, p. 58; Parsons 1969, p. 71).

Many historians and social analysts have placed considerable emphasis on status differentiation in explaining the existence in Germany of numerous parties, each representing a particular status group and having a distinct ideology (Neumann 1932, pp. 9-21). Skilled German workers and socialist leaders exhibited a stronger hostility to the lowest segments of the population than occurred in other western countries (Michels 1906, pp. 511-14). For most European socialist parties, all depressed workers, whether urban or rural, were a latent source of support. But for the German socialists, the lowest stratum was a potential enemy. Writing in 1892, in a major theoretical work, Karl Kautsky, the leading Social Democratic theorist, described the "slum proletariat" as "cowardly and unprincipled, . . . ready to fish in troubled waters . . . exploiting every revolution that has broken out, only to betray it at the earliest opportunity. . ." (Kautsky 1910, p. 196).

The Austrian part of the Hapsburg Empire also retained major postfeudal elements into the twentieth century, as reflected in its electoral system, similar to that of Hohenzollern Prussia. Until

1895, the Austrian electorate was divided into separate entities—the aristocracy, chambers of commerce, cities, and rural districts, with the latter two being limited by property franchise. In 1895, a fifth class, all others, was added to give the poorer strata some limited form of representation. And, as in Germany, the socialist movement was radical and Marxist.

The strong support obtained by the Social Democrats in Sweden, culminating in the formation of the most durable majority socialist government in Europe, was deeply influenced by the strength of *Staendestaat* elements in the most status-bound society of northern Europe. Comparing the three Scandinavian countries at the end of the nineteenth century, Herbert Tingsten noted that “the Swedish nobility . . . still enjoyed considerable social prestige and acted partly as a rural aristocracy, partly as a factor in the bureaucratic machinery and officers’ corps, [and] was far more numerous than the Danish. . . [while] in Norway there was no indigenous nobility” (Tingsten 1973, p. 11; Rokken 1981, pp. 60-61). The social structure of Sweden in this respect resembled that of Wilhelmine Germany. Class position has correlated more strongly with party choice in Sweden than in any other European country, a phenomenon that helped generate majority support for the Social Democrats.

The strength of the Finnish Socialists, who in 1916 formed the first majority labor-based government in Europe, also can be linked to the character of the class system. The Finns were exposed to the strong emphasis on status and aristocracy that characterized both Russian and Swedish culture (Rokken 1981, p. 57). Finland was a Grand Duchy under the Czar from 1809 on, and a small Swedish minority was predominant within the social and economic upper classes (Allardt and Pesonen 1967, pp. 326-27). Before 1905, the Finnish Parliament was divided “into Four Estates or Houses: the Nobility, the Clergy, the Burghers, and the Peasantry. . . Major cleavages formed along these status dimensions and tended to co-align and reinforce each other” (Martin and Hopkins 1980, p. 186).

The political history of Great Britain, however, would seem to contradict the hypothesis that radical class consciousness was encouraged by sharp status differentiation derived from a feudal past and the continued influence of aristocracy. Marxists, such as Friedrich Engels, emphasized the importance of status factors in accounting for the fact that in England, the major capitalist nation of the nineteenth century, “the bourgeoisie never held undivided sway.” As he noted, the “English bourgeoisie are, up to the present day [1892] . . . deeply penetrated by a sense of their social inferiority . . . ; and they consider themselves highly

honoured whenever one of themselves is found worthy of admission into this select and privileged body” of the titled nobility (Engels 1968a, pp. 394-95).

The emphasis on status clearly has had an impact on British working-class politics from the outset of the Industrial Revolution down to the post-World War II period. E. P. Thompson has stressed that in the early nineteenth century, “there was a consciousness of the identity of interests of the working class or ‘productive classes,’ as against those of other classes; and within this was maturing the claim for an alternative system” (Thompson 1968, pp. 887-88). Such consciousness presumably facilitated the emergence of Chartism, the strongest working-class movement in the first half of the nineteenth century, which mobilized workers in a militant class-conscious struggle for the suffrage and ultimately may have helped to create the strong correlation between class position and electoral choice that has characterized British politics since World War I. As Peter Pulzer put it: “Class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail” (Pulzer 1967, p. 98).

But socialist movements were much weaker in Britain than in most Continental countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Labour Party, allied to the Liberals, did not become a factor in British politics until 1906, when it elected 30 members to Parliament, and it only secured major-party status after the First World War. This seeming anomaly is explained by analysts of British politics by the strength of *noblesse oblige* norms among the aristocracy, who consciously served as a “protective stratum” for workers by enacting factory reforms and welfare-state legislation, activities that won the support of the workers (to be discussed in more detail below).

In Latin countries such as France, Italy, and Spain, the strength of revolutionary labor movements (anarchist, syndicalist, left socialist, and later communist) on the one hand, and ultra-reactionary political tendencies among the middle and upper classes, on the other, has been related to the failure of these societies to develop a full-grown industrial system until after the Second World War. The aristocracies in these countries had declined in power by the late nineteenth century and did little to foster *noblesse-oblige* welfare policies for the workers. At the same time, their business classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were weakly developed and resembled a semifeudal stratum whose position was tied to family property (Brenan 1950, pp. 10-15; Landes 1951, pp. 334-53; Sawyer 1951, pp. 293-312; Daalder 1966b, pp. 56-57). Notwithstanding the Revolution of 1789, the French social

structure reflected, in Stanley Hoffman's words, a "feudal hangover . . . traditional Catholic doctrines (notably concerning the evils of capitalist accumulation) left their mark . . . ; the bourgeoisie in many ways imitated the aristocracy. . ." (Hoffman 1963, p. 5). As Val Lorwin emphasizes, writing about the bourgeoisie of France and Italy, ". . . they flaunted inequalities by their style of living. Their class consciousness helped shape the class consciousness of workers" (Lorwin 1958, pp. 342-43). This orientation, with its emphasis on family and its concern for the maintenance of explicit status lines, was associated with a profound antagonism to collective bargaining, labor legislation, and social security.

Strikingly, efforts to account for the moderate multiclass "people's party" orientations of the Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, and Danish labor and socialist movements have pointed to the weakness of feudal elements in these societies. Carl Landauer notes that Belgium had been much less of a *Staendestaat* than its neighbors.

Belgium is a business country, with a weak feudal tradition—much weaker than in Germany, France, or Britain. . . . In Belgium, fewer upper-class people than elsewhere think that they owe it to their pride to resist the aspiration of the underprivileged. . . . [E]ven less than in Britain or France and certainly less than in Germany was exploitation motivated by the idea that the humble must be kept in their places. . ." (Landauer 1959, p. 479).

