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Brad Rose and George Ross

# Socialism's Past, New Social Democracy, and Socialism's Futures

The ideas of socialism grew in ordinary people's lived experience of all-encompassing markets, totalizing doctrines of individualism, the power of capitalist property over human dignity and destiny, and equations between market success and human merit. Codified into doctrine, socialism was productivist, seeing the work experience as that which determined personal identity and the shape of social collaboration. It was also class analytical, mapping the social world in terms of classes in conflict and specifying the

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working class as the central social actor and agent for change. Third, it was egalitarian democratic, rejecting arbitrary distinctions determining different stations in life. Finally, socialism was utopian, revolutionary at least in aspiration if not always in deed. The capitalist order could be, and ought to be, radically transcended. Socialism, which would follow, would reappropriate control over work and its fruits by “the workers” and would facilitate full democracy, equality, and the consecration of a creative and cooperative social order.

The socialist family has always been divided. The recent extinction of two of its three collateral branches, communism and revolutionary third-worldism, the major positions on the “left of the left” in the twentieth century,<sup>1</sup> has left only social democracy remaining as an organized vehicle for socialist ideas. Social democracy, its longevity assured by electoral success, time in power, and influence over policy, has not escaped the *fin de siècle* crisis of socialism, however. The logics of modern capitalism, which for some time after 1945 favored social democracy, have turned against it, as we discuss in the first part of this essay. To survive politically, modern social democracy has had to change in fundamental ways. These changes, in turn, place social democracy in a difficult and contradictory political situation whose dilemmas, which we explore in the second part, mean that contemporary social democracy has great mobilizational and coherence problems. The ultimate aim of this article is to consider the implications of these changes and the dilemmas that flow from them for democracy.

### The Three Lives of Social Democracy

Behind the early-twentieth-century crisis of revisionism that spawned official communism lay the fact that workers, however interested they might have been in social change, were not directly revolutionary.<sup>2</sup> Connected was the problem that their organizations, unions in particular, were more interested in survival in capitalism than in radical social transformation.<sup>3</sup> The shock of 1914—when workers marched off patriotically to the trenches, ending the dream of proletarian internationalism—was a turning point (Haupt 1965). The deeper lesson was that early socialist projections about the development of capitalist societies had proven inaccurate. Capitalism remained a

harsh system, but it had turned out much more durable and complex than nineteenth-century theorists had anticipated. In a generic sense there have been three successive social democratic responses to this.

### Version One

In response, most social democrats concluded that socialism should be pursued within national parliamentary institutions and elections and, in addition, that socialism itself could be reconceived as the result of pushing capitalist democracy beyond its capitalist limits.<sup>4</sup> This meant abandoning revolution and rejecting the substitution of official communism.<sup>5</sup> Tactically it implied cross-class electoral coalitions, approaches to non-working-class groups, and the moderation of more purist socialist positions (Przeworski 1985).

The reformist approach that emerged, social democracy's first major twentieth-century configuration, was not immediately successful. It aspired to build a model of counterhegemonic insertion of workers into a wide-ranging and enveloping network of organizations around social democratic parties, one of the reasons for what success it had. Despite its relative moderation, however, its program—public ownership, neocorporatist labor relations, social protection, and sometimes Keynesianism *avant l'heure*<sup>6</sup>—still scared capital and a Right that often was but precariously committed to democratic processes.<sup>7</sup> More important, it did not seduce a sufficiently large number of non-working-class voters. Thus, even though social democracy did make electoral progress, it was rarely able to win decisively and even more rarely able to implement its new programs.<sup>8</sup>

Stinging defeats in the interwar period, administered in very different ways by the rise of fascism, the Great Depression, and the coming of Fordist mass production, ultimately brought some new answers. Keynesianism could, in the right circumstances, turn capitalism into a positive-sum game. The years from World War II through the 1970s thus became glory days for social democracy, its second, most successful configuration. It held power often, worked reforms, and, quite as important, reshaped the political agendas of most advanced capitalist democracies, putting capital and the Right on the defensive.

## Glory Days

The Keynesian–social democratic method was built around nested compromises between labor and capital whose premise was the possibility of conciliating capitalist competitiveness and profit with openings for redistribution and democratization. On the level of public policy, the stimulation of demand, which social democrats insisted should be set to produce near-to-full employment, moderated the business cycle and allowed mass-production capitalism to tap a predictable and growing consumer market. Minor redistributions of income and wealth through taxation were small (if always contested) prices for capital to pay. Greatly expanded welfare state programs moderated capitalism's otherwise harsh allocation of misfortunes while providing a degree of countercyclic income stability. Expanding state intervention and employment worked in the same directions. New deals in the workplace gave higher wages and greater employment security to workers—unionized male workers in the first instance—in exchange for quiescence about technological change to enhance productivity. By consenting to such deals capital also helped create an important new working-class “market segment” that was sufficiently well remunerated, when assisted by various credit schemes, to consume the products that it itself produced.

Social democratic success was thus underwritten by a *de facto* treaty with monopoly capital. Socialists accepted the quasi permanence of capitalism in exchange for hopes that it could be sufficiently humanized and democratized to constitute a livable society, in essence that capitalist efficiency and reformist redistribution could be combined. The treaty was productivist at heart: economic growth was the key to achieving these hopes. Facilitating, fine-tuning, and sharing the fruits of this growth became the central policy matters at hand. This nearly exclusive focus on promoting capitalist expansion involved setting aside early socialist dreams of redefining work to liberate human creativity and cooperation in favor of the postwar boom's consumerist trivialization. The boom period's deals came also at the expense of relative indifference to noneconomic inequalities like racism and sexism and to damage to the environment on a global scale. Finally, social democratic strategies and the institutions for their implementation were heavily bureaucratic and statist. To an important degree, successful social democracy encouraged citizens to delegate their power to experts and institutions

rather than to be personally empowered. Often enough the results were cold organizations embodying, at best, a technocratic noblesse oblige dispensing standardized benefits to clients.

