NLR I/103, May–June 1977

GÖRAN THERBORN

THE RULE OF CAPITAL AND THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN advanced capitalism and democracy contains two paradoxes—one Marxist and one bourgeois. Any serious Marxist analysis has to confront the following question: How has it come about that, in the major and most advanced capitalist countries, a tiny minority class—the bourgeoisie—rules by means of democratic forms? The bitter experiences of Fascism and Stalinism, and the enduring legacy of the latter, have taught the firmest revolutionary opponents of capitalism that bourgeois democracy cannot be dismissed as a mere sham. Does contemporary reality then not vitiate Marxist class analysis? Presentday capitalist democracy is no less paradoxical from a bourgeois point of view. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as both political practice and constitutional debate clearly demonstrate, prevailing bourgeois opinion held that democracy and capitalism

(or private property) were incompatible. Even such a broad-minded liberal as John Stuart Mill remained a considered opponent of democracy for this very reason. He advocated the introduction of plural votes for entrepreneurs, merchants and bankers, as well as their foremen-lieutenants and professional hangers-on, in order to forestall proletarian 'class legislation'.[1] In modern times, however, since at least the outbreak of the Cold War, bourgeois ideologists have maintained that *only* capitalism is compatible with democracy. What has happened? Is this perhaps just a *post hoc* rationalization of a historical accident?

I Basic Problems

Before going any further, we should make absolutely clear what we understand by 'democracy'. The term is here used to denote a form of state with all the following characteristics. It has 1. a representative government elected by 2. an electorate consisting of the entire adult population, 3. whose votes carry equal weight, and 4. who are allowed to vote for any opinion without intimidation by the state apparatus. Such a state is a *bourgeois* democracy in so far as the state apparatus has a bourgeois class composition and the state power operates in such a way as to maintain and promote capitalist relations of production and the class character of the state apparatus.[2]

It is notoriously difficult to delimit precisely the democratic form of government, but the above definition seems adequate to locate the crucial variables: popular

representation and free, universal and equal suffrage. It further includes, as necessary prerequisites, the important legal freedoms of speech, assembly, organization and the press.[3] The definition is intentionally formal, since the problem here is not to expose the 'seamy side' of bourgeois democracy[4] but to elucidate how a democratic form of government has arisen in a society where a tiny minority determine whether, where, how and for how much the majority of the population work, as well as how and where they live.

Existing Sources

Democracy is one of the key words of contemporary ideological discourse, despite—or perhaps precisely because of—the fact that so little serious research has been devoted to it. It is hardly surprising that the classical Marxist writers produced almost nothing of substance on the question, for none of them had personal experience of a fully-fledged bourgeois democracy.[5] Subsequently, the preponderant role of the Soviet Union and the acute threat of Fascism were not conducive to deeper study of the problem within the international labour movement. What is more remarkable is the lack of fundamental analysis following the Western Communist Parties' reappraisal of bourgeois democracy and the rise of a new Marxist intelligentsia in the capitalist countries since the mid-sixties. Discussion has instead centred either on the capitalist state in general, usually treated at a very high level of abstraction (e.g. the work of Poulantzas, or West

German authors like Platow-Huisken, Hirsch or the Projekt-Klassenanalyse), or on non-democratic state forms (Fascism and other dictatorships—Poulantzas; Absolutism—Anderson). If general theories of the capitalist state stop short of the specific problems of bourgeois democracy, the tradition of analysis of power elites (Mills, Domhoff, Miliband), which sets out to demystify the actual practice of bourgeois democracy, for its part leaves those problems, so to speak, behind it. Both refrain from asking why it was established and how it is maintained. However, these questions cannot be avoided by the labour movement in its current strategic discussion of the relationship between democracy and socialist revolution. In the developed capitalist countries, all major sections of the revolutionary labour movement have now openly acknowledged that bourgeois democracy cannot be dismissed as a mere sham. It is now seen as an important popular conquest, which lays the basis for further advance. This in turn poses a challenge for historical study and analytical research.

It is even more striking that the problematic relationship between democracy and the rule of capital has attracted so little attention from bourgeois social scientists, historians and constitutional theorists. Here one may speak of a real regression in analytical courage and perceptiveness. As is shown by the struggles for constitutional reform that broke out in all countries, the issue was very seriously and heatedly debated by bourgeois thinkers and politicians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is tempting to regard the present lack of interest in the way in which the

contradiction between democracy and minority privilege was eventually resolved as, at least in part, determined by repressed and inconsolable memories—memories of an unexpected escape, which is best forgotten lest it reawaken the old spectre: the working masses.

Despite this sparsity of analysis of the socio-political functioning and establishment of bourgeois democracy, investigation does not have to start quite from scratch. Many will think here immediately of Barrington Moore's bold work.[6] But this is concerned with the bourgeois revolution, and democracy as we have defined it appeared in virtually every case long after the great bourgeois revolutions. Moore's book, then, will serve as an extremely stimulating background to this article rather than as a source of direct relevance. Whereas Moore tries to locate the starting-points of the roads to capitalist democracy, fascism and communism, another important contributor to the discussion, Stein Rokkan, focuses on the institutional stages of development of West European democracy, and also occupies a leading place in comparative research into electoral behaviour, with a keen eye for the historical dimensions of political institutions and conflicts.[7]

None of these previous studies, however, has centred on the historical and social context of the process of establishment of democracy. The resultant failure to grasp analytically the concrete and immediate dynamics of the process itself is perhaps most clear from another major work of contemporary bourgeois political science, Robert Dahl's *Polyarchy*. Together with Moore's

comparative history, Dahl's set of propositions concerning the conditions favouring democracy (or polyarchy as he calls it, reserving the term democracy for an unattained ideal) probably constitute the best attempt so far at a theory of bourgeois democracy. But Dahl concentrates his analysis on the *pre*-conditions of 'polyarchy' and has little to say about the concrete socio-political constellations attending the establishment of bourgeois democracy.[8]

Study of the development of democracy pertains of course to the field of constitutional history. However, this branch seems to have dedicated relatively little systematic effort to the democratic problematic as a whole, focusing instead either on the parliament-executive relation or on suffrage regulations. The former has dominated the old and lively English tradition of constitutional historiography, the latter the German tradition of comparative constitutional law.[9] The contributions of mainstream political sociology have, not surprisingly, been quite sterile. The method first developed by S. M. Lipset manages to combine timeless correlations of democracy with wealth (measured by indices ranging from income to telephone ownership), literacy, urbanization etc., with an almost total lack of interest in social dynamics and, in Lipset's own case, blatant distortions of fact.[10]

Among historical studies devoted to particular countries, only a few concentrate on the process of democratization, or critical aspects of it. But such works do exist.[11] Most research into the history of democratization is contained in general political and

social histories and in monographs, including political biographies, which are primarily concerned with other questions. Thus, although scientific investigation of bourgeois democracy starts out from a paltry analytical tradition, it can build upon a large number of scholarly studies to which it owes a considerable debt.

Now that the crucial variables have been identified, we must turn to problems of sample and method. Although this article presents only a few preliminary reflections, and by no means a definitive account, it will clearly have need of a representative sample of cases. Future studies will have to draw upon the experience of all existing capitalist countries, but at this stage it is the advanced ones that are most important. One of the least arbitrary ways of choosing a sample is simply to take the members of the OECD, which seems to be the broadest and most significant organization of the core capitalist states. At present its members include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, German Federal Republic, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. There are other important capitalist states, such as Brazil, India and Iran, but the OECD countries seem to constitute the central nucleus of capitalism. At the time of writing (March 1977) none of these is a fully-fledged dictatorship, although Turkey and Spain do not yet have stabilized democracies. The real heart of the OECD appears to be the seventeen major capital-exporting states—excluding, that is, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Spain and

Turkey—which make up its Trade and Development Committee. It is these seventeen, then, that I shall take as our representative sample.

We are concerned here with the process whereby democracy became the established form of bourgeois rule under advanced capitalism. Our task, then, will be first to locate its appearance in time, and secondly to situate it in social and political space. For these purposes, neither the correlational techniques of the sociologists nor the institutional sequences of Rokkan are adequate. What is required is rather a comparative historical overview which seeks to identify general patterns while remaining sensitive to the peculiarities of each particular case.

The Tasks of Democratization

Since even formal democracy cannot be said to exist either completely or not at all, it is sometimes very difficult to establish an exact date for the achievement of democracy. But if we are able to isolate the democratic values of our four defining variables, it should then be possible to discover when they were attained in the various countries under consideration.

The democratic principle of popular representation implies the existence of either a republic or a parliamentary monarchy. The predominant régime of nineteenth-century Europe—a constitutional monarchy in which the cabinet had no clear-cut responsibility to parliament—cannot then be held to fulfil the conditions of democracy. Nor was this true of non-sovereign states

like pre-1918 Finland or British colonies before they reached independent or dominion status. For representative government clearly implies popular sovereignty. In our sample of seventeen countries, the process of attainment of representative government stretched over a period of two centuries: from the mid-eighteenth century, when a parliamentary cabinet was consolidated in Britain, to 1952, when US occupation of Japan was terminated and the 1947 democratic constitution took effect as the basis of a sovereign state.

The introduction of universal suffrage required the dismantling of a number of restrictions, typically based on criteria of tax-payment and income. Where two legislative bodies existed side by side, as was often the case, these qualifications would normally be considerably higher for one of the chambers. Of a certain importance were also limitations based on standards of literacy (as in Italy until the new electoral law of 1911, and in the southern states of the USA well into the twentieth century) or on membership of a particular sex (invariably the female), race (blacks in the USA, Chinese in the USA and Canada), or (parts of) a given class (wage-labourers with a household of their own in Denmark and Britain). Further minor restrictions, excluding people on relief, for example, were not insignificant in the early stages of democratization, but we shall not deal with them here.

The achievement of equal suffrage also involved the abolition of plural voting—which survived in Britain until 1948, although it was of little import after 1918—

and the elimination or emasculation of a privileged upper House. More intractable has been the practice of gerrymandering and disproportionate allocation of seats. With the exception of Norway, where under the 1814 constitution the reverse tendency operated, almost all the countries we are considering have had, and to a varying extent retain a clear over-representation of (presumably more conservative) rural voters. However, this does not seem to have been a very significant electoral factor since the other variables began to correspond to the conditions of democracy, and we have left it out of account in the present analysis.[12]

When we talk of a free vote, we are of course referring only to norms supported by the force of law: to freedom from intervention by the state apparatus in the electoral process; and to the right to present candidates of any persuasion, and vote for whichever is preferred. In the past, Napoleon III and Giovanni Giolitti in pre-1914 Italy became masters of the management of elections by sections of the state apparatus—from the Ministry of the Interior down to local prefects and even postmen.[13] In modern times, the intimidation of blacks by the regional and local state apparatus in the United States provides one major illustration of these methods, but the typical pattern of restricting democracy has rather been the banning of opposition parties.

The most important line of demarcation we must now draw is the one between democratic régimes and various non-democratic structures. However, it will help us to elucidate the processes involved if we briefly outline the general contours of the universe of bourgeois

rule, of which democratic states form a part. In *State Power and State Apparatuses*, I argue that a bourgeois government is, in a minimal, non-evaluative sense, always a régime of national representation. This provides us with two dimensions within which to delimit the characteristic space occupied by a particular régime. Which nation is represented? How is it represented? The nation as expressed in the institutional arrangements of the polity—the *pays légal*—may quite simply comprise the entire adult population. But it may also embrace some more than others—by means of plural votes, delineation of constituencies, etc.—or even exclude from political participation sections of the population who have little or no property or who belong to a certain race, sex or current of opinion.