A similar thesis has been advanced by Hans Daalder for two other small European countries, the Netherlands and Switzerland. As he notes (1966b, p. 55), in both, "the position of the nobility against that of burghers and independent peasants tended always to be weak and to grow weaker as capitalism expanded." And writing of his native country, the Netherlands, Daalder points out that the historic "political, social, and economic prestige" of the Dutch bourgeoisie, which dates back to preindustrial times, fostered conditions which "dampened working class militancy, and eased the integration of the working class into the national political community" (Daalder 1966a, p. 197).

Preindustrial Switzerland "was one of small farms, with no considerable estates or landed aristocracy." Erich Gruner cites a comment by a Swiss writer in the late 1860s that "the poor man felt himself less oppressed, since he had the satisfaction of having his freedom in the community (*Gemeinde*) and province (*Landsgemeinde*) and the pride that, he, himself, counted for as much as the richest factory owner, which gave him self-respect and let him raise his head high. . ." (Gruner 1968, p. 156). Factory and welfare legislation was enacted before 1900. Unlike the large

German and Austrian Social Democratic parties, the small Swiss "Socialist movement . . . was on the extreme right wing of the Second International" before World War I (Cole 1956, p. 611).

The labor and socialist movements of Denmark have been the most moderate in Europe (Castles 1978, p. 14). One recent analyst of the Danish case notes that although the Social Democratic Party has been "the dominant force in Danish politics for the past half century," its pragmatic reformist orientation poses the same question as that raised for the United States, "why there is no socialism in Denmark," a question that can only be answered by reference to its past (Cornell, n.d.). While the explanation for Denmark, as for the United States, must be multivariate, part of it would appear to be, as Herbert Tingsten has noted, that feudalism and the nobility were much less important in Denmark than in Germany and Sweden. And in Britain, "moral responses to the miseries that existed . . . [were] sufficient to preclude any revolutionary movement" (Cornell, n.d., p. 19).

The clearest discrepancy in the relationship between status systems and working-class politics outlined here occurred in Norway. There is consensus among students of Scandinavian society that Norway was less affected by feudalism and aristocratic status norms than the other northern countries (Aubert 1974, p. 111). Nevertheless, the major socialist movement in Norway decided in 1919 to join the Communist International and remained affiliated until 1923.

Analysts of Norwegian politics agree, however, that this development was an historic anomaly, an event response that was out of character with the behavior of Norwegian workers, as evidenced by the fact that the link with the Third International lasted only a few years. Norway appears to be "the exception that proves the rule." The Norwegian labor and socialist movements were weak and moderate until World War I. But the war, in conjunction with the development of cheap hydro-electric power, resulted in a period of sudden and very rapid industrialization and social dislocation, which created a large segment of workers without political traditions or loyalties who were prone to support of labor militancy and radicalism (Galenson 1952, pp. 105-20; Lipset 1981, pp. 53-57). The bulk of Norwegian workers were first organized at the time of the Russian Revolution and, as in many other countries, were swept up in the enthusiasm for the Revolution. But Norwegian socialism and trade unionism soon returned to the characteristic pattern of social democratic moderation (Eckstein 1966, p. 15). Thus, Norway fits the "pattern" up to 1914 and from the mid-twenties on. Even during the Great

Depression of the 1930s, the Communists remained a weak party, securing less than 2 percent of the vote.

### The Right to Participate

As emphasized at the outset, cross-national variations in working-class political activity were also affected by differences in the extent to which the proletariat was legally free to form class-based organizations and participate in the economic and political life of their societies. The greater the duration and intensity of state repression of working-class economic and political rights, the more likely workers were to respond favorably to revolutionary doctrines. As Max Weber concluded in his essay on the suffrage and democracy in Germany, "All the might of the masses is directed *against* a state in which they are only objects and not participants" (Weber 1958, p. 279).

The effect of participation may best be illustrated by examining the two principal paths by which the members of the working classes were accepted into the fabric of societies as political and economic citizens. The first involves their right to vote and to organize political parties that could play a constructive role in the polity; the second refers to the way working-class economic combinations, in the form of labor unions, were accepted as formally legitimate by the state and substantively legitimate by employers.

The absence of these rights throughout Europe for much of the nineteenth century emphasized the inferior status of the workers and peasants (Sturmthal 1953, pp. 20-22). The political organization of much of premodern Europe was based on functional representation by Estate or *Stand* (Bendix 1977, pp. 90-91). The lower classes, including the emerging proletariat, were not accepted as an Estate worthy of representation. And the parliaments of many European countries—Austria, Finland, Prussia, and Sweden, among others—were composed of members elected by the more privileged *Staende*. Some eventually created a new Estate for the outcaste groups. Thus their Constitutions legitimated the fixed hierarchical status orders. The contradiction between such patterns of hierarchical representation and the universalistic norms of capitalism and liberalism fostered efforts to secure plebiscitarian electoral systems, one man, one vote, as well as struggles for the right of free association, particularly for trade unions. The fight for the vote and the right to organize were perceived in terms of opposition to hierarchical class role, as part of a broad struggle for equality (Bendix 1977, pp. 96-105, 112-22).

The importance of the early granting of democratic rights for political activity has been emphasized by social analysts and historians in numerous contexts. T. H. Marshall, for one, noted that extreme ideologies initially emerged among new strata, in particular the bourgeoisie and working class, as they fought for the political and social rights of citizenship (Marshall 1964, pp. 65-123). Along these lines, many writers concerned with the question of "why no socialism in America?" have pointed to the early enfranchisement of the white working class as an important causal factor. Selig Perlman made this argument in *The Theory of the Labor Movement* when he suggested that a major cause of the lack of class consciousness among American workers

... was the free gift of the ballot which came to labor at an early date as a by-product of the Jeffersonian democratic movement. In other countries where the labor movement started while workingmen were still denied the franchise, there was in the last analysis no need for a theory of "surplus value" to convince them that they were a class apart and should therefore be "class conscious." There ran a line like a red thread between the laboring class and the other classes. Not so, where the line is only an economic one (Perlman 1928, p. 167).

This view was shared by Lenin, who maintained that the weakness of socialism in America and Britain before World War I stemmed from "the absence of any at all big, nation-wide *democratic* tasks facing the proletariat" (Lenin, n.d., p. 51). Other countries, in which manhood suffrage and full democratic rights were secured in the nineteenth century, such as Australia, Canada, Denmark, and Switzerland, were also resistant to efforts to create strong socialist parties.

Conversely, the denial of the suffrage proved to be a strong motive for class political organization in many European nations. The first major British labor movement, Chartism, was centered on the struggle for the vote. In some countries, general strikes were called by workers to force through a change in the electoral laws (Austria, 1896 and 1905; Finland, 1905; Belgium, 1902 and 1913; and Sweden, 1902). The struggle for suffrage often had a quasi-religious fervor and was viewed by its advocates as the key to a new and more egalitarian society, since the poor outnumbered the rich and would presumably secure a radical redistribution of income and opportunity if they had the necessary political rights. The existence of a limited franchise based on property made it clear to workers that political power and economic privilege were closely related. The withholding of the franchise often became a symbol of the position of workers as a deprived and pariah group. A restricted franchise encouraged the ideologists of

both unfranchised and privileged groups to analyze politics in terms of class power.