Still, for nearly three decades—even more in Scandinavia, where innovations came earlier and went further—this complex of deals allowed much electoral success.<sup>9</sup> Quite as important, it contributed to the longest economic boom in the history of capitalism. The accomplishments of this extraordinary moment in terms of material betterment changed lives, and the establishment of “kinder and gentler” material conditions for many people ought not to be underestimated.<sup>10</sup>

## New Capitalism

During the glory days of Fordist-consumerist compromise the nation-state could hope to regulate national economic flows by controlling capital movements, exchange rates, fiscal policies, and the strength of demand; hence the relative effectiveness of Keynesian techniques. The state had thus become a central agent in the accumulation process, moving tax revenues and national savings and using state agencies to achieve economic policy goals. In general terms, during the postwar boom era many important social choices, including extensive efforts to structure and frame the market itself, could be made through conscious political processes. These processes, through which a wide range of public goods were generated, could in turn be influenced by the political struggle of organized groups. Well-organized and politically salient working-class movements could therefore gain a degree of power.<sup>11</sup>

The virtuous cycle of postwar economic growth closed in the mid-1970s. Oil shocks, stagflation, increased competition, deindustrialization in traditional sectors, low investment, monetary chaos, low productivity growth, and rising unemployment replaced optimism about continuing expansion. In fact, capitalism was beginning the transition to a new stage of globalism. Nation-state-based, Keynesian–social democratic policies no longer worked adequately. The new dynamics of accumulation subsequent to the two oil shocks had devastating effects. Globalization helped reverse trends toward political regulation and brought a decisive shift toward the marketization of decision making, away from conscious political choice. Moreover, the nature

and content of much of the remaining political decision making changed. In the new context, the nation-state became a mediator between internationalized capitalist economic flows over which it had declining control (Scharpf 1988). Conscious political intervention did not disappear, of course, but it re-focused, in “supply-side” ways, on the promotion of a nation’s international competitiveness, away from earlier regulation of a wide range of social choice.

These changes included hammer blows to the working class. As capital turned toward use of the entire planet as production location and circulation space, labor markets became global. Working classes remained national, at least in terms of collective identity. Simultaneously the culmination of longer-term occupational changes brought massive development of new middle strata and tertiary occupations and a striking feminization of the labor force. The working class had been defined by labor and social democracy largely in terms of male, unionized, blue-collar manufacturing operatives.<sup>12</sup> As this category progressively became smaller in relative terms, claims made on its behalf that it was some sort of “universal class” whose interests ought to be the centerpiece of the Left’s platforms became less credible.<sup>13</sup> It was no accident that class-analytical visions of the world started losing their intellectual credibility.

Parallel changes in the 1980s further undercut the power of many, if not most, of the union movements that had been the traditional mass support of the social democratic Left. High unemployment, “flexibilization,” and changing labor market structures have had devastating effects. In Europe, where official unemployment figures above 10% mask much higher real levels and where there has been an explosion of “junk jobs” and other forms of precarious employment, it became customary to speak of a “two-thirds, one-third society” in which the bottom third was substantially excluded (Therborn 1989). Neocorporatist arrangements, which were the backbones of postwar social democratic regulation, were displaced; union membership declined, and union efforts at mobilization became more difficult to sustain.<sup>14</sup> Capital, organized by relatively impersonal market structures, functioned internationally. Labor, organized painstakingly over nearly a century by great self-conscious struggle within national boundaries, continued to function nationally.

The predominant logic of industrial restructuring *within* specific advanced capitalist societies had its own decomposing effects on the traditional

bases of social democracy.<sup>15</sup> The new supply-side outlook of firms and governments brought with it mechanisms and techniques to seduce and prod labor to focus more on life at firm level rather than on national matters. Collective bargaining was slowly decentralized toward the firm, for example, while various organizational efforts to create firm-oriented worker consciousness—work teams, quality circles, official works’ councils, expression groups, merit-based individualized salary scales, and/or simple propaganda barrages—were generalized.<sup>16</sup> One consequence of such decentralizing tendencies was that the focus of worker’s consciousness became less and less national and more and more localized or regionalized (with, in places like the European Community, growing possibilities for regions to straddle actual national frontiers).

### New Social Democracy

Older social democratic formulae ceased to work primarily because the felicitous post-1945 congruence between national capitalist competitiveness, state intervention, and limited redistribution broke down. The 1980s saw the coming of what one might call a postworkerist socialism.<sup>17</sup> The most spectacular enunciations of this coming occurred in France and Spain, but by the 1990s contagion had even reached the irreproachably neocorporatist Swedish social democrats. Faced with the economic shift between national and international, this emerging social democratic project gave increasing priority to the regeneration of national economic capacities in the face of a rapidly moving and threatening international economic environment. In part this involved “deregulating”—minimizing various national rigidities and market imperfections to encourage capital to adapt and innovate rapidly.

The new social democrats did not abandon state intervention. Rather, they reconfigured it. The use of the political levers that remained available to national governments was converted to a quest for competitiveness. The state was to get out of the business of reshaping economic sectors and markets and into the business of providing environments in which firms, henceforth the key actors for national destinies, would make decisions to enhance their international competitive positions. The interventionist and dirigiste state had to be dismantled through privatizations and the marketization of areas that had earlier been considered to be public services and/or natural mo-



nopolies: transport systems, energy and telecommunications networks, post offices, and so on. This often involved removing arrangements that protected firms against the cold winds of the international market. It also involved extensive state investment in research and development and targeted educational spending to upgrade human capital. In this general logic, however, many neocorporatist arrangements, particularly in the labor market, were reconfigured, collapsed, or were targeted for removal. Ironically, therefore, the new social democracy found itself obliged to pursue policy courses that further weakened its former class base.

This complex set of changes had an important impact on the way new social democracy actually *did* politics. The new socialists could hope to assert two major comparative advantages over their opponents. First, more managerial and technocratic than their predecessors, both in practice and in political self-presentation, the new social democrats claimed that their particular national capitalism would be better managed and coordinated and more rational and successful when central political tasks were given to people like themselves, for new social democratic movements were increasingly dominated by a caste of policy intellectuals and high administrators. They were also resolutely “modernist” in an economic sense, promising the kind of state-of-the-art, “international best practice” capitalism that, they argued, narrowly self-interested capitalists and a political Right tied to conservative social interests were unable to produce. Second they claimed to be modernists “with a heart,” advocating the preservation of as much as possible of the national welfare state consistent with economic constraints plus new flexible social programs to help specific groups most directly threatened by rapid economic restructuring.<sup>18</sup> In most places this second claim appealed demonstrably to populations who, while not loath to buy into various forms of market deregulation, did not want to see the dismantling of the welfare state. These two claims combined into a package of political appeals that contrasted strongly with those of earlier social democracy. The Keynesian-Fordist appeal enjoined class collaboration to a working-class base to promote a capitalist success whose profits might then be redistributed into high wages and collective goods. The new appeal was for general social cooperation and solidarity in a national crusade for capitalist success in the international market.

The change of social democracy also responded to decline and fragmentation of a working class that had been the central social and concep-

tual entity of earlier social democratic iterations. The new social democracy was thus vastly less workerist and class oriented than its predecessor, seeking power not by representing a class and its organizations but by attracting votes from the various groups and constituencies who desired to civilize and humanize capitalism. Political scientists formerly portrayed social democracy as anchored on a workerist Left but dragged toward catchall politics by the logic of electoral competition. The new social democracy, in contrast, began slightly on the reformist side of the political center and as a catch-all operation from the outset, with workers simply one constituency. Finally, its political strategies and tactics were much more electoralist in a modern sense, encompassing polls, advertising, television personalities, and so forth.