The mode of representation may be exclusively elective, but it may also be self-proclaimed. A régime may be based, for instance, on the claim of a Leader or an apparatus of the state (usually the army) to represent and incarnate the will or interests of the nation. Between these polar extremes lies another, historically important mode of representation which combines the two. The non-parliamentary constitutional monarchies of nineteenth-century Europe provide us with the best example of such a régime. They combined a non-elective, proclaimed representation of the nation by the king—the King of the French, etc.—with elected legislatures. This built-in dualism of elective and non-elective representation should be distinguished both from cases where elections are only a subordinate aspect of a non-elective régime (such as Franco's Spain) and from those where elections opened the road to power for

a régime which was thereafter organized and maintained on the basis of an incarnate mode of representation (such as Hitler's Germany). Strictly speaking, the dualistic mode of representation also differs from situations where a non-elective mode, though not insignificant, is clearly secondary to the elective one; such is the case of the British House of Lords and of the pre-fascist Italian Senate, which was appointed by the king.

The dimension of the mode of representation corresponds directly to the variable of representative government which was discussed in connection with the definition of democracy. The broadening of the nation, or—to use the telling expression of nineteenth-century bourgeois political theory—of the *pays légal* comprises the three other variables used in the definition: the extent and degree of equality, and free exercise of the franchise. It also comprises Dahl's two dimensions of 'polyarchy': the rights of participation and contestation (a schema which is inadequate to distinguish between the systems that preceded the introduction of male suffrage in Habsburg Austria or Meiji Japan and the parliamentary régime of Victorian Britain).

TABLE 1
The Universe of Bourgeois Régimes

EXTENT OF FRANCHISE	MODE OF REPRESENTATION		
	Incarnate	*Incarnate and Elective*	*Elective*
equally to whole adult population	1. (Inclusivist Dictatorship)	2. (Authoritarian inclusivist)	3. Democracy
to less than whole adult population or to some more than others	4. Dictatorship	5. Authoritarian exclusivist	6. Democratic exclusivist

The logical possibilities 1 and 2 have never occurred in reality. (Inclusivist dictatorship refers to rule by the army or another non-elected body under which everybody, of any opinion, is entitled to express his or her preferences and have them represented by the ruling group.) We are therefore left with *four main types of régime*: *democracies, dictatorships, authoritarian exclusivist* and *democratic exclusivist* states. Among the seventeen countries we have selected, Fascist Italy and Germany, Dollfuss Austria and wartime Japan exemplify dictatorship; the non-parliamentary constitutional monarchies (including the second French Empire in its later phase, when the previously dictatorial Imperial government began to lose its hold over the electoral process) are instances of authoritarian exclusivism; whereas democratic exclusivism is illustrated by parliamentary Britain prior to the introduction of universal suffrage, the United States from the Declaration of Independence to the effective enfranchisement of the blacks, late nineteenth and twentieth century Switzerland before the extension of the vote to the female population, and Lapua Finland between 1930 and 1944 when the Communist opposition was suppressed. These last four cases also express the *most important criteria of exclusion*: *class, race, sex* and *opinion*, respectively.

This extremely broad and general schema may be refined and elaborated in a number of ways, according to the type of incarnation (legitimate descent, political charisma, various institutional forms etc.), or the criteria, extent and repressive efficiency of exclusion, and so on. For instance, it makes a considerable difference whether it is the majority of the population or a minority, large or

small, which is excluded from the legal nation. In this respect the United States and South Africa have obviously not had the same experience.

II The Establishment of Democracy

Now that we have defined the criteria of bourgeois democracy, we should attempt to locate the period of establishment in the seventeen countries.

TABLE 2
Year of Establishment of Democracy

Country	*First attainment of democracy*	*Male democracy (if prior)*	*Reversal (excl. foreign occupation)*	*Beginning of present day democracy*
Australia	(1903)			
Austria	1918		1934	1955
Belgium	1948	1919		
Canada	(1920)		(1931)	(1945)
Denmark	1915			
Finland	(1919)		1930	1944
France	1946	1884		
Germany	1919		1933 (1956)	1949 (1968)
Italy	1946	(1919)	[1922]	1946
Japan	1952			
Netherlands	1919	1917		
New Zealand	1907			
Norway	1915	1898		
Sweden	1918			
Switzerland	1971	c. 1880	([1940])	([1944])
UK	1928	1918		
USA	c. 1970			

NOTE: Brackets denotes qualifications, square brackets a process of reversal or re-establishment of male democracy.
SOURCES: In compiling the above table and survey, I have drawn on a large number of sources available in Swedish university libraries, ranging from constitutional documents and handbooks to political biographies. As I cannot claim any particular competence to provide a bibliographical guide to the best and most accessible histories of the seventeen countries, I shall give references only for highly specific and controversial statements. Some major secondary sources have already been given above.

In order to gain some bearings for the causal analysis that follows, and to motivate the datings in Table 2 (some of which may appear far from self-evident), we should survey the most decisive events in the different countries.

Australia. The Australian colonies became a federal state with the ambiguous sovereignty status of a dominion in 1901. Already in the 1890s, Lib-Lab coalitions in individual colonies had started introducing the universal and equal white suffrage which was to form the basis of the federal franchise of 1903. The qualifications were blatantly racist, and indeed section 25 of the constitution still explicitly allows for discrimination in state electoral laws. However, even in the decade before the achievement of dominion status, the principal racist thrust had been directed at the exclusion of prospective non-white immigrants (by means of skilfully contrived European-language tests which, after British protests, had been imported from the Natal[14]) and at the expulsion of Chinese and Pacific immigrants already there. Behind the walls of this exclusive continent, racism had a limited significance—although it was only in 1962 that the small aboriginal population was finally granted the federal vote.[15]

Austria. In 1907, following the revolutionary events in Russia and massive working-class demonstrations in the country itself, virtually universal and equal male suffrage was introduced in elections to the second chamber in the Austrian part of the Habsburg dual monarchy. Only after the fall of the Habsburgs in 1918 were full universal suffrage and a parliamentary government established. The new democratic republic was the work of a tripartite coalition in which the Social Democrats were initially the central force. But Austrian politics soon came to be dominated by the overwhelmingly farmer-based Christian Socials, who in 1934 installed a reactionary dictatorship itself to be

swallowed up four years later by German Fascism. After the defeat of the Nazis and the end of allied occupation Austria started out on its present democratic road.

Belgium. The struggle for universal and equal suffrage was the focus of massive working-class strikes in 1886, 1888, 1891, 1893, 1902 and 1913, all of which were defeated, sometimes with severe repression.[16] Finally, at the end of the First World War, the ruling Catholic Party accepted universal suffrage, after twenty-five years of a system of heavily weighted male voting in which middle-aged heads of propertied families disposed of three votes. The post-war national coalition government called elections on the basis of equal male suffrage, and the resultant parliament amended the constitution accordingly.[17] Responsibility for the very restricted female franchise lies mainly with the Liberals and Social Democrats, who feared that women voters would tend to support the Catholics.[18] Full universal suffrage was not adopted until 1948. A male democratic franchise for elections to the Senate was also introduced in 1919, but workers and small entrepreneurs are still not among the twenty-one categories eligible to stand as candidates.[19]

Canada. Property qualifications continued for a long time to restrict the franchise, persisting in Quebec and Prince Edward Island provinces until after the Second World War. But in the struggle for military conscription—much detested in Quebec in particular—a Conservative government considerably extended the franchise in 1917 and in 1920 universal white suffrage was introduced for federal elections. However, racially discriminatory electoral legislation was permitted to the provinces and

once more authorized by franchise acts of the 1930s. British Columbia and Saskatchewan continued to make use of this possibility until the end of the Second World War. As regards political exclusion, the small Communist Party was raided in 1931 and its leaders imprisoned. Officially prohibited in 1940, the party was able to reappear after Stalingrad as the Labour-Progressive Party, but its single elected MP was soon deprived of his seat under a mysterious espionage charge.[20]

Denmark. In 1849, under the triple impact of a succession to the throne, nationalist agitation focusing on the unclear status of the king's German-Danish dukedoms, and the March Days (the more peaceful equivalent of the French February Revolution), Denmark moved from an absolutist régime to a bi-cameral constitutional monarchy in which the lower chamber was elected by equal and virtually universal male suffrage. Cabinet responsibility to the farmer-controlled second chamber was secured in 1901 after a protracted struggle with an upper house dominated by the landowning aristocracy in alliance with the big urban bourgeoisie. A left-liberal government, based on the small farmers and urban petty bourgeoisie and actively supported by the Social Democrats, then proposed a democratic, bi-cameral constitution including women's right to vote. The last attempts of right-wing landowners to maintain significant conservative guarantees—attempts which had the sympathies of the big farmers' Left party—faded away in the national union that was established on the

outbreak of the First World War. However, the democratic constitution adopted in 1915 included a very high electoral age limit of twenty-nine years.

Finland. The general strike and mass workers' demonstrations of 1905 led the Finnish Estates, meeting not far from the St Petersburg Soviet, to transform themselves into a unicameral legislature elected by universal suffrage—a solution subsequently accepted by the Tsars. Women received the vote both because the labour movement demanded it and because the Conservatives thought they could count on their electoral support.[21] But Finland remained part of the Russian Empire, and the executive council—the Senate—did not take on the responsibility of a parliament.[22] After the civil war of 1918, the victorious Whites set out to install a non-parliamentary constitutional monarchy under a German prince. However, the fall of the German aristocracy later in the year frustrated these plans, and in 1919 a bourgeois republic was proclaimed. Although the Communist Party remained illegal, it was able to operate through a front party until a strong fascist-type movement based on the farmers put an end to this in 1930. Only in 1944, after the defeats of its German ally, did the Finnish government join the bourgeois democracies and lift the ban on the Communists.

France. The democratic constitution of 1793 was the first in the world to include universal male suffrage, but it was never put into practice and was formally revoked after Thermidor. The similar provisions adopted after the February Revolution were in turn severely restricted by the bourgeois parliament in 1850, and, although they

were restored by Napoleon III in 1852, it was in the absence of free elections and parliamentary government. Military defeat of the Second Empire and stalemate between rival royalist factions laid the basis for the republican constitution of 1875. Thus, from the year 1884, when the republican advance secured an alteration of the privileged upper chamber, France may be described as a male democracy. The Communist Party was banned on the outbreak of the Second World War and, after the defeat of 1940, a non-democratic satellite régime was installed until the Liberation. The new constitution of 1946 went on to extend the franchise to all adult women. Throughout the twentieth century, the history of the French republics has been punctuated by revisions of constituency boundaries and electoral procedures introduced with the aim of putting the opposition at a disadvantage.[23]

Germany. The popular conquest in 1848–9 of effectively universal and equal male suffrage was swiftly reversed by pro-capitalist royal reaction. Later, Bismarck introduced a male franchise for Reich elections as a means towards national unification and as a weapon against the bourgeois liberals. The establishment of a régime of parliamentary democracy, in which the reformist Social Democrats played the leading role, came about only after the military defeat of Wilhelmine Germany. Present-day West German democracy may be said to date from the end of the Allied occupation that followed the fall of the Third Reich. However, the relatively small CP was banned in 1956 and only allowed to reappear under a new name in 1968.

Italy. After unification, Italy had a very narrow suffrage until 1912, when the Liberal Giolitti introduced the male vote as part of his campaign for support of the Libyan war. However, the state apparatus remained active in 'management' of the elections right up to 1919,[24] and a conservative Senate blocked a positive proposal for female suffrage. Although the government's parliamentary base lay in the Chamber of Deputies, a significant role was thus still played by the Senate, whose members were appointed by the king according to a number of criteria that included possession of considerable wealth and a distinguished career rank. Even the existing elements of male democracy were, of course, quickly eradicated by fascism and a fully democratic constitution was only adopted in 1946.