The exclusion of workers from the fundamental political rights of citizenship effectively fused the struggle for political and economic equality and cast that struggle in a radical mold. Thus, a large number of European socialist movements grew strong and adopted a radical Marxist ideology while the working class was still unfranchised or was discriminated against by an electoral system that was explicitly class or property biased. Such was the history of Austria, Germany, Finland, and Sweden, among others.

The variations in legal rights that influenced the character of working-class politics also helped to determine the relationship of trade unions to labor parties in different nations (Von Beyme 1980, pp. 237-43). Where both trade-union rights and male suffrage existed at an early date, the unions and the workers as a social force were able to press for political objectives by working with one or more of the non-socialist parties. And even when labor parties emerged, they did not adopt radical objectives.

As Gary Marks has noted in his study of trade-union political activity:

Where trade unions were firmly established before party-political mobilization was underway, the resulting party had to adapt itself to an already "formed" working class with its cultural ties and institutional loyalties. Unlike the parties that were established before the rise of trade unions, these parties could not integrate the working classes into a singular, inclusive, and politically oriented sub-culture of radical or revolutionary resistance against capitalism. In this important respect, then, the Social Democratic Party, the early guardian and shaper of trade unionism in Germany, stands opposite the British Labour Party, which, in Ernest Bevin's telling phrase, "has grown out of the bowels of the T.U.C." (Marks 1982, p. 89; Sturmthal 1953, pp. 37-62; Derfler 1973, p. 73).

Labor unions in the English-speaking countries became legitimate pressure groups oriented to pragmatic and immediate economic goals (Piereson 1979, p. 16). They were involved in many of the nonideological issues of the day, such as protection versus free trade, and immigration policies. Some of the more left or liberal non-socialist bourgeois parties supported social legislation desired by labor unions.

In those countries in which the trade union movement created a labor party, such as Australia and Britain, the original radical socialist promotion groups had comparatively little influence. The dominant working-class parties were controlled by trade unions and followed a pragmatic non-Marxian ideology. Socialists remained a comparatively small pressure group within these

organizations or sought to build their own parties outside the labor parties.

In nations where the state repressed economic combination, unions were faced with a common and overriding task, that of changing the rules of the game. The more intensive and longer lasting the state repression, the more drastic the consequences. Where the right to combine in the labor market was severely restricted, as it was in Germany, Austria, Russia, France, Spain, and Italy, the decision to act in politics was forced on trade unions. Whether they liked it or not, unions became political institutions; they had first to change the distribution of political power within the state before they could effectively exert power in the market. At the same time, extreme state repression or employer opposition minimized the ability of privileged groups of skilled workers to improve their working conditions in a sectional fashion. In this important respect, then, repression fostered socialist or anarchist ideologies that emphasized the common interests of all workers.

Where fundamental economic rights were denied to workers, strong radical organizations were established before unions were well developed. This meant that the parties formulated their ideologies in the absence of pressures for pragmatic policies from trade unions.

Where the working class was deprived of both economic and political rights, those who favored social change were necessarily revolutionary. The identification of state repression with privileged and powerful groups reinforced political ideologies that conceived of politics in demonological terms. Perhaps the most important example of this pattern was Czarist Russia. There, every effort to form legal trade unions or establish a democratic parliamentary regime was forcibly suppressed. This situation provided the ground for revolutionary lower-class political movements under the leadership of intellectuals or others of middle- or upper-class origin.

Although the goals of party and union tend to differ when both are tolerated by the state, under repression there is much less space for diversity. Both share the task of changing the political status quo. As Lenin observed in the context of Czarist Russia:

... the yoke of the autocracy appears . . . to obliterate all distinctions between a Social-Democratic organization and trade unions, because *all* workers' associations and *all* circles are prohibited, and because the principal manifestation and weapon of the workers' economic struggle—the strike—is regarded as a criminal (and sometimes even as a political) offense (Lenin 1973, p. 139).

The Leninist concept of the "combat party," with its reliance on secrecy and authoritarian dis-

cipline and its emphasis on the "conquest of power," developed as a reaction to the political situation of the time.

The situation in Finland also illustrates the interrelated effect of status and political factors on working-class politics. As in other areas of the Czarist Empire, manhood suffrage and trade-union rights did not exist. The Finnish Socialist party, formed at the end of the nineteenth century, appealed to the class discontents of the newly emerging working class and the much larger farm tenant population. The Socialists addressed themselves to the overlapping issues of class, democratic rights, cultural and linguistic identity, and national independence. This meant both that the movement was initially more revolutionary in its ideology than the parties in the other northern countries, and that it could successfully appeal for support outside the ranks of the small urban working class (Allardt and Pesonen 1967, pp. 326-29). Once manhood suffrage was won, as a result of the General Strike throughout the Czarist Empire in 1905, the Finnish Socialists secured 40 percent of the seats in Parliament, more than any other European party up to that time. Their parliamentary support grew to 43 percent in 1910, 45 percent in 1913, and to over 50 percent in 1916 (Martin and Hopkins 1980, pp. 196-97). The trade-union movement, however, was faced with governmental restrictions and with strong resistance from employers and remained very weak until the Russian Revolution (Knoellinger 1960, pp. 52-57). The continued strength of Finnish Communism down to the present stems in large part from the commitment to radical Marxist ideology fostered by the Finnish Socialists during the period of Czarist and Swedish minority domination (Laidler 1927, pp. 447-50, 489-90; Deutsch 1953, pp. 104-07; Waris 1958, pp. 211-14).

In Germany, to be discussed in more detail below, the continued domination of the Reichstag by traditional conservative forces, the absence of a democratic franchise in Prussia, and the strong repressive measures taken by Bismarck against the socialists in the 1870s and 1880s, bound the socialists and the trade unions formed by them into a distinct subculture having an explicitly revolutionary ideology (Roth 1963). In practice, of course, as Robert Michels and many other contemporary observers argued, the bureaucracy of the party gradually became conservative and opposed any measures that threatened its organizational stability. Nevertheless, the position of the labor movement as a semi-legitimate opposition group helped to perpetuate its use of radical terminology (Groh 1973, p. 34).

In Austria, as in Germany, the intransigence of the upper class had a decisive influence on the

character and ideology of the working-class movement. Anti-Socialist laws were in effect from 1866 to 1881, and a special law repressed the workers' party in many regions from 1881 to 1891 (Gulick 1948, pp. 21-24). The party and the unions, which cooperated closely in the struggle for the suffrage, adhered to a radical class-conscious ideology. Manhood suffrage for parliamentary elections was only attained in 1907 (Shell 1962, p. 11; Rokkan 1970, p. 85).