For some time in the 1980s the most important cases of the new socialism were to be found in Latin Europe. France was most revealing. The French socialists brought with them a radical reformist program of industry nationalizations, planning, redistribution, and measures to strengthen labor when they won elections in 1981. After a brief eighteen months and a very difficult introduction to the realities of globalizing capitalism, they completely shifted gears. Short-term austerity programs led to efforts to restructure French industry. Public-sector firms led the way to rapid labor shedding and rising unemployment. Policies were introduced to shift the share of wages in national income to profit, encourage the stock market, and pursue a resolute monetarism, all in the interest of establishing new conditions to compete in Europe and internationally.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of political techniques the French socialists reconfigured their product to abandon references to class, earlier omnipresent, in favor of personalities and a “good technocrat” appeal. The socialists claimed to be better managers than their Center-Right opponents, in particular superior at spotting and seizing upon the limited options that France had in a constraining global environment. They were also more humane, willing and able to define the narrow space that remained for reforms to do what could be done for the many French who were excluded from the benefits of the new course (i.e., the rapidly growing cohort of long-term unemployed that socialist policies helped create). Largely because their opponents were themselves profoundly divided about what to do, the socialists were able to hold on to power for most of the period until March 1993, when they suffered a devastating electoral defeat.

The Spanish socialists pursued a similar path, if anything much more vigorously. In power beginning in 1982, they opened up the Spanish economy to the harsh winds of the European Community and dismantled the old “rust belt” industries where Spanish labor’s base largely resided, which even Franco had been afraid to touch. They too turned toward a harsh monetarism and invited capital to seek profit by whatever means. Labor was marginalized and, on occasion, beaten back during strikes.<sup>20</sup> Spain’s growth levels rose to the highest in Europe, but official unemployment rates rose to nearly 20%. All of this followed a massive conversion experience of socialist elites. The idealism of opposition to Francoism became a hard-nosed managerial Europeanism, cloaked in the argument that the new policies were the unavoidable route to consolidating Spanish democracy. Since the socialists’ opponents were tainted by direct filiation with the authoritarian old regime, a decade of electoral success ensued. The Spanish socialists (PSOE) had even more space to reconfigure their approaches than the French had, and they made no bones about the personalism and electoralism of their political operations. Felipe Gonzales, an extremely able and charismatic figure, was central in this.<sup>21</sup>

Purist analysts initially doubted the exemplarity of these Latin European experiences. After all, none of the Latin socialist parties had really emerged from the earlier two configurations of social democracy, and they had never really managed a Keynesian welfare state during the postwar boom. Moreover, none had ever had strong links with an organized working class or any experience with neocorporatist practices. The fate of Swedish social democracy demonstrated that such doubts were wrong.<sup>22</sup> By the later 1980s the famous Swedish “third way” began to move to Latin rhythms. The Swedish model, with its tripartite top-level negotiations of economic priorities, all-enveloping welfare state, full employment, and “active labor market policies,” came apart later than the Latin socialist experiments, but quite as decisively. Large Swedish multinationals, who had long been happy with an export-led strategy based on production in Sweden itself, began to relocate offshore. They also began to attack the basic institution of Swedish neocorporatism, “solidaristic wage bargaining.”<sup>23</sup> At the same time rapidly rising budget deficits and inflation levels led a social democratic government to take decisive steps to austerity, dismantling neocorporatism, instituting welfare state cutbacks, and facing rising unemployment. By the early 1990s, when the change was still far from completed and the social democrats were

out of power, Sweden's unemployment rate was close to the European average of 10%.

### **The Contradictions of Socialism without the Workers**

Until its third iteration social democracy promoted a particular model of representation. Social democratic parties were *the* major mechanisms for aggregating the wide range of left-of-center interests in most capitalist societies and served as central clearinghouses and brokers in the creation of relatively unified strategies and platforms. But social democracy was not simply a neutral political manager integrating different outlooks into one coherent program. Rather, it worked from its own point of departure, such that group representation was mediated through and organized by a core social democratic system of values, ideas, and strategic precepts. The recent reconfigurations of globalizing capitalism and social democracy have brought this construct of representation to an end.

### **The Socialist Representational Tradition and Democracy—Biased Brokerage?**

Social democracy's representational model was constructed historically on the basis of a strongly etched map of the social world, which began with the proposition that capitalism created social classes in conflict with one another. In this setting the central conflict was between capital and a working class that carried the most advanced set of progressive purposes. The working class had a set of central class interests, largely productivist, and certain natural organizational forms through which it expressed these interests, unions and socialist parties in the first instance.

Immersed in the broader logics of parliamentary democracy, social democratic politics quickly became coalitional and strongly electoralist. As radical critics of social democracy incessantly pointed out, these processes helped wear down its reformist edges. But the ways in which coalitions and electoral appeals were themselves conceived and organized remained deeply imprinted with this basic social mapping and the conceptualizations of interest representation that flowed from it. The interests of workers and wage

earners were the core set of concerns around which the interests of other groups—the salaried middle strata, farmers, the petit bourgeois, or, indeed, women, the disabled, and ethnic minorities—were to be arrayed.

Where it was solidly implanted, social democracy was in a position to define the central tenets of what was progressive. It was not exclusivist in its administration of this power, to be sure. But it did consistently use it to reformulate the strongly held concerns of non-wage earner groups (or of wage earner groups who did not automatically express their needs and demands in standard “material” ways) to conform to its own *problématique*. The center of social democratic programs thus remained focused on productivist issues concerned with democratizing capitalism, decommodifying and demarketizing growing sectors of social life, and erecting barriers to full market flows to shield certain (largely labor) groups from capitalism’s harshness. Moreover, it sought to do such things through the use of the nation-state’s legislative and regulatory power. Thus, to choose but one example, when social democracy as “biased broker” addressed women’s issues, those issues tended to be defined or translated into issues of women at work or women in the labor force.

This social democratic model of representation became in many places the only plausible way for different progressive impulses to express themselves effectively. Social democracy thus organized the articulation of a broad front of different social concerns, translated them into a prioritized program for reforms, pressed for support for this program when out of power, and acted to implement pieces of it when in power. Social democratic workerism, pale and compromised though it became, was the pole around which other progressive groups and causes were obliged to gather and the primary vehicle for pressing their points home politically. For those advocating concerns different from those highlighted in this workerism it became a matter of persuading social democracy to include these concerns in its broader platform even at the cost of having their original expression translated into social democracy’s mildly workerist “catch some” conceptual and programmatic language. Radicals of all stripes thus swarmed around social democracy, clamoring to obtain a hearing for their positions while often grumbling about the distortions of their views that social democrats imposed.