Japan. The Japan of the Meiji Restoration came to take the German Reich as its model, and the 1890 Constitution was written with the help of German jurists. Universal male suffrage was introduced in 1925 following the post-war years of popular struggle. Although no genuine system of representative government and political freedom ensued, parties and elections were permitted until the establishment of a military dictatorship under Imperial cover in the late 1930s. Japan may be regarded as a bourgeois democracy since she recovered her sovereignty in 1952 on the basis of a constitution drawn up by the US occupation authorities six years previously.[25]

Netherlands. The early Dutch revolution did not bring about a democratic régime, and towards the end of the nineteenth century the Netherlands still had a narrow,

property-based franchise. Divisions appeared in all the capitalist parties in the 1890s as the bourgeois democrats advanced to the accompaniment of workers' demonstrations and social-democratic parliamentary obstruction. Male universal suffrage was finally incorporated in a wide-ranging deal between all parties, whereby the religious ones received state support for church control of the schools. The deal was eventually implemented under the auspices of a Liberal government in the 1917 climate of national unity, but it accorded with the recommendations of a pre-war commission. Owing to the opposition of religious politicians, female suffrage was delayed until 1919. Further constitutional amendments of 1922 restricted the already much weakened powers of the monarch.

New Zealand. After three decades of parliamentary government and a franchise based on property qualifications, a sort of male democracy was instituted in 1889 by a rather conservative government in the wake of left-Liberal and Labour agitation. Four years later, female voting rights were introduced by a Labour-backed Liberal administration, largely under the pressure of prohibitionists anticipating widespread women's support.[26] The Maoris had been given four seats in the House in 1867. Thus the principal democratic changes had already been implemented before the country acquired dominion status in 1907.

Norway. The struggle against the union with Sweden was led by the urban intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie, who managed to rally the farmers around them in a liberal Left party. However, when it formed a

parliamentary government in 1884, the Left came out in opposition to universal suffrage. Labour movement agitation in the 1890s finally persuaded the liberals to yield in the hope of uniting the people for the final battle with the Swedish monarchy.[27] Practically the whole male population gained the vote in 1898, followed by women fifteen years later.

Sweden. Fifteen years of social-democratic and liberal campaigning were necessary before a Conservative government finally granted men equal voting rights to the second chamber in 1907. However, equal powers were attributed to a first chamber elected indirectly according to a system whereby the richest voters disposed of forty votes. With regard to municipal elections, even the liberal agrarian bourgeoisie had considerable reservations about granting the lower classes an equal vote; it was only in the turmoil of late 1918, when they were threatened by working-class rebellion, that the Conservatives gave in. By contrast, there was little conflict at that time over women's voting rights.

Switzerland. The traditional oligarchies of the Swiss cantons fell to the male democracy of artisans, peasants and intellectual petty bourgeois in the 1830s and 1840s, in several cases after armed uprisings. Although the national civil war of 1847 was fought over the issue of national unification versus provincial clericalism rather than over democratic rights, the two struggles were in practice different moments of the same revolution. The federal constitution of 1850 proscribed male democracy, but it can hardly be said to have institutionalized it; for

the following decade was filled with cantonal rebellions and counter-rebellions.[28] It is in fact extremely difficult to date precisely the consummation of the process. A host of ingenious devices of intimidation and manipulation, as well as significant legal exclusion clauses (relating to bankruptcy, tax payment, and so on) continued to be employed for several decades by the cantonal state apparatuses. In Berne in 1874, for example, as many as 25 per cent of the total male population were effectively excluded from the franchise.[29] The establishment of male democracy may perhaps be located most accurately about the year 1879, when a proper electoral register was drawn up for the first time. Out of accommodation to Nazism, the Communist Party was banned in 1940. But when the fortunes of war turned, so did those of Swiss male democracy—in 1944 the party was allowed to reform as the Party of Labour. Women's rights, however, found no place in the predominant conceptions of democracy and, even after the male political establishment acquiesced to female suffrage in the 1950s, sexist referenda delayed its attainment until 1971.

United Kingdom. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Britain became, alongside Sweden, the earliest parliamentary monarchy. The birthplace of industrial capitalism, Britain witnessed also the first democratic working-class mass movement . . . as well as, in the 1840s, the first effective crushing of such a movement. The male franchise was considerably extended in 1867 and 1884, but it was only during the war, in 1918, that more or less equal and universal suffrage was legislated by a Liberal government. Provisions for a more restricted female vote, which had been successfully

opposed before the war, were also approved. Equal women's suffrage was granted by the Conservatives in 1928 after the first minority Labour government had failed to get it accepted. Relatively insignificant instances of plural voting rights were finally abolished by Labour in 1948.

United States. The American road to democracy has been a tortuous one indeed. Starting in Connecticut in 1855 and Massachusetts in 1857, the trend which had appeared in the first half of the century towards removing the original property qualifications was for a time reversed by the introduction of literacy tests to exclude the new poor Irish immigrants.[30] The Fifteenth Amendment enfranchised the blacks in the northern states, but it took another hundred years for it to take effect in the south. There, both blacks and poor whites were intentionally barred from voting by poll taxes and manipulative literacy requirements, as well as by semi-official intimidation. It was not simply racist ideology that lay behind these practices: the aim, which was successful for more than half a century, was to establish a one-party régime of the upper bourgeoisie.[31] In the north, the significance of literacy tests was soon eroded, but the fresh requirement of advance registration in person on the electoral list proved more effective in discouraging the lower strata from political participation. Thus in Massachusetts 4 per cent of adult male citizens were excluded from voting in the 1908 presidential elections because of literacy qualifications, whereas a further 13 per cent failed to register.[32] The combined effect of northern registration obstacles and southern oneparty régime was a reduction of

participation in presidential elections from 75–80 per cent in the period 1876–1900 to an average of 60 per cent this century.[33]

In the northern states, white and black women obtained the vote together just after the First World War. But it was only in the late 1960s, after violently resisted civil rights struggles in the south and ghetto rebellions in the north, that the federal government began to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment in the south. The Amendment had been passed shortly before the centenary of the republic, but it was only just in time for the bi-centennial celebrations that the United States fully qualified as a bourgeois democracy.

III Patterns of Democratization

In the history of democratization, two features are striking by their absence. Firstly, the fact that none of the great bourgeois revolutions actually established bourgeois democracy. It is not only of the early Dutch and English revolutions that this is true: the democratic constitution produced by the French Revolution remained a dead letter from beginning to end of its brief existence. The July Revolution did not even manage to draft one, although it did stimulate the development of a male democratic movement in Switzerland. The international popular upsurge of 1848 was rapidly stifled by feudal-dynastic reaction—and also by the bourgeoisie itself. For example, in 1850 the Second French Republic deprived 2½ million adult males of the vote by the introduction of lengthy residence

qualifications. Similarly, the Danish bourgeois National Liberals eagerly assisted in clipping the wings of the popular chamber in the 1860s. The American Republic was established by white propertied gentlemen, and the only blacks enfranchised by the Civil War were male northerners. Unified Italy took over the extremely narrow franchise of the kingdom of Sardinia. And when, despite the misgivings of the bourgeois liberals, Bismarck introduced universal male suffrage in Reich elections, a régime of parliamentary democracy was neither the object nor the outcome of the measure.

TABLE 3

Bourgeois Régimes at Selected Points in Time

Democracies	*Democratic exclusivist*	*Authoritarian exclusivist*	*Dictatorships*
	The 1850s		
	Belgium	Norway	France
	Denmark	Sweden	
	Netherlands		
	(Switzerland)		
	UK		
	USA		
	1914		
Australia	Belgium	Austria	
New Zealand	Canada	Germany	
Norway	Denmark	Japan	
	France		
	Italy		
	Netherlands		
	Sweden		
	Switzerland		
	UK		
	USA		
	1920		
Australia	Belgium	Japan	
Austria	France		
(Canada)	Italy		
Denmark	Switzerland		
(Finland)	UK		
Germany	USA		
Netherlands			
New Zealand			
Norway			
Sweden			
	1939		
Australia	Belgium		Austria*
(Canada)	Finland		Germany
Denmark	France		Italy
Netherlands	Switzerland		Japan
New Zealand	USA		
Norway			
Sweden			
UK			
	The 1950s		
Australia	Switzerland		
Austria	USA		
Belgium			
Canada			
Denmark			
Finland			
Germany (after 1956)			
Italy			
Japan			
Netherlands			
New Zealand			
Norway			
Sweden			
UK			

*1934–38, then incorporated into Germany

The second striking absence in the history of bourgeois democracy is that of a steady, peaceful process accompanying the development of wealth, literacy and urbanization. On the eve of the First World War, only three peripheral capitalist states could have been characterized as democracies: Australia and New Zealand (where rampant racism was able to turn outwards rather than inwards) and Norway. If we disregard sexism and include male democracies, then two more examples could be cited: France and Switzerland. The latter had recently passed through two civil wars—in 1847 and 1874—whereas the former had experienced a number of revolutions and counter-revolutions, as well as the military defeat of the Second Empire which became the starting-point of the democratic republic. The long-standing British parliamentary régime had still not enfranchised the whole male working class, and was only slowly beginning to relax after its repression of the first democratic mass movement in history. In the United States, the process of democratization had suffered two reverses: one in the north, directed against new illiterate immigrants, the other turned against the blacks and poor white opposition of the south. In Italy, prefects and the *mazzieri* (thugs armed with clubs) of the liberal premier Giolitti still largely controlled the elections. In other countries likewise, big landowners and their *kulak* and bourgeois allies retained the power of privilege.

In order to provide an overview of the temporalities involved in the process of democratization, we must now chart the political pattern of these seventeen countries at given points in time (Table 3). Countries will

be included only after they have gained independence, with the exception of Norway, which, prior to 1905, was the minor partner in a royal union with Sweden rather than an integral part of it. Italy and Germany appear only after national unification; Austria after the *Ausgleich* of 1867 and the end of absolutism; and Japan after the Meiji Restoration. Until these changes, they all clearly belonged to a different universe of régimes. (The Habsburg Empire, for example, was never a bourgeois state proper.)

Democracies by Defeat

After the First World War the number of democracies increased from three to ten (with some qualification in the cases of Canada and Finland), and that of male ones from five to fourteen. By 1939, however, the number had fallen to eight and eleven, respectively. The big boom of democracy came in the aftermath of the Second World War, with only Swiss sexism and US racism holding out until the 1970s. The conclusion would appear to be that bourgeois democracy is largely a martial accomplishment.

The victors of both world wars made ample use of democratic rhetoric, and none more than the least democratic of capitalist states—the United States of America. But no serious historian seems to have suggested that the wars were caused by a struggle for or against bourgeois democracy, or that Germany and her allies lost because they did not possess democratic régimes. Moreover, the crucial historical role of foreign

wars provides strong support for the thesis that bourgeois democracy is largely contingent to the developed rule of capital. If this is true, then the fragility of bourgeois democracy in Latin America may be partially attributed to the fact that it was never drawn into the mass slaughter of two world wars.

It may be the case, however, that the accidental origin of bourgeois democracy is itself an accident. For even if they scarcely figured among the major capitalist powers, three countries did have democratic régimes prior to the First World War, and they have retained them ever since (disregarding the German occupation of Norway between 1940 and 1945). It would appear, then, that world wars are at least not indispensable conditions of bourgeois democracy. Perhaps there were even internal processes of democratization at work, which only accidentally burst forth after the world wars. At all events, we must abandon the terrain of correlational analysis, so beloved by political sociologists, and examine the causal forces in operation. We shall also have to indulge in some counter-factual speculation about the possible course of history if the world wars had not taken place or if they had produced a different outcome.

Let us count the four states which jumped on and off the democratic stage as each representing two instances. We then have a total of twenty-one cases instead of seventeen. In nine of these, a régime of bourgeois democracy resulted from the military defeat of a non-democratic government (Austria, Finland, Germany, twice each, and Italy, Japan and Sweden, once). In two of

these (Finland 1918–19, Sweden 1918), it was the fall of a foreign régime—Wilhelmine Germany and, before that, the Romanov Empire—which had an indirect effect on the process of democratization. In the Finnish example, it seems perfectly clear from the development of constitutional negotiations after the White victory in the civil war that, had it not been for the establishment of a democratic republic in Germany, a constitutional but non-parliamentary monarchy would have been proclaimed. Half a year after the collapse of the Reich, it was still an open question whether a democratic republic would be accepted by the interim head of state, General Mannerheim, and by the forces of the Right.[34] But there was no equivalent to the solid Hungarian aristocracy and Mannerheim was not to become the Finnish Horthy.