The achievement of this political goal, followed by a sharp increase in parliamentary representation, however, served to undermine the cohesion and radicalism of the workers' movement. As G. D. H. Cole notes, "the very success of the Austrians in winning the vote necessarily weakened their sense of the need for close unity. The main plank in their common programme having been withdrawn, it was none too easy to find another to take its place. Now that they had become an important parliamentary party the emphasis tended to shift to the struggle for social and economic reforms, especially for improved labour laws regulating conditions of employment and the development of social services on the German model. But these were poor substitutes because they tended to change the Socialist Party into a reformist party. . ." (Cole 1956, p. 538).

The Socialist party and the trade unions continued to make significant progress after the defeat and breakup of the Hapsburg monarchy in World War I. Such a situation should have resulted in the development of working-class political and labor movements integrated into the body politic, and a further moderation of their ideology in the direction of the British and Scandinavian patterns. In fact, this did not occur. But the responsibility did not lie with the Austrian labor movement. Rather, the Austrian conservatives, whose support was based on the rural population and business elements, and who were tied closely to the Catholic church, aristocracy, and monarchism, refused to accept the rising status of labor. Faced with rebuffs from the conservatives, the church, and the business strata, the socialists responded by adhering to Marxian class-war principles. Within the Socialist International, the Austrian party was considered to be on the far left, before it was suppressed in 1934.

The political development of the working class in Switzerland contrasts sharply with that in Germany and Austria. The gradualist emphasis of the predominantly German-speaking Swiss Social Democrats not only reflects the marked difference between the status systems of Switzerland and those of Prussia and Austria, noted earlier, but also the fact that universal manhood suffrage was introduced in many cantons by 1848. Thus, as in the United States, Swiss workers never had to

engage in a struggle for the vote (Rokkan 1970, p. 86). As Christopher Hughes (1975, p. 164) emphasizes, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the workers "had the fullest political rights, cantonal power was entirely within their reach. . . . The direct democracy of the referendum (or the *Landsgemeinde*) was available after 1875. . . . The normal political processes . . . seemed to place power in the hands of 'the people.'" As early as 1877, the Swiss electorate approved a referendum proposal regulating work conditions in factories (Siegfried 1950, p. 171). Swiss trade unions, although legal, faced severe conflicts with the government in the years preceding World War I, a fact that enabled "left-wing tendencies . . . to gain ground" within them (Cole 1956, p. 615). In this period, the unions stood considerably to the left of the party. The party, however, also briefly moved to the left during the First World War when it rejected the pro-war stance taken by the European parties in most of the war-torn countries. Both unions and party returned to their former moderate course during the 1920s.

The three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, varied considerably both in their status systems and the timing of the institutionalization of manhood suffrage, factors that affected the degree of radicalization of their working-class movements before World War I (Rokkan 1981, pp. 61-63). By 1898, the percentage of all adult males who had the right to vote was 86 in Denmark and 91 in Norway; the figure for Sweden was only 25 (Svaasand 1980, p. 403). Denmark had "moved straight into a system of nation-wide elections under a very extensive manhood suffrage in 1849" which gave almost three-quarters of men over thirty the right to vote (Rokkan 1970, p. 150). The Social Democratic Party, established in 1871, "was born reformist and committed to the parliamentary road to power. . . . Its moderation was probably due to the comparative ease of access that the liberal franchise afforded the industrial working class in Denmark and to the availability of bourgeois parties with which it could cooperate" (Luebbert 1983). The allegiance with the bourgeois left parties involved cooperation in Parliament to attain various economic and welfare measures. Danish labor organizations secured greater legitimation than any other in Europe when in 1899 the employers' federation and the unions "agreed to attempt, whenever possible, to settle their affairs by peaceful collective bargaining." The already strong unions continued thereafter to make economic gains and to become "among the best paid and strongly organized in Europe" (Cole 1956, p. 677).

In Norway, the least industrialized of the three Scandinavian countries before World War I, the

Socialists were weak electorally, even following the enactment of male suffrage in 1898, and cooperated closely with bourgeois parties, first the Liberals and later the Radicals. Pre-World War I "Norwegian Socialism resembled the Danish movement. . . . It was mildly reformist in character" (Galenson 1952, p. 151).

Unlike the situation in the other Scandinavian countries, Sweden's privileged classes resisted democratization until the first decade of the twentieth century. Although election to four Estates was abolished in 1866, the new system provided for a lower house chosen by a very restrictive income and property franchise (Rustov 1955, pp. 18-24). The absence of a broad suffrage pressed the Social Democratic party, founded in 1889, to concentrate on the struggle for the vote and encouraged the use of radical class-struggle rhetoric and tactics. The partial franchise fostered an anarchist movement, syndicalism, and antiparliamentary groupings inside the Social Democratic party. As Walter Galenson notes, "contributing to early socialist radicalism was the great conservatism of the society, the late introduction of the universal franchise, and the opposition on the part of large Swedish employers to trade unionism" (Galenson 1952, p. 152). Although the party became more moderate ideologically following the attainment of adult male suffrage for elections to the lower House in 1909, it continued to emphasize its adherence to Marxism until the First World War (Tingsten 1973, pp. 166-89). The Social Democrats were welcomed as an ally and potential coalition partner by the great bourgeois party, the pro-suffrage Liberals, with whom they were to form a wartime government in 1917. But as G. D. H. Cole notes, "even then, Swedish Socialism was still far from having acquired the status as an exponent of moderate Social Democracy which it won for itself in the period between the wars" (Cole 1956, p. 697).

The Dutch and Belgian cases were somewhat more complicated. Although, as noted earlier, the weakness of postfeudal status structures contributed to a relatively weak emphasis on class consciousness, full male suffrage came late to both countries. The proportion of adult males eligible to vote in the Netherlands was only one-quarter in 1890, rising after a change in the law to one-half in 1900, and to two-thirds by the start of World War I (Lijphart 1968, pp. 107-08; Daalder 1981, pp. 202-03). The Belgians enacted male suffrage in 1894, but on a weighted basis, giving extra votes to those with property (Rokkan 1970, p. 84; Mabile and Lorwin 1977, p. 390). The socialist parties of the Low countries, therefore, concentrated on securing equal voting rights for all males as an essential prerequisite to securing office.