The new social democracy fundamentally recast this representational

model. The system of ideas and strategic precepts that had earlier mediated different group interests and political elites, and which had obliged the translation of various group demands into workerized and productivized terms, lost its place. In the new social democracy the operation of platform construction persisted but without this process of mediation. In the new setting dealings have become direct between the elites who do politics and devise policy once in power and the wide variety of groups who hope to influence political outcomes. The new social democracy thus conforms much more closely to the “interest group pluralist” models of classical political science: elites construct electoral coalitions and platforms by adding different group concerns one to the other in order to win elections. Such coalition construction is not completely arbitrary, of course, since it must proceed from center leftward on issues. But the older, persistent basic programmatic orientation is missing. More important, the elites themselves, sobered by new tasks of state management set by globalized capitalism, have their own visions of what ought to, and more pertinently what can, be done.

Social democracy’s new representational-mobilizational outlooks have brought new dilemmas. The policies of new social democrats have helped undermine the collective identities and loyalties of the working-class constituencies that, until quite recently, had been the principal social democratic base. Socialist elites are determined to pursue policy packages that no longer correspond to the desires of workers for employment security, growth, higher wages, and improved social benefits. It is not surprising that although these elites claim that their new policies are in workers’ longer-run interests, the workers conclude otherwise. In consequence, older party loyalties and identifications have been dissolving into contingent support, electoral individualism, and strong inclinations to use the vote, wherever it seems to make sense, to protect precariously established positions.<sup>24</sup> The lesson of British prime minister Margaret Thatcher’s success in dislodging formerly loyal Labour voters by offering them individual ownership of council houses is clear, and something like it can be found in most other places.<sup>25</sup> The desertion of workers from Swedish social democracy in recent years is clear in the party’s declining electoral results as well. Nowhere is the phenomenon clearer than in France, however. In the March 1993 legislative elections the socialist vote of slightly under 20% was the same percentage as its score with

workers. Former socialist working-class voters deserted to the Right in extraordinary numbers (25%), while, more alarmingly, fully as many workers voted for the racist National Front as for the socialists.<sup>26</sup>

There is an important subtext here. To the degree to which the new social democracy moves away from workerist class appeals, it loses its grip over the working-class electorate that it had taken for granted as its base. This is a catch-22, of course, because it has to take steps that will cause its grip to loosen both for policy reasons and because of the slow diminution in size and fragmentation of the working class. The conclusion is, however, that the new iteration of social democracy can no longer assume the continuing loyalty of its older, traditional base. Workers will be less and less willing to be treated as hostages by elites who either cannot or will not provide them with the policy returns they desire. Moreover, the very changes in capitalism and social democracy that we have described have been slowly disaggregating workers' political identities as a class. Thus, the new social democracy has a serious mobilizational and representational problem.

### Progressive Politics and the New Pluralism

Fundamental change in social democracy's representational model has coincided with important changes in the nature of progressive interest expression. Over the last three decades the combination of social democratic crisis and reconfiguration has opened political space on the Left into which an array of new social movements (NSMs) has plunged.<sup>27</sup> This may not be accidental. As protest vehicles of both the rising new middle strata and the socially marginalized in advanced capitalist societies, these movements exploded onto the scene at precisely the point where the weight and salience of labor and *ouvrièrisme* started their steep decline.<sup>28</sup> One index of this is the evolution of social science theorizing about the NSMs, which has, more often than not, also brought frontal attacks on the workerist tradition, whether from a neo-Marxist perspective as in the case of Alain Touraine, from the neo-Weberian pessimism of descendents of the Frankfurt school, or, more recently, from postmodern outlooks.<sup>29</sup>

Nonlabor protest has emerged from behind the shadows to stake out its own progressive territory.<sup>30</sup> Whereas earlier social movements that deviated from a traditional workerist model would have had to present themselves

to social democracy and have their demands mediated by social democratic workerism, more recently they have been freer to express themselves autonomously. The ebb and flow of such movements thus signals the appearance of new political and social interests along with the waning of the social democratic Left's capacities to produce the kind of universalizing and inclusive vision that socialism once articulated.

The new mobilization has announced the emergence of potentially radical social collectivities often organized around very specific issues and according to principles of mass participation and democratic self-organization. It has sometimes succeeded where more traditional political forms have failed at mobilizing the actions and sympathies of masses of citizens. The movements have also attempted, again with some success, to politicize spheres of private and social life—civil society—once neglected by the official Left, particularly issues of gender and the body. In many instances they have offered alternative models to the bureaucratic organizational structures of conventional leftist politics.<sup>31</sup> Finally, their actions and claims have sometimes brought theoretical fresh air to the stale orthodoxy of leftist political discourse. In many ways they have significantly challenged the definition of the political in advanced industrial societies.

The political valence of these collectivities is very different from that of earlier workerist progressivism. The labor movement had a predictable set of concerns, a regularized repertory of actions, and fixed organizational forms.<sup>32</sup> The new movements tend to be reactive protest movements, responsive to multiple situations where oppression is perceived and drawing upon microcommunities of movement entrepreneurs or organizers.<sup>33</sup> Most tend to be ad hoc, single issue, multicentered, and organizationally ephemeral. In many instances their explicit purposes are as much to force the renegotiation of identities, language, and meaning on the level of civil society as to influence specific outcomes from political institutions. The bifurcation of purpose—the movements often point simultaneously in political and cultural directions—makes their central logics difficult to seize for observers and participants alike.

While such features have been conducive to involving significant numbers of persons, they have also meant internal disorganization and political fragmentation. Connected with this, if these movements have had some success in mobilizing committed people in relatively spontaneous, infor-



mally structured, nonhierarchical political activities, they have rarely been able to elaborate the organizational, ideological, and decision-making structures necessary for long-term, modulated, strategic action.<sup>34</sup> Finally, some movements conforming perfectly to the pertinent definitional criteria—non-productivist ideologies, a proclivity to direct action protests, participatory organizational forms, and a stress on the identity confirmation of members—may be quite reactionary in their deeper logics.<sup>35</sup>

Most social movement theoreticians contend that, in reaction to the apparent failure of the totalizing vision of classical socialism, the new movements have abandoned hopes for the kind of universal historical subject that the socialist tradition entertained. Instead, it is claimed, longer-run political sustenance and inspiration are derived from a plurality of political discourses and the potential hegemonic articulation of a multiplicity of discursively constituted subject positions—a vision comforted by postmodern social theorizing.<sup>36</sup> Such views demonstrate commendable tolerance, but they also tend to valorize the fragmentation of the NSMs. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that NSMs produce counterproductive cacophony and localized sectarianism as well as coherent progressive forward motion. Finally, advocates for the new movements seem almost proud about the lack of movement articulation to actual centers of official power. “We mobilize as energetically as we can,” they claim, “and by so doing we confront the establishment in ways to which it must respond.” It is, of course, the second half of this phrase that is most troublesome.