In the case of Sweden, counterfactual argumentation is rather more hazardous. In the late autumn of 1918, the country was in a situation of near-revolutionary turmoil. Left-wing forces, striving for a socialist revolution and greatly inspired by the Russian October, constituted a clear minority of the labour movement, whereas the popular pressure for bourgeois democracy was very strong. Nevertheless, the Right was entrenched in the non-democratic first chamber and could count on both the support of the landowners, prosperous farmers and mighty wood and steel combines of pre-industrial origin and on the loyalty of the officer corps and police. It was undoubtedly the king's fear for his throne, among other considerations, which finally persuaded the politicians of the Right to relinquish the privileges to which they had clung so stubbornly. It seems almost certain that the

process of democratization would have been postponed for some time further if Germany had emerged victorious. What would have happened had there been no war at all is more difficult to assess. The Swedish Right had grown stronger and more aggressive as the storm-clouds gathered over Europe after 1912, and it is unlikely that it would have accepted a democratic régime by late 1918 without the fall of its much admired Wilhelmine Reich.

Similarly, the course that would have been taken by the Habsburg and Hohenzollern empires in a period of peaceful development is impossible to state with any assurance. However, they would hardly have blossomed into parliamentary democracies by 1919. In the event of military victory, too, the *Junkers* would by no means have freely given up their privileges or retreated for long before the internal forces of democracy.

In conclusion, we can say that in eight cases out of twenty-one (or in five out of seventeen) the outcome of the world wars was causally decisive in the instalment of bourgeois democracy, and that in one more (Sweden) it determined the timing of the process. To these six democracies whose origins lie in military defeat, we may add the case of France. For the precondition of the male democratic republic that developed was the collapse of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian war.

In only four countries was the process of democratization totally unrelated to foreign war—Australia and New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland. However, in six of the thirteen other democracies in our

sample, war seems to have had an indirect effect or to have been of only secondary significance in their development. It served to influence existing governments and parties in the direction of democracy rather than to break up old forces and bring forth new ones. Indeed, it would be more correct to consider this type of effect under a more general heading, covering additional important steps in the process. Thus, from the war democracies proper—the democracies by defeat—we should go on to examine the democracies of national mobilization.

National Mobilization Democracies

National mobilization has been related to the development of democracy in two basic ways. On the one hand, measures of democratization have been introduced as a *means* towards the end of national mobilization; on the other, they have been produced as *effects* of the process of integration (military, economic and ideological) expressed in popular mobilization for the national effort. The two clearest examples of the former are Giolitti's franchise reform in Italy and the Canadian War Times Elections Act of 1917—both part of political preparations for war. The second relationship is illustrated by the establishment of male democracy in Belgium, the Dutch reforms of 1917–19, the Danish Right's acceptance of democracy in 1915, the British Reform Act of 1918, and the introduction of female suffrage in the United States in 1919 (perhaps also in France and Belgium after the Second World War). In all these cases, a process of democratization already under

way was speeded up and facilitated by a wartime *union sacrée*. This effect of mobilization was very well expressed by Albert 1 of Belgium, speaking to parliament on 22 November 1918 upon his return to Brussels: 'Equality of suffering and endurance has created equal rights in the broadening of public aspirations. The government will propose that the two chambers dismantle the old barriers in a patriotic agreement and initiate national consultation on the basis of equal suffrage for all men who have reached the age required for the exercise of civil rights.'[35]

In other cases as well, national mobilization has played an important role in extension of the suffrage. Bismarck, for example, wrote in his memoirs: 'the acceptance of general suffrage was a weapon in the struggle against Austria and the rest of the foreign powers, a weapon in the struggle for national unity'. But his intention was that only candidates for the propertied classes should be allowed to compete for the votes of the masses.[36] In the same spirit, one of the reasons why the Austrian emperor conceded general male suffrage in elections to the second chamber in 1907 was his hope that this would neutralize tendencies towards disintegration of the dynastic empire into its component nations.[37] Similarly, the Danish bourgeoisie was led to accept a general franchise as an instrument of its struggle to replace the king's Germanic dukedoms of Schleswig and Holstein-Lauenburg by a national, non-dynastic frontier on the Eider river. In Norway, the need to rally the people behind the fight against union with Sweden appears to have been one of the main reasons for the (liberal) Left Party's acceptance, in 1898, of the labour movement's

strong demands for male voting rights. Semi-revolutionary working-class demonstrations formed the background to the extension of the Finnish franchise in 1906 as part of the struggle against the Russian Tsar.

Mobilization for national liberation and foreign war has thus, alongside military defeat, been one of the most important causes of the development of bourgeois democracy. But it is more difficult to ascertain how decisive this role has been. It has been a crucial determinant of the timing of democratization and one of the reasons for the coincidence of war and democracy. But would the internal processes have come to a halt without these external threats? It seems extremely probable that in the Netherlands and Denmark, where a parliamentary majority had already tabled proposals shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, the tempo of events would have been roughly the same in the absence of national wartime integration. In Norway, however, the establishment of democracy would almost certainly have been delayed for a considerable time had it not been for the unresolved conflict with Sweden. In Canada, too, where property and poll-tax restrictions persisted at a provincial level long after the introduction of a federal franchise in 1920, the war seems to have affected the process in a decisive manner. But for the war, the militant Belgian Catholic Right would hardly have surrendered by 1919, and it would also have taken longer for women to gain the vote in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and, possibly, the United States.

In Britain, reform was already at quite an advanced stage. The franchise had been considerably extended in 1867 and 1884; free elections had been guaranteed; the House of Lords had been rendered virtually powerless just before the war; and a bill abolishing plural voting had been published. Nevertheless, no decision had been taken on general male suffrage, not to speak of universal voting rights, and although the process would doubtless have continued even under peaceful conditions, it is likely to have taken a much longer time to reach completion.

In conclusion, then, we can say that national mobilization in the face of external threat has been a most important factor in the history of bourgeois democratization. In two countries—Denmark and the Netherlands—it was of only secondary significance, determining the more or less consensual manner in which the critical steps were taken. In four cases—Belgium, Britain, Canada, Norway—it speeded up the achievement of male democracy to a varying, uncertain, but probably considerable extent. In five countries—Belgium, Britain, France, the Netherlands, the USA—it brought nearer female enfranchisement. (We should also remember that the voting rights of southern blacks were first enforced during the Vietnam war, quite possibly as a result of the government's concern with a crumbling home front marked by black rebellion, student movements and opposition to the war.) But in none of the cases under consideration is it possible to state that national mobilization was a necessary condition of democracy.

Internal Development Democracies

There are only three countries were democracy has been produced by internal developments alone: Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland. But we should also consider those cases where such processes were of overwhelming significance, namely, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United States. In France, the establishment of democracy rested upon a uniquely complex fusion of external defeat and internal evolution. Finally, since the four examples of national mobilization referred to above—Belgium, Britain, Canada, Norway—also exhibited major internal tendencies, we shall have to take them into account under this heading.

Two internal factors seem to have been of the most immediate strategic importance: the independent strength of the agrarian petty and small bourgeois landowners, and divisions within the ruling-class (or power) bloc. This statement should at once be qualified by mentioning the enormous role of the labour movement. The Second International went down in ignominious disarray in 1914, but its contribution to the development of bourgeois democracy was certainly not insubstantial. Indeed, this may be said to have been its principal historical accomplishment. However, although the labour movement was the only consistent democratic force on the arena, it was nowhere strong enough to achieve bourgeois democracy on its own, without the aid of victorious foreign armies, domestic allies more powerful than itself, or splits in the ranks of the enemy.

It is hardly surprising that the tiny privileged minority constituted by the mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie and the feudal and capitalist landowners should have been almost invariably hostile to democracy—hence the exclusivist outcome of the bourgeois revolutions. By contrast, the urban *artisanat* and petty bourgeoisie generally tended in a democratic direction and provided the striking force of both the Jacobins and the 1848 revolutions. But, as these examples also show, they were too weak to hold out against feudal and bourgeois reaction. The peasantry, however, constituted an absolutely decisive force in the still largely agrarian capitalist countries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Now 'peasantry' is, of course, far too undifferentiated a notion. The landless peasants were, on the whole, still too oppressed to say or do very much, although in Finland the crofters very soon became involved in the labour movement and later played a heroic role in the civil war. The ones who really counted were the small and medium landholding farmers, patriarchal self-subsistence households, the agrarian petty bourgeoisie and the small and medium agrarian bourgeoisie (those using hired labour).

The strength of these agrarian classes—and the degree of their independence from the landowning aristocracy and urban big capital—were crucial factors in the development of democracy. They were most powerful in the Swiss cantons, which had withstood the Habsburg empire for centuries, and in the settler communities of Australia, New Zealand, the northern USA and Western Canada. The isolated mercantile patriciates of Berne and

Zurich were as little able to resist these forces as the pastoralist squattocracy of the antipodes and its allies amongst recently formed urban capitalists. The institution of male democracy preceded the rise of the workers' movement in both Switzerland and the northern United States. In Australia and New Zealand, trade-unionist labour politicians occupied an important place in the democratic coalitions, but posed no socialist threat to capital. In the large and bitter strikes of the early 1890s, sheep and shipping capital inflicted, with the help of the state, serious defeats on the seamen's and shearer's unions. (It is worth remembering, however, that Australia had a quite strongly organized agricultural proletariat as early as the 1880s.) In Canada, by contrast, the small settlers were no match for the wealthy mercantile bourgeoisie of the Saint Lawrence river, the Tory squires of Ontario and the traditionalist French community of Quebec, closely shepherded by the Catholic hierarchy.

Pre-industrial poverty and semi-colonial dependence, which had for centuries kept Finland and Norway on the periphery of European society, almost completely prevented the formation of a native aristocracy. All that was able to develop was a thin and largely urban crust of Danicized nobles in Norway, and a slightly stronger stratum of Swedish aristocrats in Finland. These were far too weak to support an aristocratic autocracy of the kind that was installed in Horthy's Hungary after the fall of Wilhelmine Germany and the victory of domestic counter-revolution. Although the French aristocracy returned after Waterloo to take up its old positions in state and church, it had been decisively broken by the

Great Revolution. Thus, by the middle of the century, the free landed peasantry was strong enough to provide the popular support for Louis Napoleon's shrewd institutionalization of universal male suffrage.

The Danish landowners were much stronger than their Swedish counterparts. Nevertheless, the internal process of democratization developed much earlier in Denmark, largely because of the differential impact of the crisis that hit central European agriculture in the second half of the century. The victory of protectionism in Sweden in the late 1880s split the old Groman Party and forged an alliance, rather similar to the one in Germany, between landowners and prosperous farmers linked to traditional heavy industry (wood and iron); modern engineering industry, like *Elektro-Chimie* in Germany, tended in a more liberal direction.[38] In Denmark and the Netherlands, however, farmers turned to dairy production, building up a strong co-operative movement in which they lost the interests they had shared with the big landowners. By overplaying its hand at a time when its economic hold over the countryside was being undermined, the Danish aristocracy soon made it impossible to reach a viable agreement with an agrarian bourgeoisie that was far from enthusiastic for democracy.

It is impossible to disentangle here the reasons why the Belgian farmers so docilely followed the leadership of the Catholic Party (a formation which, though *encadré* by the lower clergy, was effectively controlled by the aristocracy). They disposed of a fairly important organization—the Boerenbond—with which to defend

their economic interests, but they remained socially and politically isolated in their Flemish countryside from the industrialized and secularized French-speaking parts of the country. This lack of an active political role also characterized the economically powerful Dutch farmers. Although I am not able fully to assess the political significance of the phenomenon, it is clear that agrarian class relations in Belgium and the Netherlands present marked differences from the pattern prevalent in Scandinavia, France and other countries of continental Western Europe. The fact that a large proportion of farms are rented suggests that a certain degree of personal dependence has survived the introduction of intensive commodity production. Unfortunately, the latest figures available to me are for the years 1929–30, when 57 per cent of Belgian and 46 per cent of Dutch farms were rented, compared with 20 per cent in France and Sweden and (in 1949) 4 per cent in Denmark.[39]

However, as the case of Britain shows most clearly, the existence of a vigorous agrarian small and petty bourgeoisie is by no means a necessary condition of democratization. In fact, Britain, like France, although in a rather different way, provides an excellent example of the second critical internal factor mentioned above—a divided ruling class. There have been at least two ways in which, under certain circumstances, splits have come to play an important determining role. As long as there is no serious threat from below, divisions can lead to intense vying for popular support; and provided that there exists a degree of underlying unity (if only because

of previous disastrous experiences of violent conflict), they may help to promote institutional procedures securing peaceful coexistence and opposition.