The denial of adult suffrage resulted in some

support in both nations in the late nineteenth century for anarchism, syndicalism, and left-wing socialism. But the involvement of the bourgeois Liberal parties in the struggle for a wider suffrage and opposition to church schools helped move the workers' movements to the right. The socialists in each nation cooperated with the Liberals, a policy that was severely criticized by leftist parties elsewhere (Cole 1956, pp. 662-63, 642-45; Mabile and Lorwin 1977, p. 390). With the widening of the electorate and the expansion of Social Democratic representation before the Great War, the socialists in the Low countries tended toward reformism and seriously entertained proposals to form coalition governments with the Liberals (Cole 1956, pp. 662-63).

Dutch workers were in a more favorable position with respect to economic than political rights. The government did not oppose their right to organize unions or to strike after the repeal of an antistrike law in 1872. And as Lijphart notes, "Partly as a result of the benevolent attitude of the government, the many unions that were set up from about 1870 on, tended to be moderate in their demands and actions." The socialist union center (N.V.V.) eclipsed its anarcho-syndicalist rival and remained reformist politically in spite of considerable labor conflict in the pre-World War I and interwar eras (Daalder 1966a, p. 210).

In analyzing the relationship between economic and political rights and working-class political behavior, I have thus far dealt primarily with formal rights, that is, whether adult suffrage existed, and whether trade unions could function without serious legal difficulties. In fact, however, legal rights were only partial indicators of the will and capacity of the upper and business classes to resist the emergence of the working class as a political force. The right to vote or organize unions did not necessarily mean that labor had acquired a legitimate place in society, or that the pressures toward radicalism flowing from the position of the worker as political outcast had disappeared.

It is possible to distinguish among three situations: total repression, legal existence but constant conflict (i.e., *de jure* but not *de facto* recognition), and *de jure* and *de facto* recognition. The existence of the first two conditions usually indicates that the business classes still desire to destroy the organized expression of the labor movement. Under such conditions, labor may be expected to react strongly against capitalism and, perhaps, the existing political system as well.

France before World War II, Spain before 1975, and pre-fascist Italy are examples of nations where unions were weak because the business and conservative classes refused to grant *de facto* recognition to them. The consequences of this for

union strategy have been recognized by Fred Ridley:

There is a close relationship between weak, unorganized labour movements and the outbreak of revolutionary or anarchist activity in Russia, Spain and Italy, as well as in France. The unions had little bargaining power when it came to across-the-table negotiations with employers; they had neither the membership nor the organization with which to impress. Lack of funds, inability to pay strike benefits, meant that they could not hope to achieve their ends by ordinary peaceful strikes. They were thus forced to play for quick results: violence, intimidation and sabotage were the obvious weapons to choose (Ridley 1970, p. 18).

In much of Latin Europe, both the state and employers denied legitimacy to trade unions, i.e., their right to become the institutionalized representatives of workers, although in France manhood suffrage existed in the 1870s and in Spain from 1889. In France the Socialist party was able to gain electoral strength before unions were well developed. The party, however, had little success in fostering social legislation or trade-union organizations, given "the ferocity of bourgeois response to it" (Derfler 1973, p. 78; Sturmthal 1953, pp. 55-56). In countries where a wide franchise failed to provide "an effective lever in the hands of the masses, such 'democratic' reforms could paradoxically develop into a measure of plebiscitary control over them. This could result in an enduring alienation of sizable sections of the population rather than in their permanent integration in an effectively responsive political system" (Daalder 1966b, p. 54).

The French trade-union movement continued to face strong resistance from the state and the business class, both of which refused to grant unions a legitimate role as bargaining agents in the economy. The unions required a revolutionary ideology to motivate membership and leadership participation and thus sustain their organization. They found this ideology in syndicalism. As a number of historians have suggested, syndicalism, with its faith in violence and in worker spontaneity, was not merely an impractical flight of idealism, but a response to constraints that served to limit the alternatives facing unions. Ridley has noted:

The law forced workers into opposition to the state; in a measure, indeed, it persuaded them to reject the state altogether. Its provisions, biased heavily in favour of the employer, excluded the worker from its benefits—left him to all interests an outcast—*hors du pays legal*. The syndicalist doctrine of autonomy, the insistence that the labour movement must develop outside the state, create its own institutions to reinforce it, can be

understood in the light of its experience (Ridley 1970, p. 23; see also Stearns 1971, p. 13).

Distrust of parliamentary government and a strong emphasis on syndicalist and revolutionary class organization developed in Spain and Italy as well. As noted, Spain introduced universal male suffrage relatively early. But the government "continued to manage elections as it pleased, to the extent of deciding centrally who were to be elected, not only for its own party, but also to represent the recognized opposition groups" (Payne 1970, p. 22; Brennan 1950, pp. 5-8). In the big cities, it counted the ballots; in small towns and rural areas, the "caciques," local bosses, controlled (Cole 1956, pp. 754-55; Carr 1966, pp. 367-69). In Italy, the Liberals, who dominated the government in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, rigged the election results among a more restricted electorate by a variety of corrupt practices, comparable to those used in Spain. "These practices . . . left a heritage of cynicism, highly politicized administrative machinery, corruption, and the absence of civic pride and of vital local government" (Barnes 1966, pp. 306-08). The expansion of the suffrage in 1912 was followed by an election in which the governing Liberals added to corrupt practices a heavy "dose of violence to ensure success" (Gaetano Salvemini, quoted in Barnes 1966, p. 308).

In both countries, trade union organizations were harassed by state institutions that claimed to represent the electorate democratically. Because unions were weak, the conditions for the emergence of a genuine working-class leadership were absent. Consequently, intellectuals or other upper-class radicals came to dominate the labor movement. The weakness and instability of trade unions also resulted in few achievements that could legitimate gradualist and pragmatic goals. As Juan Linz notes with respect to Spain:

The bitterness of class conflict that ultimately led to semirevolutionary general strikes, local or regional insurrections . . . should not hide the fact that the labor movement was weak by comparison with other countries. Spanish labor lacked numbers, organizational and economic resources for strikes, success at the polls, and capacity for nationwide activities (Linz 1981, p. 368).

In Italy and Spain, as in France, the business classes continually resisted coming to terms with the trade union movement. Although unions had *de jure* recognition, the history of labor in these countries was characterized by constant warfare. Revolutionary syndicalism was strong in each country (Malefakis 1973, p. 5). In Italy, syndicalism gained strength as a reaction to the repeated suppression of local strikes and popular protest movements that often involved the use of

violence (Cole 1956, pp. 733-34). In Spain, anarchism grew in response to "alternate periods of legal toleration and savage repression" (Carr 1966, p. 440). This pattern culminated in the triumph of authoritarianism in both Italy and Spain and the establishment of regimes that were primarily oriented toward maintaining the economic and class status quo. And as in France, the working class and its leaders responded by supporting extremist doctrines. Thus, in Spain, moderate socialism was relatively weak, whereas doctrines such as revolutionary socialism, anarchism, and even Trotskyism were strong. In Italy, anarchism and left socialism were influential before Mussolini, and moderate socialism, even today, remains relatively weak; the bulk of the working class supports the Communist party.