### New Social Democrats, New Movements, and the Construction of a New Left?

At this point we must return to the representational problems of social democracy. The organizational and discursive workerist mediation of social democracy long obliged various social movements to submit their projects for “translation” to be included in the official platforms and strategies of the Left. From nonlabor points of view this was usually the best and often the only way to be certain of having any efficacy. From another angle, this mediation also *constrained* social democratic elites. However strongly they were pulled into the managerial logics of capitalism by their participation in official politics—and the pull was considerable—there were limits to how

much they could compromise the movement's own officially stated and historically consecrated goals. The removal of this operation of mediation with the coming of new social democracy has left elites much less constrained, at least from below.

Perhaps the central political questions about this new situation of socialism without workers and new social movements without parties are whether and what kind of viable coalitions can be constructed between the two. Prospects for coalition building might at first glance seem good, especially since the new social democrats (given problems with traditional bases) must constantly fish for electoral support, and at least some social movements hope to influence political power. There are in fact some precedents for coalitions with the Greens, perhaps the only new social movement to take the risky step of directly entering electoral politics. In Germany, for example, local and regional "Red-Green" (i.e., SPD [social democratic]/Green) coalitions have been formed in Frankfurt, West Berlin, Hanover, and the state of Lower Saxony, largely because the Greens were able to articulate a broad range of concerns beyond the environment and win electoral clout.

To this point, such coalitions—which ought not to be taken as models, since most new movements do not reformulate themselves into electoral contenders—have been predominately marriages of convenience. They expressed socialist recognition that with the erosion of their traditional electoral bases, they had to deal with the new politics of new constituencies to maintain electoral viability. Almost always this has involved efforts to co-opt and moderate Green themes while steering a middle course between constituencies of old and new social movements.<sup>37</sup> In Sweden, for example, social democratic appropriation of environmental protection and antinuclear issues during the 1980s enabled Swedish social democrats to regain control of governmental power, despite the Social Democratic Party's ambiguous line on nuclear power in the 1970s. France's 1993 electoral period was perhaps most revelatory. Threatened with massive defeat and by polls predicting high socialist vote loss to the Verts, the socialist party tried to capture environmentalist support, endorsing an alternative Green organization, *Génération Ecologie*, against the Verts.<sup>38</sup> In the event both the socialists and the rival Green groups lost big.

In each of these cases, playing mainstream politics caused great difficulties for the new social movements themselves. The German Greens were

pioneers in their vituperative divisions between *realos* and *fundis* (Frankland 1989). The more recent French situation added Gallic complexities to this Teutonic dichotomy. The Verts (the more fundamentalist Green Party) have always been powerfully divided. Having decided to enter politics, should they play power coalition games at all, in the event they won seats, or stand independent to defend environmental issues? Next, what might they do if faced with the choice between Left or Center-Right policies? Although the Verts have yet to make a serious national-level breakthrough, at local and regional levels both issues have been serious. The second question did not trouble those who chose the “refuse to participate” answer to the first. They were a minority, however. The participators most often decided to build coalitions with Left or Right depending upon which was making the best offer. This, of course, infuriated those Greens who saw their movement as part of the Left (Pronier and Le Seigneur 1992; Roche and Bennahmias 1992; Jenson 1989). Such dilemmas had their costs in the March 1993 French elections.<sup>39</sup> Polls initially predicted a big swing in the Green direction that, had it solidified, might have given them 15% of the vote (with the socialists themselves at only slightly under 20%). This led the Greens to perceive that they might conceivably win even more votes by putting forth Red-Green programs across the spectrum of policy while somewhat downplaying their environmentalism.<sup>40</sup> Few Greens were comfortable with this, in part because it reminded them that they could not make up their minds whom they really wanted to be. A worse problem was that the electorate sensed the Greens’ uncertainty and the obvious fact that when Greens talked anything beyond the environment, they really were not in control. One could vote for a real politician rather than a Green whose discussions were fuzzy around their edges. Thus the Greens lost over half their early poll when voting day arrived, a major defeat.

It should be evident that such formal coalitional questions can be posed only when NSMs try to become electoral organizations, thus far a relatively rare event. Below the party level of politicking, the next most obvious way of compelling attention and respect from social democrats would be to develop classical interest group capacities—lobbying influence, membership and membership mobilization, and outreach to voters. It is evident that NSMs are rarely able to push large parts of their program home in complex political systems unless they transform parts of their activity into interest groups. This course is difficult for both cultural and structural reasons. Attempting

to transform loosely unified, often consensually organized, congeries of different groups of similar issue affinities into the well-regulated, disciplined, hierarchical instruments needed to function as effective interest groups can be powerfully divisive, even destructive, for many social movements.<sup>41</sup>

We must be careful not to trap ourselves in older models of mobilization, usually based on the labor movement. Many of those entities that one calls new social movements are in fact clusters of different movements around a larger issue. In this cluster there will almost always be gradations of militancy, variations around the culture-versus-politics axis, and degrees of willingness to enter institutional politics. Often broad movements, generally unable or unwilling to develop interest group politics, will shelter within their cluster particular groups who are able to do so. However, the looseness of these movement clusters is still quite costly for the interest group wings, who cannot control the behaviors of the others and have difficulty maneuvering sympathizers in strategically coherent ways. “Delivering” for politicians is not always easy.<sup>42</sup> Given all this, it is overwhelmingly tempting for social democracy to regard NSMs simply as indicators of one segment of public opinion, from which, when needed, it can try to buy electoral support at lowest cost. The definition of lowest cost, to be sure, is largely left to social democracy itself, since the movements generally lack the instruments needed to make things otherwise. In postindustrial as in earlier politics, lowest cost means securing maximal support for minimal commitment to avoid binding engagements that could compromise flexibility. The social democratic outcome is often a flurry of words, contact with personalities, and perhaps some weak programs, all usually arranged without serious engagement with the movements themselves.

Still, it is unquestionably true that new social democracy needs to fish in NSM waters for electoral support. The trends could not be clearer. The present period is one of the most fallow for socialists since World War II, in terms of electoral promise, optimism, and governmental presence. Social democrats are losing power in one election after the other, as in Sweden and France, or suffering debilitating losses, as in Spain and Italy. Social democrats out of power, moreover, are having major problems in returning, except in Sweden. Any leads toward new sources of support have to be followed up. On the other side of the ledger, many, if not most, NSMs need to make policy claims in order to achieve their important ends.