The waves reaching Britain from revolutionary France and the first steps of the labour movement were all effectively crushed by a unified ruling class. However, the early and immature bourgeois revolution resulted in the establishment, by the nineteenth century, of a deeply rooted parliamentary pattern based on competition within the ruling class between landed and urban capital. When the counter-revolutionary panic subsided, and especially when popular agitation re-emerged in more cautious forms, this rivalry developed into a struggle for broader mass support. The important extension of the franchise by the Conservative Disraeli government in 1867 offers a brilliant illustration of this feature. Parliament and the Tory Party itself were caught in an unstable balance of power, while outside popular pressure for electoral reform was mounting. After a series of complicated manoeuvres, in which Disraeli's main objective was to out-trump his Liberal rivals and to secure the leading position within his own party, the government-sponsored bill was finally carried by a parliamentary majority. In mid-nineteenth century Britain, a Conservative politician could possess such enormous class self-confidence that a handful of parliamentary radicals, playing the competitive game of the ruling class, managed shrewdly and inostensibly to extend the suffrage further than the government had intended. The key thing for Disraeli was to beat the Liberals, who opposed the bill from the right.[40]

Developments in France constituted a more violent variation on the same theme. The much more radical bourgeois revolution had both seriously estranged the urban bourgeoisie from the landowning aristocracy and definitively emancipated the peasantry. The latter made Louis Napoleon president in 1848, while the nobles prevented the consolidation of bourgeois reaction in the period from 1849 to 1851. After the military defeat of the Second Empire and the crushing of the Paris Commune, divisions within the royalist camp of reaction produced a stalemate which led to the formation of the non-democratic Third Republic. Torn by internal dissensions, this bloc fairly rapidly succumbed to the democratic republican forces of the small bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, extremely complex divisions within the Dutch ruling class also facilitated the process of democratization. The Liberal Party split into three. The Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party, which supported a male household franchise while opposing both individual and property-based suffrage as expressions of the 'rule of Mammon', suffered a split when a faction more closely tied to aristocratic and big farmer interests broke away to form the Christian Historical Union. Some democratic elements even appeared within the generally conservative Catholic Party. The resultant combination of bourgeois democracy with lay acceptance of state-supported religious schools—a compromise which was reached in 1917—proved an effective barrier to the emergence of a unified working class capable of using bourgeois democracy to advance its own interests.[41]

The importance of ruling-class divisions operating within a solid underlying framework of unity is further demonstrated by the arduous and protracted process of democratization in the United States. The Fifteenth Amendment, forbidding electoral discrimination on grounds of race, was not the result of the Civil War. Nor was it seriously intended to enfranchise the blacks in the south, since the vitally important task was to reunite the northern and southern fractions of the bourgeoisie. 'The effect of the amendment', wrote its sponsor, the Republican senator of Nevada, William Stewart, 'has been what I supposed it would be, to secure for the negro in the northern states his right to vote without intimidation.'[42] The amendment was proposed by the Republicans after their relatively poor performance in the 1868 elections, in order to ensure majorities in the north and in the union. Meanwhile, the Democratic plantocracy was allowed to entrench itself in the south.

It is of course difficult to sum up in a few lines the complex history of the forces of democracy in the American South. However, if we compare the situation of the 1960s with that of a century before, two striking differences emerge. In the 1860s the black ex-slaves had no independent, organized force with which to conduct opposition or a policy of alliances—and democracy has never been handed down from above. A century later, a militant black movement had established itself in the industrialized and urbanized areas of the south, and, by the third quarter of the twentieth century, the old rural bourgeoisie of the deep south had become marginal to the national ruling-class bloc. It is this which explains the ability of the federal state apparatus to move in to

enforce democratic rights without fear of provoking significant splits within the bourgeoisie. In 1965, half of the states still had literacy requirements for voting, but their effectiveness had been eroded even before the absorption of new immigrant workers into the system by the bosses of the urban political machines.

Any attempt to chart the dominant patterns in each country carries serious risks of oversimplification. The table below should therefore be seen only as a rough indication of the forces that contributed directly to the achievement of bourgeois democracy. The only fairly clear-cut cases are Belgium, the war democracies proper, and the three countries—Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland—where democratization was a wholly internal process. A number of qualifications should be made concerning other countries. Thus, to a significant extent, Norway owes her democracy to the independent agrarian petty bourgeoisie. Federal Canadian democracy emerged both as means and effect of national mobilization; and national integration also played an important role in Denmark and Britain. Military defeat was an important factor in France, while in the northern United States democracy was largely an achievement of the small and petty bourgeoisie. Nor does the table give full justice to the Dutch small and petty bourgeoisie, which was rather more to the fore than its Belgian counterpart. Finally, it should be stressed that underlying all these patterns was a common, consistent force: the working class. In a certain sense, different patterns may be said to express the different allies necessary for the success of the working-class struggle for democracy.

TABLE 4
Patterns of Democratization

Democracies by defeat		Democracies by national mobilization		Democracies by internal development	
Direct	*Indirect*	*As means*	*As effect*	*Small and petty bourgeois independence*	*Ruling-class division-in-unity*
Austria	Sweden	Norway	Belgium	Australia	France
Finland		Canada		Denmark	Netherlands
Germany				New Zealand	UK
Italy				Switzerland	USA
Japan					

IV Capitalism and Democracy: Inherent Tendencies

Bourgeois democracy has been attained by such diverse and tortuous routes that any straightforward derivation from the basic characteristics of capitalism would be impossible, or at best seriously misleading. Nevertheless, the facts that democracy in the sense defined above did not appear anywhere prior to capitalism; that some capitalist countries have experienced a purely internal development of democracy; and that all major advanced bourgeois states are today democracies—these naturally call for some elucidation of the tendencies inherent within capitalism. These may provisionally be grouped according to their effect upon two central features of bourgeois democracy: (a) inclusion of the masses in *part* of the political process, (b) under conditions of representative government and electoral competition.

1. Bourgeois democracy has always succeeded mass struggles of varying degrees of violence and protractedness. The first inherent tendency, then, will be found in *the conditions favouring popular struggle*. Legal emancipation of labour and the creation of a free labour

market, industrialization, concentration of capital are all intrinsic tendencies which simultaneously lay the basis for a working-class movement of a strength and stability inachievable by the exploited classes of pre-capitalist modes of production. In accordance with Marx's analysis of the growing contradictions of capitalism, the working class is, *ceteris paribus*, strengthened by the advance and development of capitalism. This explains the traditional sociological correlations of democracy with wealth, literacy and urbanization—factors which bear upon the relationship of forces in the class struggle. And, as we have already seen, the labour movement has itself played a vital role in the struggle for democracy.

2. However, we also remarked that in general the working class has not won a share in the political process in the heat of battle. On the contrary, it has been more common for the bourgeoisie to make concessions after a period of successful resistance to reform. Apparently, working-class participation must in some sense be to the bourgeoisie's advantage. Although in Germany and Austria in 1918 and 1945 (possibly also in Belgium and Sweden in 1918) and in Italy in 1945 the alternative to bourgeois democracy was an attempted socialist revolution, actual defence against proletarian revolution does not seem to have been a directly determining factor. In all these cases, it was not the insurrectionary proletariat but foreign armies that overthrew the existing régimes, whereupon the old internal democratic forces at last got the upper hand.[43] Of greater importance was the specifically capitalist art of industrialized warfare. The First World War was fought both with massive conscript armies and with

whole civilian populations mobilized for military production. For this effort even the Wilhelmine Reich admitted the Social Democrats into the governmental machinery; against this background, too, the suffrage was extended in Belgium, Canada, Britain and the United States.

3. National unification and liberation have everywhere been seen by the bourgeoisie as a strategic necessity for the development and protection of trade and industry and the breaking of feudal dynastic power. And for these aims it has often found it invaluable to enlist popular support. The extension of suffrage in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Finland and Italy (for the imperialist Libyan expedition) formed part of a process of national unification.

4. Feverish development of the productive forces is another feature peculiar to the capitalist mode of exploitation. One of the main reasons why nineteenth- and early twentieth-century liberals could deny the compatibility of democracy with private property was their dread that popular legislatures and municipal bodies would greatly increase taxation. However, they were disregarding the elasticity and expansive capacity of capitalism. Higher levels of taxation have liquidated neither private property nor capital accumulation. Rises in productivity make possible a simultaneous increase of both rates of exploitation and real incomes of the exploited masses.[44] This is, of course, not in itself conducive to democracy. But it is relevant in so far as it

provides the bourgeoisie with an unprecedentedly wide room for manoeuvre in dealing with the exploited majority.

5. So far we have deliberately talked in very general terms of popular mobilization and incorporation of the working class into the political process. But such mobilization need not be democratic. In their very different ways, wartime Wilhelmine Germany, Fascism and third world 'populism' all testify to that. What makes capitalist democracy at all possible is a characteristic unique among known modes of production. Capitalism is an impersonal mode of exploitation, involving the rule of capital rather than personal domination of the bourgeoisie. It certainly does not function in the manner of an automatic machine, but it does operate as production for ever greater profit under conditions of impersonal market competition. The rule of capital requires a state—for both internal and external support and protection—but, as long as it upholds the separate realm of capitalist 'civil society', this state does not have to be managed personally by bourgeois. And in the long history of democratization, bourgeois politicians have learnt the many mechanisms at their disposal to keep the state in harmony with the needs of capital.[45]

6. This last-mentioned feature of capitalism may explain why the impersonal rule of a tiny minority is conceivable in democratic forms—why, for example, the rule of capital is compatible with a labour party government, whereas a feudal aristocracy cannot be governed by a peasant party. But a theoretical possibility

is one thing, actual historical dynamics quite another. And we have seen that the fight of the working class for universal suffrage and freely elected government was never by itself sufficient to enforce the introduction of bourgeois democracy. This raises the question whether there are other internal tendencies of capitalism, which, under certain conditions, may generate forces of democratization apart from working-class struggle. One such tendency may be immediately identified. Capitalist relations of production tend to create an *internally competing, peacefully disunited ruling class*. In its development, capital is divided into several fractions: mercantile, banking, industrial, agrarian, small and big. Except in a situation of grave crisis or acute threat from an enemy (whether feudal, proletarian or a rival national state) bourgeois class relations contain no unifying element comparable to the dynastic kingship legitimacy and fixed hierarchy of feudalism. Furthermore, the development of capitalism has usually stimulated the expansion of petty commodity production, before tending to destroy it. Thus, the commercialization of agriculture transformed a self-subsistent peasantry into an agrarian petty bourgeoisie with distinct interests of its own.[46]

In the absence of a single centre, some kind of elective, deliberative and representative political machinery became necessary. Therefore, propertied republics or parliamentary monarchies developed at an early stage in the formation of capitalist states—for example, the Italian, German and Swiss city republics, the United Provinces of the Low Countries, Britain, the United States, France and Belgium (the latter after 1830). As

regards freedom of the press, the material basis of its appearance was the launching of newspapers as capitalist enterprises like any other. This was still a democracy for the bourgeoisie only, and fractionalization of capital has only contributed to a democracy including the rest of the population in conjunction with the other tendencies referred to above. Thus, the decisive role in a number of instances of contingent military defeat shows that capitalism does not necessarily develop forces of sufficient strength to extend the basis of democracy to the masses.