It is also worth noting that both Spain and Italy were industrially backward societies in the late nineteenth century when radical working-class movements emerged. Like fascism itself, anarchism has been viewed as an antimodern doctrine, a reaction against the strains of modernity (Carr 1966, p. 444). In this context, it should be noted that in France, too, syndicalism was strongest among craft workers in small-scale industries that were most threatened by industrialization and mass production.

The adoption of an anarchist or syndicalist political ideology had specific and identifiable consequences for trade-union movements. Syndicalism committed them to a loose, unstable, and relatively unbureaucratic organization. This structure, in turn, required the unions and their leaders to stress ideology at the expense of building loyalty on the basis of concrete gains achieved through collective bargaining. It also reduced those inhibitions on militant action that result from the need to protect an established structure.

In discussing the denial of legitimacy to socialists and trade unions, I have focused primarily on the influence this had on their activities and ideologies. But, obviously, the relationship is not a simple cause-and-effect one. The behavior of the left had its effect on the right. In particular, one should not ignore that France, Italy, Spain, and Austria are Catholic, which meant that the traditional struggle between the left and right was not solely, or even primarily, an economic class struggle but also was a confrontation between Catholicism and atheism or secularism. Many of the Catholic conservative leaders viewed the battle against Marxism and working-class institutions as part of the fight for their religion. To accept the legitimacy of a working-class movement that was Marxist and irreligious involved a much greater modification in their value systems than was necessary in situations where religious values were not involved, as in Britain and Australia.

In the Catholic societies of Western Europe, the

church, in alliance with landed interests, attempted to establish trade unions and political organizations to counter the influence of socialism among the lower classes. The result was the "pillarization" of the working class into mutually antagonistic Catholic and socialist tendencies. In France, Italy, Spain, and Austria, socialist parties not only were rejected by the ruling powers, they were also opposed by a major segment of the working class. Both of these factors furthered the development of radical movements. Reformism tended to be more typical of working-class politics and unions in countries where labor was powerfully represented by unitary organizations that were accepted into the political and economic mainstream.<sup>1</sup>

### Efforts at Integration: Britain and Germany

The previous discussion indicates that radical ideologies were strongest where social and political groups attempted to reduce or destroy the influence of leftist or working-class movements by refusing them legitimacy and continually fighting them. In countries in which the working class was incorporated into the body politic at an early date, the chances that workers would come to support extremist or revolutionary doctrines were considerably reduced.

The American experience clearly illustrates the consequences for working-class movements of integration into society. There the absorption occurred as a result of social structures, values, and events that predated industrial society. The European experience offers insights into the effects of deliberate efforts to win the allegiance of the working class. An examination of Great Britain and Germany is particularly informative because in both countries, sections of the ruling strata consciously sought to reduce the class antagonism of the workers by accommodating their demands; yet the attempt succeeded in Britain and failed in Germany.

The conventional explanation of why Marxism is weak in Britain suggests that the landed aristocracy and their party, the Tories, who retained considerable power in nineteenth-century Britain, sought to stem the growing power and ideology of the rising industrial business class by winning the allegiance of the "lower orders." In their opposition to the new capitalist society and in a desire to

preserve past institutions and values, Conservatives, led by Disraeli, often took the same position as the spokesmen of the working classes. As Hearnshaw points out:

The "young England" Tories [which Disraeli joined] . . . with their curious affection for an idealized feudalism and chivalry, had much in common with the Chartists and other proletarian reformers of the early Victorian days. With them they deplored and resented the operation of the new poor law of 1834; they opposed the principles of laissez-faire; they hated the new machinery and the hideous mills in which it was housed; they protested the repeal of the usury laws and the corn laws; they distrusted the new stock-jobbers and the joint-stock bankers . . . [their] principles flowed naturally from the mainstream of the conservative tradition (Hearnshaw 1933, pp. 219-20).

The Tories, however, maintained a traditional view of the relationship between rich and poor, one that was based on an idealization of class relations as they existed in pre-industrial society. They assumed that the lower classes should remain "dependent" on the upper class and that the latter, in turn, should be responsible for the welfare of the lower strata.

Some of the leaders of the aristocratic upper classes were able to perceive the extent to which the new industrial workers—despite occasional violent protest actions and increasing class consciousness—shared their view of "the good old days and the bad new days," and, more important, desired recognition and status within the existing order (Bendix 1977, p. 46). Disraeli believed in the traditionalism of the lower classes. He was able to secure the passage of the Electoral Reform Act of 1867 as well as some social legislation. To this must be added the relative freedom that British trade unions attained in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, especially through the labor laws of 1875. The facts of political life, plus the steadily rising standard of living, demonstrated to workers and their leaders that it was possible to improve their position within British society. Both the Tories and Liberals formed workers' associations.

The reformist policies of British politicians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped to integrate workers into the national community, to reduce their hostility to existing political institutions (the state, the throne, and the major parties), and to adopt gradualist rather than revolutionary methods. Friedrich Engels noted that the absence of "a separate political working-class party" was to be expected "in a country where the ruling classes have set themselves the task of carrying out, parallel with other concessions, one point of the Chartists' pro-

<sup>1</sup>It should also be noted that the involvement of workers in religious parties also helped move such groups to the left in social policies, once democratic institutions were stabilized. In the Low countries, in particular, the recognition of workers' rights by the religious groups helped to moderate the behavior of the socialists as well (Daalder 1981, pp. 207-08).

gramme, the People's Charter, after another" (Engels 1953, p. 466). Although a labor party gained strength in Britain in the early 1900s, following the Taff-Vale court decision that threatened the power of the trade unions, the leaders of the new movement did not view the other parties as class enemies who had to be eliminated. Rather, they conceived of a separate labor party as an electoral tactic, which would place labor in a better position to bargain with the older parties. The development of a stable, legitimate, labor movement created a stratum of working-class leaders who had secured position and power within the existing social system and consequently had close ties to it. The emergence of Fabianism as a political force in Britain is in large measure explicable by the fact that the Fabians, with their initial hope that the upper class could be converted to socialism, reflected the actual British historical experience of aristocratic intervention on behalf of the workers.

In Germany, a situation similar in certain important respects to that in Britain led to a comparable effort to integrate the lower classes into the society. The aristocracy, crown, and state bureaucracy sought to inhibit the influence of the rising liberal bourgeoisie (Roth 1963, pp. 59-62). Bismarck, who was the chief exponent of this policy, established universal suffrage in the federal empire after 1867 so that he could use the votes of the rural lower classes, and to a certain extent of the workers themselves, against the urban middle classes, who, he realized, would dominate in a restricted property-based suffrage (Meinecke 1928, pp. 522-23; Schultze 1980, p. 129).