The problem may be particularly urgent if, as many think, the long cycle of mobilization and protest deriving from the 1960s is drawing to a close.<sup>43</sup> As certain analysts contend, however, social democrats may find the demands of the NSMs difficult either to absorb or to counter. Smith et al. (1989: 326) note: “The underlying reason may not relate so much to the specific issues or areas of concern—environment, feminist claims, minority rights, defense issues—but in the demands that are latent within them, especially in the implications of the desire for ‘self-realization’ and greater participation. They (i.e., new social movement issues) quickly translate into calls for direct action and confrontation.” Smith et al. also point out that social democratic parties, like the SPD, have been much happier dealing with well-organized and predictable interests attached to the established structures of decision making and, conversely, have not been pleased to wrangle with the unruly politics of the NSMs.

No convincing answers are really yet available to the questions posed above about social democrat/NSM relationships in the new era. To date, NSMs have at best operated as the functional equivalent of pressure groups on parties. By and large, many of the votes of supporters of NSM issues have gone to social democrats, with alternative parties making important but nonetheless small advances at local and regional levels. NSMs may exercise an indirect influence upon social democratic parties via internal demographic changes and the rise of a younger cohort of party activists/leaders more sympathetic to NSMs. The entry of New Leftists into the socialist parties of France and Spain in the post-1968 period might provide a model here.<sup>44</sup> Where social democrats have responded, the issues and concerns of NSMs have been absorbed and moderated, and such co-optation is likely to continue in the future. Moreover, the perceptible weakening and issue diffusion of NSM action certainly mean that social democracy cannot solve its electoral problems through strongly NSM-oriented fishing expeditions. This, in turn, means that social democracy will not be able to satisfy the concerns of movement activists and that, in consequence, whatever fishing is done will be carried on in turbulent waters.

### **Conclusions: Results and Prospects**

That socialism is in crisis is common knowledge. The underlying conceptual commitments of the socialist vision are on precariously weak ground.

Labor, the socialist Left's major traditional base, is in sociological decline and ideological retreat. Most new sources of progressive energy in advanced capitalism come from social movements that are often explicitly non- or antisocialist. Intellectuals everywhere are abandoning *socialisant* approaches to the world. To be sure, it would be a mistake to buy into ambient Fukuyamaesque euphoria about "the end of history." Socialism's crisis may grant important political and ideological room to maneuver, but capitalism will need all of the space it can find. The problems it faces are, if anything, more monumental than they were. North-South disparities, powder kegs in formerly socialist areas of Europe and Asia, growing unemployment, poverty, and urban social decomposition in the wealthiest parts of the world will unquestionably bring a great deal more history.

There should therefore exist no lack of raw material for progressive political formations. They may bear the label *socialist*, but whether the label will mean anything is problematic, given the changes in the representational characteristics of social democracy. Our claim is that the organizational and discursive workerist mediation of social democracy long obliged various social movements to submit their projects for translation to be included in the official platforms and strategies of the Left. From another angle, this mediation also constrained social democratic elites. However strongly they were pulled into the managerial logics of capitalism—the pull was considerable—there were limits to how much they could compromise the movement's own officially stated and historically consecrated goals. In its heyday, older social democratic mediation was first of all ideological: it obliged virtually everyone who wanted to have issues represented by the Left to compromise around a workerist and productivist set of social democratic ideological canons, whether they liked it or not. But it was also, and simultaneously, unifying: it obliged concerned actors to submit their issues to a process of constructing a unified platform.

The coming of new forms of social democracy has virtually eliminated this operation of mediation. In consequence, change has unleashed social democratic elites from many of the political constraints that responsibility to the earlier mediation process and platform implied. To be sure, in order to build and sustain viable electoral coalitions they must be sensitive to what is happening, including in the movements. But the nature of this sensitivity has changed: it is much shorter term, electoral and poll oriented, and, most important, less encapsulated in past conceptual and programmatic commit-

ment. The new social democrats are thus relatively free, compared with their predecessors, to pick and choose how they will respond to different situations. New movements are particularly ill equipped to nail down serious commitment from social democracy because they are much less able to organize instrumentally for politics than labor movements were. For the elites, the most important thing is to win elections and stay in power while avoiding as many costly commitments to reform as possible. Truly pluralized, as opposed to social democratically mediated, interest pressures allow these elites to make vague promises to many, precise promises to few, and costly commitments only to electorally strategic groups.

Not only are the new social democratic elites much less constrained in relationships with their constituencies than they were earlier, they are also much more constrained, as potential and actual state managers, in policy terms. Finding themselves unleashed from serious reformist policy commitments is an unexpected benefit to them, since globalization has vastly intensified constraints on the managerial-policy sides of their political equations. To these elites “there is no alternative”—to paraphrase Thatcher, who came to be known as TINA to her colleagues—to single-minded management of national societies to promote international competitiveness. TINA is what the new social democrats preach to the groups that may support them.

The actual political valence of the end of the kind of social democratic ideological, policy and program mediation on the contemporary Left is thus profoundly ambiguous. One can evaluate the importance of the loss of its ideological and specific programmatic biases. Here there is no question but that social democracy—perhaps for as long as a century—managed to persuade lots of people that its ideas were somehow tied in a privileged way to the movement of history. We now know that this was more a triumph of organizational persuasion than scientific acquaintance with history’s heavy tendencies. We can applaud or regret the decline in the power of such ideologies and programs in the privacy of our own political hearts, of course. But we also have to evaluate the importance of the loss of social democracy’s ability to promote the relative programmatic and ideological unification of the desires and interests of different progressive constituencies. Here one would be hasty indeed to conclude that progress has been made.

Rather grim conclusions follow. It is sobering to juxtapose our earlier considerations about changes in social democracy’s representational model

with what we have just said about the various prospects for social movements in the new period. There no longer exists any compelling mechanism for progressive forces to come together to form any unified program or outlook at all. In consequence, elites, including social democratic ones, have the political playing field much more to themselves than they had earlier. Relatively unconstrained by social counterparts with anything like its resource base, business gains considerable new political influence. Finally, to the degree to which social democracy is unable to “deliver the goods” to actual or potential progressive constituencies, the self-identity of the Left will tend to disaggregate. The new social democracy’s modern pluralist approach to mobilization is a catch-22. Progressive coalitions need the kinds of ideological glue and passion that older social democratic workerism provided through social democratic mediation. Without such a glue, however vague it may have become, the Left simply becomes a constellation of different groups and populations that seem to desire some kind of change. Allegiance to socialism gave different groups reasons to coalesce together and some sense of where discrete policies fit into a broader scheme of things. Allegiance to change gives neither. The new social democracy thus has very little to engender devotion and create collective identity. Without such things success will be very difficult.