Democracy and Dependent Capitalism

This article has dealt only with the development of bourgeois democracy in the advanced capitalist countries. In order to arrive at a global picture of the relationship between democracy and the rule of capital, it would be necessary to relate the above outline to analyses both of the history of bourgeois democracy in the underdeveloped capitalist countries and of the anti-democratic forces present in advanced and underdeveloped capitalism. However, assuming that we have correctly identified the essential pro-democratic tendencies of capitalism, we may be able to conclude by tentatively suggesting a few factors that explain the rareness of bourgeois democracy in the capitalist third-world countries.

The external inducement of capitalism has had three crucial effects on the bourgeoisie of these countries. First, it has severely restricted the internal differentiation of

the capitalist class, making it instead largely dependent on one external centre (factor 6 above). Secondly, the lopsided, externally dependent growth of petty and generalized commodity production has rendered the economic base extremely fragile and vulnerable to international crises, thus leaving the indigenous bourgeoisies little room for manoeuvre vis-`-vis the exploited classes (factor 4). The frequent intertwining of capitalist with feudal, slave or other pre-capitalist modes of exploitation, as well as the combination of enclave capitalism with subsistence farming, has impeded the development of the impersonal rule of capital (factor 5) and a free labour market, thereby seriously limiting the growth both of the labour movement (factor 1) and of an agrarian small and petty bourgeoisie (factor 6).

Furthermore, the national struggles of third-world countries were fought at a much earlier stage of development than in Europe. Consequently, there was either little need to involve the popular masses in struggle or not the same compulsion to cope with their specific demands in order to mobilize them, or both (factor 3). Nor, given their stage of development and geographical location, have these nations had to mobilize for the holocaust of industrial war (factor 2). And those which have had to wage a people's war to gain their freedom—which entails a class-explicit ideological mobilization—have not fought on a capitalist basis and have subsequently taken a non-capitalist road of social development.

V Democratization and Class Struggle

In the last few decades, despite striking *prima facie* evidence to the contrary—European Fascism, third-world military dictatorships, etc.—functionalist and/or evolutionist conceptions of a 'normal' relationship of correspondence between the rule of capital and bourgeois democracy have quite often informed the analyses of both Marxist and non-Marxist writers. Our historical examination of the political constellations in which democracy was established in the major and most advanced capitalist countries has revealed the inadequacy of such general arguments and explanatory hypotheses.

Nevertheless, bourgeois democracy is no mere accident of history, and capitalism does contain a number of tendencies which are conducive to processes of democratization. Thus, it has frequently, and correctly, been observed that bourgeois democracy entails a competitive division within a basic framework of unity —even if this statement is interpreted in a naively idealistic way, by reference to ideology and varieties of 'political culture'. But the concrete economic and political dynamic of the rise of capitalism does involve the struggle for and development of a new divided unity. This appears as the *nation state*, freed of the barriers and boundaries of dynastic legitimacy, feudal enfiefment and provincial tradition. The establishment of national sovereignty and unity resulted from struggles against royal absolutism, foreign dynasties and provincial separatism. These were the stakes of the

Dutch wars against Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the seventeenth-century English revolution and civil war; the US Declaration of Independence; the French Revolution of 1789; the 1830 August revolution in Belgium; the unification of Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and of the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand colonies; the Meiji Restoration in Japan; the establishment of the constitutional Eider state in Denmark; the emancipation of Norway and Finland; and even the constitutional struggles within the Habsburg empire. Only in Sweden, with its long-standing national unity and peculiar mixture of estates and parliament dating from the eighteenth century, were anti-dynastic and anti-parochial national struggles not a central component of the nascent process of democratization. But even in this case, the process exhibited a crucial dimension of conflict between national and non-national (dynastic, foreign or provincial) elements: Carolingian absolutism fell under the blows of the Great Nordic War, and the formation of democracy finally reached maturity under the impact of the foreign revolutionary aftermath of the First World War. The old Swedish dynastic nation state acquired its national-democratic character essentially from external stimuli.

Freedom of trade and industry created a network of divisive competitive relationships which ran through the new ruling class of the unified and sovereign states. The market replaced the hierarchical pyramid of medieval and Absolutist feudalism. And it was in this unity-division of national state and market that the process of

democratization originated. This happened fundamentally in one of two different ways. In certain cases, democracy was first introduced for upper layers of the bourgeoisie (including commercialized landowners), who alone had the right to vote and form parliamentary or republican governments. Other sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie were subsequently included in this structure, according to widely varying tempos and modalities. However, where the bourgeois revolution stopped half way, democratization began as a constitutional compromise between the old landowning ruling class—including its apex, the dynasty—and the bourgeoisie. This system then developed either into a propertied democracy, as in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Belgium, or into a still largely non-democratic form of government based on an extended franchise, as in Austria, Germany and Japan.

These are, of course, only the principal routes followed by the process, and specific detours such as the Jacobin régime of 1793 also have to be taken into account. But if these routes accurately express the general pattern, as I believe they do, then we may conclude that bourgeois democracy, in the same way as its Athenian predecessor, first arose as a democracy for male members of the ruling class alone. Only after protracted struggle were these rights extended to the ruled and exploited classes as well. Sometimes the ruling class of these early régimes was extremely narrow—for instance, the few score *regimentsfähige Familien* (literally, 'families fit to rule') of the Swiss city republics. Sometimes it was fairly broad, as in the United States. But in every case the

propertyless were excluded—in the USA and the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand colonies as well as in the parliamentary monarchies of Europe. Nor did things change after the American states gained independence; indeed, property as such had a right to representation, whereby joint owners were given a plural vote to share.[47]

Leaving aside Switzerland, where armed male artisans and peasants won democratic rights in a series of violent struggles in the 1830s, ’40s and ’50s, neither of the two main processes of this first stage led to the establishment of democracy for all adult men, not to speak of the whole adult population. With this one partial exception, then, competitive capitalism has nowhere led to bourgeois democracy as a result of its own positive tendencies. A Marxist analysis of capitalism, however, must take up centrally the contradictions of the system. And it has been the development of the basic contradiction between capital and labour that has carried democracy beyond the boundaries of the ruling class and its props. Thus, the second stage in the struggle for democracy was largely shaped by the emergence of the working class and the labour movement. We have already seen how the capitalist mode of production gives birth to an exploited class with capacities of organized opposition far superior to those of any previous one. In fact, the labour movement fought almost everywhere not only for higher wages and better working conditions, but also for political democracy—either as an end in itself (the British

Chartists or the Australian and New Zealand trade-union movement) or as an integral part of the struggle for socialism (the parties of the Second International).

However, the working-class movement was nowhere capable of achieving democracy by its own unaided resources—and this tells much of the strength of bourgeois rule. From the Chartists in the 1840s to the Belgian Social Democrats just prior to, and the Japanese workers just after, the First World War such attempts always resulted in defeat. Only in conjunction with external allies were the non-propertied masses able to gain democratic rights; and it was above all the propertied minorities who in the end answered the critical questions of timing and form—of when and how democracy was to be introduced. Thus, the process of democratization unfolded within the framework of the capitalist state, congealing in the form of bourgeois democracy rather than opening the road to popular revolution and socialist transformation.

The most important allies of the working class in the struggle for democracy were the following: victorious armies of foreign bourgeois states, the small and the self-employed petty bourgeoisie, and a section of the ruling class itself. The role of these allies follows, of course, from other contradictions of capitalism—imperialist rivalry, national conflicts, the contradiction of competition and monopolization, and clashes between different fractions of capital. In the space opened up by these contradictions, the weight of the working class could be brought to bear on the process of democratization, even in the absence of a significant

labour movement. For example, the working-class vote could be utilized by bourgeois organizations and politicians for their own ends, as was most evidently the case in the United States. Here the political 'machines' even found a place for new immigrant workers, excluded from the franchise by literacy tests, poll-taxes and registration statutes, by enlisting their support for the system of political graft—for a kind of city-level state capitalism. These machines were normally run by sections of the bourgeoisie distinct from established big capital.

The Two Paradoxes Explained

We are now in a position to confront the two paradoxes with which we started. For Marxists, it will be remembered, the problem appeared as one of explaining how a tiny social minority has come to rule predominantly in democratic forms; while for bourgeois liberal thought, it seemed an insoluble mystery that classical liberals were convinced of the incompatibility of capitalism and democracy, whereas contemporary bourgeois opinion maintains that *only* capitalism is compatible with democracy.

The solution to the Marxist problem is by now fairly clear. Bourgeois democracy has always and everywhere been established in struggle against (hegemonic fractions of) the bourgeoisie, but through political means and channels provided for by the capitalist state. Moreover, when it has been threatened or destroyed, the labour movement has taken up the struggle anew

against the leading fraction of the ruling class (as in Austria, Finland, France, Germany and Italy). Thus, although bourgeois democracy is democratic government plus the rule of capital, its democratic component has been achieved and defended against the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois paradox is resolved when we grasp a feature of the process to which classical liberalism quite naturally paid scant attention. Democracy developed neither out of the positive tendencies of capitalism, nor as a historical accident, but out of the *contradictions* of capitalism. Bourgeois democracy has been viable at all only because of the elasticity and expansive capacity of capitalism, which were grossly underestimated by classical liberals and Marxists alike.

We should remember that democracies form part of a much wider universe of bourgeois states. By reference to the two fundamental dimensions—mode of national representation and inclusion of the adult population in the political process—we have distinguished four major types of bourgeois régime: democracies, democratic and authoritarian exclusivist, and dictatorships. In the seventeen countries under review, dictatorships are a late, twentieth-century phenomenon, although the term may be applicable to the first period of the rule of Napoleon III. The process of democratization started out from authoritarian or democratic exclusivism, and in either case has given rise to both democracy and dictatorship. Both the democratic-exclusivist parliamentary monarchy of Italy and, via Weimar, the authoritarian-exclusivist one of Germany led to Fascism.

The authoritarian exclusivism of Scandinavia and the Low Countries developed through democratic exclusivism into democracy—and that of Japan and Austria into dictatorship, in the latter case after fifteen years of democracy. There thus seems to be little substance in any strictly evolutionist conception of the process of democratization. The fact that all seventeen states are now democracies may largely be attributed to the two world wars: in 1939, to take another date, only a minority of eight had democratic régimes, and in one of these (Canada) the description requires some qualification.

The historical struggle for democracy has been directed primarily against various forms of exclusion. Dictatorships have tended to appear late in the day and, except in Japan, only after a period of democracy or substantial democratic advances. The development of a purely elective mode of government has sometimes been resisted to the point of revolution (France 1830) and military defeat (France 1871, Austria, Germany, Japan), but in other cases it has taken the form of a very gradual evolution of non-constitutional parliamentary practice (Britain and its dominions, Scandinavia, Belgium, the Netherlands). The monarchy has everywhere grown into a powerless symbol. 'Corrupt practices' and state intimidation were also eliminated from the electoral process in a fairly undramatic, though uneven manner. However, the inclusion of various social categories in the 'legal nation' has generally been the object of fierce and protracted constitutional struggle.

Criteria of Exclusion from the Suffrage

The principal criteria of exclusion have been class (more or less crudely defined by property, income, occupation or literacy), sex, ethnicity and opinion. There is an interesting sequential pattern here. Originally, the most important criterion was class, but sex and race have proved to be much more intractable and opinion has tended to acquire greater significance. The first constitutional battles were usually fought by male members of the same ethnicity over inclusion of particular socio-economic groups. But since the First World War (and the introduction of male suffrage in Japan in 1925) instances of blatant class discrimination have been relatively infrequent: certain American states continued to employ registration requirements, poll taxes and literacy tests which played a certain role in federal elections until 1970; and the first two industrial states—Belgium and Britain—have retained, respectively, an all but powerless House of Lords and class criteria for eligibility to the Senate.