Unlike Disraeli and the British Tories, however, Bismarck had little confidence that the workers' organizations would become incorporated into the social order. This led him to outlaw the socialist movement in 1878 and to hope that by enacting social welfare measures advocated by the socialists he could win the loyalty of workers to the regime. The conservative *Sozialpolitik*, however, came too late. The workers had already begun to support the socialist movement; efforts to suppress it only served to undermine moderate representatives of the working class (Lidtke 1966, pp. 320-32). This act of repression is generally recognized to be one of the chief sources of the difference in the political development of the German and British working classes (Buddenburger 1922, p. 164; Schumpeter 1950, pp. 341, 343).

Bismarck attempted to incorporate the proletariat by winning its loyalty to society without permitting workers to have their own organizations and leaders. By the time working-class political organization was legalized in 1890, the Social Democrats had acquired a revolutionary ideology

that was difficult to discard even after the party had become a strong and stable movement, capable of antagonizing and frightening the middle and upper classes (Schumpeter 1950, p. 343).

The Bismarckian policies deeply affected the outlook and strategy of German workers. First, and most important, they placed Social Democracy in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, the party was successful: it grew steadily from one election to the next, attracted hundreds of thousands of members and employed a large bureaucracy. It gradually adapted itself to the role of a parliamentary opposition, which anticipated coming to power through democratic means. On the other hand, however, the ideology developed during and immediately following the period of repression gave it the appearance of being devoted to purely revolutionary ends and legitimized the agitation of extreme leftists within its ranks. (The party rewrote its program in 1891, after twelve years of overt repression, to emphasize its intransigence.) Until World War I, the SPD refused to repudiate its formal belief in class warfare. In large part, the subsequent strength of left-wing socialists and Communists may be explained by the legitimacy the ideology of the Social Democratic party gave to such groups within the working class.

Second, Bismarck's policies, and the socialists' ideological reactions to them, prevented the SPD from becoming a legitimate national party in the eyes of other political movements. The socialist revolutionary rhetoric may have prevented many of the middle-class, white-collar strata from supporting the Party, while at the same time strengthening the potential for an alliance between the middle class and industrialists and large landowners (Neumann 1932, p. 164).

Third, Bismarck's "social revolution from above" included a number of welfare programs that in other countries had been the responsibility of the unions themselves and had helped to stabilize conservative unions. August Bebel, the leader of the Social Democratic party, pointed this out in a speech in 1893:

In Germany, the state system of workingmen's insurance took away from the trade unions that branch of activity, and has in effect cut a vital nerve, as it were. For benefit systems had meant enormously in the furthering of unionism in Britain and among the German printers. Labor legislation has likewise preempted many other lines of activity which properly belong to the trade unions. . . (Bebel, quoted in Perlman 1928, pp. 77-78).

The fact that the state, rather than the unions, controlled welfare funds and dictated policies, which elsewhere were handled through collective bargaining, served to increase the awareness of

workers and their leaders of the need to influence state policy. The potential for a syndicalist anti-statist doctrine was reduced, since conservative state intervention stimulated the belief that workers should take over and use the state system. The trade unions, far from becoming antistatist, became more statist in their orientation. But at the same time, the elimination of various trade-union functions weakened the loyalty of workers to the labor movement and reduced the stability of the unions, which denied them the role in maintaining political stability that unions in various other countries, particularly Britain, assumed (Neumann 1932, p. 92).

The effect of varying upper-class policies on the behavior of working-class movements can be illustrated within Germany as well as through international comparisons. As a number of political commentators have noted, the socialist movement in Prussia was quite different from that in southern Germany, especially Bavaria. In Prussia, which contained over half the population of the country, Bismarck pursued the same combination of repression and paternalism that he adopted for the federal empire. Prussia, a highly industrialized part of Germany, retained legal limits on the potential power of the workers even after the anti-Socialist laws were repealed. These restrictions were in the form of an electoral system based on three estates, which gave the middle classes and the landed nobility effective control over the Prussian legislature. The restrictions were, in large part, motivated by the fact that a purely democratic franchise would give a majority to the Socialists and the Catholic Zentrum, both anti-government parties. And as Kautsky noted in 1911, the working-class movement in Prussia gave much more emphasis to class-struggle doctrines (cited in Buddenburger 1922, p. 122).

In the South, where governments were much less autocratic than in Prussia, in part because the old landed aristocracy was relatively unimportant and the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie proportionately stronger, the degree of political freedom was much greater. In Southern Germany, the Social Democrats cooperated with nonsocialist parties, in the process reducing their original emphasis on class struggle. The Revisionist doctrines of Eduard Bernstein were given their earliest and strongest support in the South. The Bavarian socialists, for example, broke with the tradition of the party and voted for the state budget (Gay 1952, pp. 254-55; Rosenberg 1931, pp. 48ff).

Bismarck failed in his effort to destroy German socialism through force. His refusal to incorporate the socialist political movement in a democratic parliamentary system helped to perpetuate revolutionary rhetoric. But the fact remains that the Social Democrats eventually became a stable,

moderate, opposition party (Roth 1963, pp. 163-71). Its commitment to Marxism was largely aimed against the militarist imperial state (de Man 1928, pp. 428-33).

The failure of Bismarckian policy is evident in the rise of large movements on the left of the Social Democrats after World War I. The momentum for such movements emerged from the prewar contradiction between Social Democratic party behavior and ideology. Although support for the Communists declined in the late twenties, they made considerable headway in the early 1930s. In Britain, on the other hand, communism and fascism were weak and found no social roots.

The identification of varying British and German policies with Disraeli and Bismarck is not intended to suggest that the sharply divergent histories of the two countries may be credited to the wisdom of one and the stupidity of the other. Rather, as Barrington Moore has emphasized, the structural histories of the British and German aristocracies differed greatly. A combination of factors led the British upper classes to collaborate economically with the rising bourgeoisie and to set their peasants free. The landed aristocracy developed "bourgeois economic habits" and accepted parts of liberal political doctrine. In Germany, on the other hand, the aristocracy continued to preside over a "labor-repressive agrarian system" and to work with the monarchy and the "royal bureaucracy" rather than the business classes. This relationship produced, or rather reinforced, an emphasis on obedience and control from the top. Thus, the divergent policies of British and German upper-class conservatives reflected basic variations in their nations' social structures (Moore 1967, pp. 413-50).

### Conclusion

In this article I have analyzed some of the ways in which the character of working-class movements has been influenced by the varying status systems of different societies and by the degree to which workers and their organizations were able to participate legitimately in the economic and political decision-making processes. In the United States, and to a lesser extent in Canada, the absence of an aristocratic or feudal past, combined with a history of political democracy prior to industrialization, served to reduce the salience of class-conscious politics and proposals for major structural change. As Walter Dean Burnham has emphasized: "No feudalism, no socialism: with these four words one can summarize the basic sociocultural realities that underlie American electoral politics in the industrial era. . . ." (Burnham 1974, p. 718).