The fundamental question is one of democracy. We are all now sophisticated enough to recognize that there are a wide variety of “models of democracy,” to use David Held’s apt term (Held 1987; Dahl 1989). Dominant general models of democracy change, along with characteristic structures of representation, forms of state action, and ways of doing politics, with changes in the material world. We are clearly living a transition after the model that marked the largely social democratic, Keynesian welfare statist years after World War II. In this model, in large part because of the power of countervailing social forces endowed with a program for mild redistribution, capital acquired incentives to engage in a positive-sum game, worked through politics, with many underlying social groups. The reasons for the transition away from this setting are deep seated and real, whatever our personal feelings.

While something characterizable as a model of democracy may well be emerging from the transition, this does not mean at all that the new model represents progress. In the earlier model large groups whose resource bases were multiplied by the various mediating operations of social democracy and



the voice of a relatively unified movement obliged both elites and capital to take notice. The new model looks more like a truncated elite pluralism in which elites, Left and Right, are freer to pick, choose, and manipulate the social groups they claim to represent. The new model may very well be a defeat for democracy, regression from earlier advances.

This, indeed, is what we would argue. Even in the most superficial terms, ignoring the continuing force of traditional leftist arguments about the limitations on parliamentary democracy established by class domination, the impact of parliamentary decision making in any given nation is profoundly limited by the underregulated internationalization of economic flows. Beyond this, democracy is in retreat on a micro, as well as macro, level. More flexible bureaucracies manned by sophisticated technocrats are still bureaucracies, that is, institutions dominated by elites that have as one of their purposes the accumulation of power that is delegated to them by people, whether through a market, a vote, or a membership card. The internationalization of many such bureaucracies, particularly in the private sector, renders them even less democratically accountable even in the most formal sense while simultaneously diminishing the effective realm of self-determination for the nation-state. In this light, beatific claims—à la Laclau and Mouffe, to take but one example—that synergistic interaction between social movements inevitably leads to deeper democratic momentum are, despite poststructuralist incantations, profoundly historicist and almost certainly misleading. Moreover, however sympathetic Habermas may be, claims about resisting the system on behalf of the lifeworld in quest of successful communicative action that might—somehow, somewhere, someplace—approach an ideal speech situation are as utopian as they are unclear. Are we obliged to live in a political world where there are no other options than this new democratic model that the new capitalism has thrust upon us?

## Notes

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- 1 By revolutionary third-worldism we mean the predominant ideologies of the 1960s New Left—Maoism, Castroism, Nkrumaism, etc.

- 2 For a discerning review, see Eley 1992.
- 3 Carl Schorske (1965) presents a subtle picture of the workings of such things.
- 4 Here parallel developments were clear in the SPD (Social Democratic Party) under Weimar, the Austrian Social Democrats (with Otto Bauer in the lead), the British Labour Party (with Ramsay Macdonald leading), and, rather more de facto than in the area of theory, in the French Socialist Party.
- 5 On this latter point, the writings of Karl Kautsky (1913, 1964) are eloquent.
- 6 The Swedish Social Democrats, of course, when they came to power in the 1930s, actually applied their own precocious Keynesian formulae (from Wigforss and others). See Gourevitch 1986; Evans et al. 1985.
- 7 Austro-Marxism provided the clearest early formulation of this general package. See Otto Bauer's works. Rudolf Hilferding was the major SPD theorist of the German variant. See also Collotti 1984.
- 8 The major success story was Sweden in the 1930s, where Social Democrat–Agrarian Party deals allowed a precocious launching of the Keynesian welfare state.
- 9 Perhaps the most eloquent defense and description of the model can be found in Korpi 1983.
- 10 We are creating here a rather schematic ideal typical picture. Cross-national variations in the timing, structures, and effectiveness of this Fordist social democratic moment were, in fact, immense.
- 11 In oversimplified terms, this setting produced tendencies toward neocorporatism. The extent of actual movement toward neocorporatist arrangements varied tremendously from country to country, however. Where labor movements were strong and centralized and, in addition, allied to strong social democratic parties, the arrangements tended to be strong. In different circumstances—weak and/or decentralized labor movements and, perhaps more importantly, liberal as opposed to social democratic partisan arrangements left of center—the neocorporatist thrust was more aspiration than reality. Political scientists discovered the importance of neocorporatist logics of representation. Philippe Schmitter (Schmitter and Lehmbruch 1979) organized much of this awareness. Unfortunately for labor and social democracy this awareness intensified at precisely the moment when neocorporatist trends were being reversed. For a lucid discussion of this, see Streeck and Schmitter 1991.
- 12 This is an important part of the story, of course. Labor and social democracy were paying for long decades of their own efforts to operationalize the meaning of *working class* in narrow ways. It was no accident, therefore, that encounters between labor/social democracy and vast numbers of new female labor force participants, non-unionized service-sector workers, and professional workers in public-sector areas such as teaching, health care, and administration had trouble finding a place for themselves in *this* working class.
- 13 This sequence of events illustrates something important. The complicated social work—organization building, resource generating, and the imposition by persuasion and power of a congruent political and intellectual discourse—that goes into

- the composition of a class functioning somehow “for itself” is both painstaking and precarious. Moreover, such a class, in its various manifestations, tends to be more conservative, largely because of its institutional nature, than the fluid capitalist market. Situations will inevitably and repeatedly arise when market changes place existing constellations of progressive forces in defensive positions.
- 14 The degree of union movement decline varies from country to country. As a rule, in places where neocorporatist arrangements of one sort or another had been struck in the boom years (often on the basis of very strong unions at the outset) and where, in addition, the national economy remained strong (two facts that are probably correlated), union membership has remained relatively solid thus far. Scandinavia, Austria, and the German Federal Republic have been the main cases here. In other places where such conditions have not prevailed, neoliberal economic restructuring has been facilitated, and declines are almost universal and in some cases precipitous. In Britain and the United States they have been pushed forward by hostile governments, while in France and Spain, for example, they have been fostered by allegedly friendly governments. Canada may be the only exception to this trend, at least thus far. In Canada the union movement has held its own, even grown, despite a lack of neocorporatism and relatively hostile governments. For some figures, see Visser 1989.
  - 15 For European data, see Baglioni and Crouch 1990.
  - 16 There is a gigantic literature on such matters. See, among other sources, Boyer 1988; Hyman and Streeck 1988; Piore and Sabel 1984; and Wood 1989.
  - 17 Richard Gillespie, in concluding his edition of a group of monographs on European social democratic renewal, announced “the existence of a European ‘wave’ of social democratic programmatic renewal effort during the 1980s, the sweep of which was if anything broader than the previous renewal wave in the 1950s” (Gillespie and Patterson 1993: 174).
  - 18 Education and retraining programs are a favorite new policy area, as are income maintenance and “social reinsertion” programs for those who must be sacrificed to enhance factor mobility.
  - 19 The fascinating story of the French Left’s first years in power, including the “great shift” of 1982–83 is told from a number of policy points of view in Ross et al. 1987. Among the useful French sources, see Favier and Rolland 1991, 1992; Halimi 1993.
  - 20 On Spanish labor, see Fishman 1990; Gillespie 1989.
  - 21 We could expand the discussion to include the Portuguese Socialists, who followed a route like that of the Spanish. We might also discuss the Italian Socialists, who, given the Italian political system, followed a sinuous route of national coalition building that led their leader, Bettino Craxi, to become prime minister. As we now know, the operation was premised on a corrupt clientelism that will destroy the party’s credibility for years to come (and may put Craxi and his lieutenants in prison).
  - 22 The illustrative material could be endless, including, among others, the German and Austrian and the Dutch and Danish Social Democrats. Closer to home in North