It has been above all the strength and fighting capacity of the working class which has made it difficult and unduly costly to maintain class-based criteria of exclusion. However, the American experience shows that smaller or more weakly organized groups can be fairly easily excluded from participation in the democratic polity of advanced capitalism. This also seems to be a major factor in the obstinacy of sexist and racist exclusion. In fact, the struggle against sexism and racism has been affected by the same general problems

as the fight against overt class discrimination. The ruling class has almost invariably opposed inclusion of ethnic minorities and the female half of the population, and neither has had sufficient weight to enforce its demands without the help of external allies. The use of poor ethnic minorities as cheap labour and strikebreakers has often left these groups without any significant support at all. For instance, the very first point of the Fighting Platform of the 1905 conference of the Australian Labour Party called for 'Maintenance of a White Australia'.[48] In the American south, blacks were abandoned by the abolitionists and only found militant allies again during the ghetto rebellions in the north and the rise of the student and anti-war movements in the 1960s: it was these forces who finally helped to push the federal rulers to move against the much weakened southern plantocracy. Racist exclusion can also operate in more refined ways than in the USA. Thus, it could be argued that, even today, Switzerland should not be regarded as a democracy because the Swiss bourgeoisie has been heavily dependent upon immigrant labour-power since the beginning of the century. And these immigrants have been denied any political rights. More generally, since the 1960s, the massive import of foreign workers into Western Europe with no rights of political representation has signified a *de facto* disenfranchisement of an important minority of the European working class.

Female Enfranchisement

Whereas racist exclusion of poor and degraded ethnic minorities has been applied with general vigour, the question of female suffrage has given rise to broad discrepancies: in New Zealand women were enfranchised in 1893, in Switzerland not until 1971; in the American south white women gained the right to vote fifty years before the black men, but in Finland the two sexes achieved it simultaneously in 1906; in France 150 years, and in Switzerland over 120 years separated the first adoption of universal male suffrage from the effective enfranchisement of women, whereas in other countries the gap was much shorter. The dynamics of female enfranchisement is still a largely unexplored territory, requiring special investigation. Here only a few suggestions can be given. First, we should sound a note of caution about some rather common facile explanations. The male constitutional referenda in Switzerland no doubt delayed the attainment of female suffrage after the majority of politicians had been won over; but by itself that does not settle the question.[49] In a number of western American states, women were given the vote by male referenda as long ago as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[50] Reference to ideological factors, such as the Catholic religion or Latin 'machismo' is equally unsatisfactory. Why did Catholic Austria grant women the vote fifty years before predominantly Protestant Switzerland, and thirty years ahead of Catholic Belgium? And how is it that the first breakthroughs in Switzerland were made in the French-speaking cantons of Vaud, Geneva and Neuchâtel?

TABLE 5
Timing of Female Enfranchisement

Before First World War	*During or after First World War*	*In aftermath of Second World War*	*Later*
Australia	Austria	Belgium	Switzerland
Finland	Canada	France	
New Zealand	Denmark	Italy	
Norway	Germany	Japan	
	Netherlands		
	Sweden		
	UK		
	USA		

Nor will an economistic explanation in terms of the proportion of women gainfully employed take us very far.

TABLE 6
Percentage of Total Female Population Gainfully Employed c. 1930*
(Unpaid family workers excluded)

Female enfranchisement: Before First World War	*During or after First World War*	*In aftermath of Second World War*	*Later*
Australia 20	Austria 25	Belgium 17	Switzerland 29
Finland 25[1]	Canada 12	France 23[2]	
New Zealand 20	Denmark 27	Italy 14	
Norway 22	Germany 22	Japan 33	
	Netherlands 19		
	Sweden 29		
	UK 27		
	USA 17		

SOURCE: *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* vol. 2 (Geneva 1937) for columns 1 and 2.

*Since the data are drawn from national censuses, we should sound a note of caution regarding their comparability. Thus, they are affected by the inclusion of family helpers (the Japanese figure looks suspiciously high), by the age structure, by the frequency of marriage (in turn largely an effect of the male-female ratio) and by the economic structure—a high level of dairy farming, rice growing and labour-intensive industries would result in higher proportions. The relatively low New World percentages seem partly due to the shortage of women available for domestic chores in the agricultural colonies. Nevertheless, bearing these reservations in mind, the table does prove that there is no significant relationship between gainful employment and enfranchisement of women. If we take account of the different branches of female employment, with their varying degrees of social freedom, then this lack is even more striking. Thus, the figures shown in the table for Norway (enfranchisement 1913) and Switzerland (1971) are 22 and 29 per cent respectively. But when we deduct women employed as domestics, the figures fall to 13 and 23 per cent.

[1] The crude figure is 41 per cent, but the unusually high proportion of female entrepreneurs and employees in agriculture seems to indicate that farmers' wives are included. The corrected figure presupposes that the percentage of women farmers was the same as in Germany — which is probably an underestimation rather than an overestimation.

[2] The French census figure included wives helping in their husband's enterprise. The above calculation assumes the same proportion of women entrepreneurs as in Germany.

There may perhaps be more substance in the thesis of the 'scarcity value' of women. It is indeed worthy of note that female suffrage was first introduced in recently populated settler territories, where women were greatly

outnumbered by men. Women had won the vote by 1900 in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Idaho, and by the eve of the First World War in another seven states, all west of the Mississipi.[51] The women of New Zealand were enfranchised in 1893. Following the example of the more remote colonies of South Australia (1894) and Western Australia (1899), the Commonwealth Franchise of 1903 adopted female suffrage throughout the Australian territories.[52] In Canada, too, the process started during the First World War in the new prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.[53] James Bryce rapidly pointed out, in his classical study *The American Commonwealth*, that in the first four American states to give women the vote there were a total of 589,000 men to 482,000 women.[54] In 1891 in the whole of Australia (i.e. including the more settled colonies of Victoria and New South Wales) the male/female ratio was 1 to 2 in the age range from fifteen to sixty-four.[55]

Although the explanation by 'scarcity value' fits with the importance of increased wartime demand for female labour-power, the correlation may yet be an accidental one;[56] in any case, it is of little use in accounting for later variations. We shall probably find it more fruitful to look in the field of political forces for the relative strength of the enemies and supporters of women's suffrage. As to the enemies, the bourgeoisie of the new colonies was not firmly entrenched and had to accept male suffrage also at a very early date. Two major allies came forward. One was the labour movement, which as we have noted soon gained considerable strength in Australia and New Zealand. The militant English suffragette organization—the Women's Social and Political Union—was at first

intimately linked to the Independent Labour Party.[57] In Finland, universal suffrage was conceded in 1906 following a massive working-class rebellion. And in Switzerland, the general strike of 1918, which was defeated by the full military might of the state, included the call for women's rights in a list of democratic and social (but not socialist) demands.[58]

This social movement in Switzerland, in which the working class remained isolated, also raises concretely the question of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois allies. For female suffrage was not one of the socio-economic concessions made by the government after the breaking of the strike. By contrast, the small bourgeois and petty-bourgeois Populists proved to be crucial allies in the Western USA,[59] as did their Liberal counterparts in Australia, New Zealand and Norway, and the Prohibitionists of New Zealand and the United States.[60] The extreme weakness of these classes in Japan makes it possible to understand the belated and externally induced character of the process of democratization. But how should we account for sexist intransigence in Belgium, France, Italy and Switzerland?

The prevalent notion that women were more conservative than male workers hardly ever led right-wing political leaders to overcome their sexist prejudices, in the way that Bismarck swallowed his hostility to the working-class vote.[61] However, in some countries, this evaluation of the likely effect of female suffrage loomed large in the considerations of a sizeable section of the progressive bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. One feature common to Belgium, France,

Italy and Switzerland is the long and bitter struggle between bourgeois and petty-bourgeois anti-clerical Radicalism and a Catholic Church linked to the landowners and bourgeois Right. As women were held to be more under the sway of the priests, Liberals and Radicals were reluctant to press for women's political rights. Only in Belgium, in 1919, did Catholic Conservatives themselves call for female suffrage, which was then blocked by Liberals and Social Democrats. But until the cataclysms of the Second World War, women's rights seem to have been sacrificed on the altar of anti-clericalism.[62]

Political Bans

The fourth criterion of exclusion—unacceptable opinion—is largely a twentieth-century phenomenon. Assessments of the legitimacy of various parties did not initially enter into liberal constitutional conceptions, but they began to develop in late eighteenth-century Britain and early nineteenth-century America and were absorbed in the Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Japanese empires.[63] The French Revolution and the Paris Commune produced shock-waves of panic and repression among the ruling classes of a number of countries. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century political discrimination was by and large subsumed under class-based exclusion. It is striking that in none of these countries were the parties of the Second International actually illegalized. (Bismarck proscribed the SPD in the 1880s, but the party was still allowed to present candidates.)

In this century, by contrast, bourgeois states have frequently resorted to explicit political exclusion. The entire labour movement was suppressed in Austria, Germany, Italy and Japan, and at various times the Communist Parties have been banned in Canada, Finland, France, German Federal Republic and Switzerland. In the United States, the party was virtually driven underground in the fifties (it was not explicitly outlawed, but the effect was rather similar since it had to register as an agency of a foreign state, under pain of imprisonment). In Australia a parliamentary majority attempted to impose a ban on the CP in 1951, but this was defeated, first by a High Court ruling and then by a referendum. In summary, we may say that political prohibition has replaced class-based exclusion as the most efficient means of handling a threat posed by the working class, or a section of it. This leads on directly to further important areas of investigation: mechanisms of containment of the working class, development of the repressive apparatuses and the rise of anti-democratic forces. But our present contribution to analysis of the establishment of bourgeois democracy will end here.

---

[1] J. S. Mill, 'Considerations on Representative Government', in *On Liberty and Considerations on Representative Government*, Oxford 1946, pp. 217ff.

[2] For the problem of the class character of the state power apparatus, see Göran Therborn, *State Power and State Apparatuses*, London 1977 (NLB—forthcoming).

[3] These important aspects of democracy are not explicitly considered here. For a very good survey of the position in the major Western countries, see F. Castberg, *Freedom of Speech in the West*, Oslo–London 1960.

[4] This aspect is dealt with in relation to the USA by A. Wolfe, *The Seamy Side of Democracy*, New York 1973.

[5] In his dismissive critique of bourgeois democracy in *The State and Revolution*, Lenin made a famous passing remark about the relationship between capitalism and democracy: 'A democratic republic is the best possible shell of capitalism'. (*Selected Works*, Moscow 1947, Vol. II, p. 149.) He went on to refer briefly to Engels' observation that wealth could wield power most effectively through 'the direct corruption of officials' and 'the alliance between the government and the stock-exchange'. Why these means should be more effective in relation to a democratic government than a non-democratic one, neither Engels nor Lenin make clear. Among Marxists these remarks have more often stimulated barren functionalist speculation about the role of democracy under capitalism than inspired serious research on the historical development and operation of capitalist democracy.

[6] *Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship,* Boston 1967.

[7] See S. Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*, Oslo 1970, which is a major contribution. Within this tradition are the very useful historical sections of S. Rokkan–J. Meyriat (eds.), *International Guide to Electoral Statistics*, The Hague and Paris 1969, and R. Rose (ed.), *Electoral Behaviour*, New York 1974. Also pertinent to the questions raised here is a survey by Peter Gehrlich of the institutionalization of European parliamentary regimes: P. Gehrlich, 'The Institutionalization of European Parliaments', in A. Kornberg (ed.), *Legislatures in Comparative Perspective*, New York 1973.

[8] See R. Dahl, *Polyarchy*, New Haven and London 1971. Dahl's book contains some remarkable factual inaccuracies on questions such as the extent of sexist exclusion after the First World War (p. 29) and differences between the Meiji Restoration in Japan and the German Reich (p. 42). More compromising is his indulgence towards current US indices and international comparisons of political freedom and the almost unbelievable lack of discernment he sometimes shows in applying these clumsy and dubious constructions. For example, he raises no objection to the following definition of a *maximum* democratic score: 'no party ban, or ban on extremist or extra-constitutional parties only' (p. 218); and although he challenges allocation of the same total score to Gaullist France and Somoza's Nicaragua, this eminent US political scientist goes on to classify the French party system thus: 'opposition significant but unable to win a majority' (p. 244). Truly, the wisdom of the best bourgeois political analysis seems to be drawn from sources other than ordinary empirical investigation. Despite these grave weaknesses, *Polyarchy* is still unquestionably a work of value.