Conversely, in much of Europe, a "post-

feudal" background was critical in shaping the political consciousness of the working class. As William Sewell, Jr. notes, "one of the most important roots of European class consciousness may have been the corporate cultural tradition of the pre-industrial European working class. This tradition made workingmen feel that their destiny was linked to that of their fellow workers, and predisposed them to collective, rather than individualistic, ideologies and modes of social and political action. . ." (Sewell 1976, pp. 232-33).

The proletarian movements, born as *Staende*, adopted Marxism as their ideological cement and sought to achieve legitimation within the bourgeois order through constitutional reforms, the acquisition of citizenship. The emergence of radical politics originated as a consequence of the meshing of the hierarchical *Staende* with the inequalities of an emerging capitalist society differentiated into economic classes. Ironically, in trying to change the perception of the social hierarchy from *Stand* to class, radical working-class movements drew on and revitalized the sense of *Stand*-consciousness that they inherited. Many of the pre-World War I Social Democratic parties, as well as postwar Communist parties, also sustained corporative forms of group solidarity by creating a socially encapsulated working-class culture, in which their followers were involved in a plethora of party and union-related organizations (Sturmthal 1972, p. 24; Shell 1962, pp. 9-11).

Where the corporate tradition broke down or never existed, what developed were interest-group organizations and ideologies. As Lenin and Perlman argued from contrary political perspectives, the orientation that stems from the class position of the proletariat is pure and simple trade unionism, or "economism," not revolutionary class consciousness. Against the background of Marxist theory, the outcome is paradoxical. For Marx and Engels maintained that the "logic of

capitalism" would give rise to revolutionary movements, and that, to the degree that remnants of feudalism were removed and the victorious bourgeoisie established civic and political rights, class disparities would become the politically decisive facts engendering working-class consciousness and leading to proletarian revolution. The historical experience suggests that, with respect to the legacy of feudalism and political rights, the reasons for working-class radicalism were quite the opposite.

The impact of these variables is formalized in Table 1, which links the relationship between the social-class system and the rights to political and economic citizenship to the way in which workers responded in the decades before World War I. Table 1 illustrates both the weakness and strength of the type of comparative analysis undertaken here. The attempt to specify the kind of working-class movements that emerged under varying status systems and citizenship rights does not express the complexity of the phenomenon. Obviously, a static classification based on the dichotomization of three continuous variables cannot be expected to produce categories into which each national case fits through time. (For example, the United States and Denmark may both be classified as nonrigid status systems, although that of Denmark clearly has a greater continuity with a preindustrial corporate *Stand* tradition than the United States.)

The behavior of workers in western societies before and after World War I was, of course, deeply affected by other variables, including the pace, extent, and shape of industrial development within their societies or how closely the objective social and economic situation "fit" the Marxist two-class model of an oppressive society. It is also important to recognize that these three factors are not independent of each other, although they may be distinguished analytically. Britain apart, the extension of postfeudal aristocratic power or

Table 1. Outcomes of different combinations of social-class patterns and citizenship rights before World War I

Economic citizenship	Political citizenship	Citizenship rights	
		Nonrigid	Rigid
Early	Early	Low political consciousness, weak interest-group unions (U.S.)	Low political consciousness, strong reformist unions (Britain)
Early	Late	Strong reformist parties and unions (Low countries)	Radical parties, strong pragmatic unions (Germany)
Late	Early	Weak reformist parties, radical unions (Switzerland)	Strong reformist parties, radical unions (France)
Late	Late		Revolutionary movements (Russia, Finland)

values into the industrial era was associated with repressive political or economic patterns. And the British case may be explained by the fact that the aristocracy developed closer links to business than elsewhere. The emergence of democratic rights was in large measure tied to bourgeois hegemony. As Barrington Moore phrased it: "No bourgeois, no democracy" (Moore 1967, p. 418).

While the stress on the relationship between fundamental economic and political rights and the ideology of the labor movements is not meant to suggest that the character of contemporary movements is determined simply by their early history, the formative experiences did initiate certain trends or institutional patterns that took on a self-perpetuating character and hence affected ideology, structure, and political outcomes in later years (Von Beyme 1980, pp. 237-56). Most of the countries in which workers found it difficult to attain economic or political citizenship before World War I were the ones in which fascist and communist movements were strong in the interwar period: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Currently, commitment to democratic institutions appears strong in Austria and Germany, but, as Dahl notes, "it is untested by adversity" (Dahl 1966, p. 360). Although declining in electoral strength, communist movements are still very influential among workers in Finland, France, and Italy. Spain, democratic since 1975, remains problematic.

Although formative experiences continue to have an impact on the contemporary body politic, particularly in distinguishing the European from the overseas settler societies, it is obvious that many of the differences discussed here no longer hold for present-day Europe. Apart from Britain, postfeudal elements have declined greatly or have disappeared in the industrialized countries. The economic miracle of prosperity and growth that followed World War II changed occupational structures, status systems, levels of income, and the distribution of educational attainments in ways that reduced many of the social strains characteristic of prewar industrial societies. Logically, in terms of the analysis presented here, which derives from the approaches of Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter, the amount of class-related political conflict should be reduced as the dynamics of an industrial society undermine the status mechanisms inherited from the feudal pre-capitalist order. The imposition on the stratification system of capitalism's or industrial society's stress on achievement and universalism should weaken rather than increase class-linked consciousness of kind. And significantly, the correlations between class and party voting have been declining steadily (Lipset 1981, p. 505).

These changes, however, have given rise to new

tensions reflective of an emerging postindustrial society. The new divisions can be understood as the most recent examples of the basic cleavages that structure comparative mass politics, systematically analyzed by Stein Rokkan (1970). I have discussed the character of these conflicts elsewhere and will not elaborate on them here (Lipset 1981, pp. 503-21). But it is important to note that the prominence of so-called post-materialist issues, such as quality of life, ecology, sexual equality, international relations, and ethnic rights, have changed the divisions between the left and right and have affected their bases of support. These new issues are linked to an increase in middle-class political radicalism and working-class social conservatism.

The working classes in western society no longer have to undergo repression. They have acquired economic and political citizenship. It is still possible, however, to relate the forms of present-day politics, particularly party labels and formal ideologies, to the emergence of new social strata in the formative period of modern politics. Should the western world experience a major crisis, it is likely that national politics will vary along lines that stem from the past, much as they did during the 1930s. Political scientists of the future, who seek to explain events in the last quarter of this century, will undoubtedly find important explanatory variables in earlier variations in the behavior of the major political actors.

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