- America, albeit on a provincial level in Canada's federal system, the experience of the Rae New Democrat government after 1991 is classic.
- 23 For an excellent review of this, see Andrew Martin, in Gourevitch et al. 1984. On employer attacks, see Swenson 1989. On broader economic policy matters, see Pontusson 1992.
  - 24 For important factions of the working class this may lead toward populist causes like antitaxation crusades and anti-immigrant mobilization.
  - 25 See Crewe 1991. The movement of Reagan Democrats in the United States (in an admittedly very different situation) and regional antitax movements partake of the same phenomena, as do xenophobic anti-immigrant mobilizations in Europe.
  - 26 The results of the French elections, with commentary, are in *Le Monde*, 23 March 1993. See also Todd 1993.
  - 27 The literature on new social movements is vast. For a useful, brief introduction, see Dalton et al. 1990. The extensive bibliography in Dalton and Kuechler 1990 is also useful.
  - 28 Alain Touraine (1971, 1977, 1981) has been the most persistent advocate of the idea of the "new class" provenance of new social movements. Ronald Inglehart's (1990) writings on the emergence of "post-materialist values" make similar arguments from a very different point of departure.
  - 29 Touraine's huge oeuvre is a monument to the use of neo-Marxist categories to argue against the primacy of the labor movement in postindustrial society. See, for the clearest expression of this, Touraine et al. 1987. Also see Ross 1987. For a concise exposition of the Habermasian–Frankfurt school perspective, see Cohen 1985. The bible for postmodernists is Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and the essays in *Power/Knowledge* (Foucault 1979, 1980). For an interesting attempt to combine Tourainian and postmodern perspectives, see Melucci 1989.
  - 30 Jean Cohen (1985: 663–69) has argued that the new social movements may be characterized by the following: Members of these movements do not view themselves in terms of class; they primarily strive to democratize the structures of everyday life in civil society (vs. state and economy); they struggle in the name of autonomy, plurality, and difference; they are willing to relativize their own values in discourse with others; many new social movements activists accept the existence of the formally democratic state and the market economy; they are self-limiting; and their organizations are not seen merely as instruments to political ends but rather as ends in themselves. Sidney Tarrow (1989) does the best job we know of disputing these claims.
  - 31 Barbara Epstein's (1991) lucid discussions of this show that, at least for some forms of new protest, consensual, participatory decision making is essential to coordinate the wide variety of grouplets that can be gathered for a "direct action."
  - 32 Charles Tilly (1978) does a particularly good job in discussing this point.
  - 33 The importance of persistent microcommunities of organizers who sustain commitment to protest and are available to respond to organizing opportunities has been discussed widely in the literature. See, for a particularly good example, Epstein 1991.

- 34 Claus Offe's excellent essay in Dalton and Kuechler 1990 shows why this is likely. Movement logics of mobilization and participation, particularly participatory democracy, militate against establishing the solid organizations needed to develop long-term action.
- 35 Witness, for example, the so-called Right-to-Life movement in the United States. Indeed, as theorists of the new social movements have argued, the political valence of the NSMs is the product of the articulation of diverse and shifting political discourses and is therefore continually being constructed and politically renegotiated in relation to other social actors. See Laclau and Mouffe 1985.
- 36 Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 84) are particularly clear about this: "In our view, in order to advance in the determination of social antagonisms, it is necessary to analyze the plurality of diverse and frequently contradictory positions, and to discard the idea of a perfectly unified and homogeneous agent, such as the 'working class' of classical discourse."
- 37 In some cases, as for example in Britain, the Labour Party has been effective in absorbing the electoral support of the alternative movements without significantly altering its political or organizational orientation. For the British case, see the findings of Rudig et al. 1991.
- 38 Génération Ecologie was headed by Brice Lalonde, formerly a minister in the Parti Socialiste (PS) government, and from what little we know about murky French political finances, it was funded to an important extent by PS sources.
- 39 *Le Monde* published an exceptionally useful review of Green positions prior to the 1993 electoral season. See "La France 'écologique'" daily in *Le Monde* from 10 June through 15 June.
- 40 Alain Lipietz (1993) is the most strident proponent of Red-Green politics.
- 41 On the other hand, in his survey of social research on the NSMs in Germany, Dieter Rucht (1991: 186) notes that, "despite the prevailing 'anti-institutional' attitude (of the new social movement sector), it cannot be denied that more conventional structures, e.g., national associations based on individual membership, are becoming increasingly important." He further notes that in spite of the dramatic media representations of NSMs as vehicles for mass action, "most of the activities are less spectacular, coming closer to the conventional action repertoire of interest group politics, e.g., collecting signatures, distributing leaflets, organizing hearings, contacting political representatives, etc." Stephen Padgett (1989: 134–36) notes that by the mid-1980s the German Green Party showed significant signs of assimilation into the parliamentary party system, "following a well-worn path." Such a course signaled the tendency of party leadership to be socialized into the realities and limitations of effecting political change, as well as the recognition of the need for compromise to achieve any political progress.
- 42 Jane Mansbridge (1984) demonstrates these points very well.
- 43 What this has meant and will mean for the politics of the new social movements and the structure of the new social movement organizations is unclear. As Rucht (1991:

- 186) observes in the case of the German Greens, fundamentalist and “more traditional Left wing groups who still have a Marxist leaning” are losing ground within the party, to those who favor a “close cooperation or even an alliance with the Social Democrats.” On the other hand, the end of mobilizations almost always produces its share of recidivist messianism, sectarianism, and utopianism.
- 44 It is a model that must be carefully examined, however. Thirst for power proved to be a powerful antidote for New Left idealism in both France and Spain (Ross and Frader 1988).

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