[9] We should mention here three valuable textbooks on the suffrage question, all of which contain historical sections: Georg Meyer, *Das parlamentarische Wahlrecht*, Berlin 1901; Karl Braunias, *Das parlamentarische Wahlrecht*, 2 vols. Berlin-Leipzig 1932; Dolf Sternberger-Bernhard Vogel (eds.), *Die Wahl der Parlamente*, of which I have seen only the first double volume dealing with Europe (Berlin 1969). One of the very few constitutional histories to treat specifically the development of bourgeois democracy is Herbert Tingsten, *Demokratins seger och kris* (Victory and Crisis of Democracy, Stockholm 1930)—a work which, although still valuable, is rather idealist and more in the nature of a short monograph than a systematic analysis. Even more idealist is H. Zwager's work, *De Motivering van het algemeen kiesrecht in*

Europa (The Motivation of Universal Suffrage and Competitive Elections in Europe), Groningen 1958.

[10] Lipset's essay, first published in *American Political Science Review*, March 1959, can be read together with other sociological breakthroughs in C. Cnudde–D. Neubauer (eds.), *Empirical Democratic Theory*, Chicago 1969. Lipset's piece is called 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy'. An example of his distortion of fact is the statement that 'the United States and Britain gave citizenship [i.e. the vote] to the workers in the early and mid-19th century' (p. 173). This is widely known to be untrue, and the analysis below will go into the real historical record.

[11] Some of these are especially worthy of mention: P. Campbell, *French Electoral Systems and Elections since 1789*, London 1965; J.-P. Charnay, *Le Suffrage politique en France*, Paris 1965; H. Boberbach, *Die Wahlrechtsfrage im Vormärz*, Düsseldorf 1959; W. Gagel, *Die Wahlrechtsfrage in der Geschichte der deutschen liberalen Parteien, 1848–1918*, Düsseldorf 1958; M. Weiss, *Die Ausbreitung des allgemeinen und gleichen Wahlrechts in der westlichen Hälfte der Habsburgmonarchie*, Heidelberg 1965; W. Gillette, *The Right to Vote*, Baltimore 1965; M. Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics*, New Haven and London 1974; J. Sigler, *American Rights Policies*, Homewood, Ill. 1975; D. Verney, *Parliamentary Reform in Sweden 1866–1921*, Oxford 1957; C. O'Leary, *The Elimination of Corrupt Practices in British Elections 1868–1911*, London 1962.

[12] Post-war Japan provides an instance of significant overweighting of the rural electorate, the purpose of which was to instal the right-wing Liberals in power in 1949 (with 264 out of 466 seats elected by 43·8 per cent of voters) and to keep them there in the sixties and seventies. J. A. A. Stockwin, *Japan: Divided Politics in a Growth Economy*,

London 1975, pp. 55, 91ff.

[13] The political system which followed Louis Napoleon's 18 Brumaire is the subject of an exquisite work of historical scholarship: T. Zeldin, *The Political System of Napoleon III*, London 1958. For information on the Giolitti regime I have relied heavily on G. Carocci, *Giolitti e l' et` giolittiana*, Turin 1961.

[14] B. K. Garis, '1890–1900', in F. Crowley (ed.), *A New History of Australia*, Melbourne 1974, pp. 242–3.

[15] In 1901 there were 40,000 Asians in Australia out of a population of 3,750,000. See A. T. Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia*, Melbourne 1964, p. 163.

[16] G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. III, part 2, London 1956, pp. 621ff.

[17] V. Lorwin, 'Belgium', in R. Dahl (ed.), *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, New Haven and London 1966, p. 158.

[18] Sternberger-Vogel-Nohlen, *Die Wahl der Parlamente*, op. cit., Vol. I, 1, p. 93.

[19] Ibid. pp. 119–20.

[20] A thrilling insight into official Canadian anti-communism may be gained from a booklet published by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—*Law and Order in Canadian Democracy*, Ottawa 1952, chs. 12 and 13.

[21] S. Nordenstrong, *L. Mechelin*, Vol. II, Helsingfors 1937, p. 334. Mechelin was by that time the leading politician in Finland.

[22] Ibid. pp. 386ff.

[23] Charnay, op. cit. pp. 143–75.

[24] The evaluation of the 1919 elections is based on C. Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism*, London 1967, p. 547.

[25] J. Maki, *Government and Politics in Japan*, London 1962, pp. 78ff.

[26] W. H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, London 1960, p. 157; P. Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand*, Auckland 1972. The main feminist organization was the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

[27] The national background to the inclusion of universal male suffrage in the Left party programme is clear from the official party history, J. Worm-Müller et al., *Venstre i Norge*, Oslo 1933, pp. 124ff.

[28] V. Gitormann, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, Thayngen-Schaffhausen 1941, pp. 510ff.

[29] E. Gruner, *Die Parteien in der Schweiz*, Berne 1969, p. 181.

[30] Sigler, op. cit., pp. 113–14.

[31] This has been convincingly argued, on the basis of solid research, by Morgan Kousser, op. cit.

[32] A. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, New York 1916, p. 149.

[33] W. D. Burnham, 'The United States', in Rose (ed.), *Electoral Behaviour*, op. cit., p. 677.

[34] For a recent monograph on the history of the 1919 constitution, see S. Lindman, *Fran storfurstendöme till republik*, Ekenäs 1969.

[35] G.-H. Dumont, *Histoire des Belges*, Vol. III, Bruxelles 1956, p. 192. The mutinous departure of German troops from

Brussels led to a popular upsurge, involving strikes and a hunt for collaborators; ruling-class fear of revolution haunted the obscure and complex round of negotiations at the royal castle of Lophem that resulted in the king's speech. It is to say the least uncertain whether, in the absence of this fear, a decisive section of the Catholic political establishment would have rebelled against the eight-year old reactionary diehard, Woeste, and rallied to the support of bourgeois democracy. See C.-E. Höjer, *Le régime parlementaire belge de 1918 ` 1940*, Uppsala 1946, ch. 3.

[36] T. Hamerow, *The Social Foundations of German Unification Struggles and Accomplishments*, Princeton 1972, p. 244.

[37] M. Weiss, op. cit., pp. 248ff.

[38] Towards the end of 1918, representatives of the engineering industry and the main banks demanded that the right-wing leaders accept democratization. See S. Söderpalm, *Storföretagarna och det demokratiska genombrottet*, Lund 1969, pp. 174ff. Söderpalm does not go into the social roots of these politicians. However, all three of them—Lindman, Trygger and Swartz—were connected, either by family or profession, with the traditional wood and iron combines (Lindman had been the chief executive of one of them). The division of German monopoly capital between coal-iron and electro-chemical interests was developed into an instrument of historical analysis by the great East German historian Jürgen Kuczynski. To my knowledge the finest use of it has been made by another GDR historian, Kurt Gossweiler, in *Grossbanken, Industrienmonopole, Staat*, Berlin 1971. The Belgian financier Francqui also seems to have played an important pro-democratic role within the cabal that lay behind the king's speech of 22 November 1918. See Höjer, op. cit., pp. 64, 82–3.

[39] F. Dovring, *Land and Labor in Europe in the Twentieth*

Century, The Hague 1965, p. 169. As a result of the successful co-operative activities of the Boerenbond (which was a junior member of the Catholic electoral cartel), Belgian tenant-farmers had few important economic grievances against their landlords.

[40] R. Blake, *Disraeli*, London 1966, ch. XXI. The account contains a striking picture of Disraeli setting his secretaries to work, under extreme time pressure and with the aid of crude savings-bank and tax records, to calculate the electoral consequences to the Tories and Liberals of various suffrage qualifications.

[41] Zwager, op. cit., pp. 161ff; A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1968, pp. 104ff.

[42] Quoted from W. Gillette, op. cit., p. 164. Gillette has conclusively uncovered the political context of the passing of the Fifteenth Amendment.

[43] In Japan, not even crushing military defeat was sufficient to dislocate the power bloc constituted by monopoly capital and the late-feudal imperial state bureaucracy. As Baron Shidebara's government could not bring itself to accept unequivocally popular sovereignty, the American occupation command stepped in to draft a democratic constitution. The resolution shown by the US government, so different from its attitude at home, should be seen primarily as an attempt to eradicate the social roots of Japanese imperialism, which had in the past posed a deadly threat to American world interests. When communism once more became the main enemy, the fate of Japanese democracy no longer seemed that important. Thus, a workers' strike was banned as early as 1947 (Stockwin, op. cit., p. 56) and the Americans co-operated quite closely with Nobosuke Kishi—a former member of general Tojo's war cabinet and a convicted war criminal (ibid. p. 60)—when he

became prime minister in 1957. It was as if Albert Speer had gone straight from Spandau to the federal chancellery in Bonn.

[44] In *A Century of Pay* (London 1968, p. 312), E. H. Phelps-Brown has shown that during most of the period from 1895 to 1960, the ratio of average annual wages per wage-earner to average annual income generated per person occupied in industry fell in the USA, UK, Germany and Sweden; but that real wages rose because of increases in productivity. Phelps-Brown's wage/income ratio corresponds roughly to a ratio which in Marxist terms would be expressed as:

$$\frac{v}{s + v}$$

A fall in the wage/income ratio would thus signify an increase in the rate of exploitation:

$$\frac{s}{v}$$

[45] These mechanisms will be touched on in my forthcoming *State Power and State Apparatuses*, op. cit.

[46] Norway provides an example of such effects produced by the commercialization of agriculture. See O. Osterud, 'The Transformation of Scandinavian Agrarianism', *Scandinavian Journal of History 1976*, pp. 201–13.

[47] J. R. Pole's *Political Representation in England and the Origins of the American Republic* (London 1966) is a solid and interesting study of the rise of the individual right to political representation.

[48] Cole, op. cit., p. 876.

[49] This is argued in, amongst other works, *Die Wahl der Parlamente*, op. cit., pp. 1127f.

[50] True, there were more defeats than victories—thirty-two to nine between 1869 and 1916. See A. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890–1920*, New York 1966, p. 5.

[51] Ibid., p. 231.

[52] Crowley, op. cit., p. 241.

[53] H. Clodie, *Canadian Government and Politics*, Toronto 1944, p. 102.

[54] J. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, New York 1911, Vol. II, p. 687.

[55] N. G. Butlin, 'Some Perspectives of Australian Economic Development 1890–1965', in C. Forster (ed.), *Australian Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, London and Sydney 1970, p. 274.

[56] This correlation does not apply at all in the case of Utah, which had an approximately even sex distribution. See A. Grimes, *The Puritan Ethic and Woman Suffrage*, New York 1967, p. xi.

[57] A. Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes* (Swedish edition), Stockholm 1975, p. 11. American women had the support not only of the small socialist movement but even of Gompers and the AFL (see D. Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, East Lansing 1972). Morgan has also written a monograph on the contradictory relationship between the British Liberal Party and the women's movement: *Suffragists and Liberals*, Oxford 1975.

[58] E. Håstad, *Regeringssåttet i den schweiziska demokratin*, Uppsala and Stockholm 1936, p. 262n. This 700-page Swedish treatise on Swiss democratic government is representative of the general indulgence towards Swiss

sexism. Thus, while it deals with the ceremonies and festivities usually accompanying elections, it contains no discussion at all of the reasons for the exclusion of women. The contemporary Swiss writer Gruner is equally unconcerned.

[59] Bryce, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 604.

[60] The need for allies, and the crucial role of rural populism and of the agricultural proletariat (which at first largely determined the strength of the labour movement) explain the perhaps surprising fact that the breakthroughs in female enfranchisement came not in the industrial, political and cultural centres of the world (such as London, Manchester, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Milan, New York, Chicago, Montreal, Melbourne or Sydney) but in peripheral rural areas like New Zealand, Southern and Western Australia, Western USA and Canada, Finland and Norway.

[61] A partial exception were the patriarchal and polygamous Mormon settlers of Utah, who gave their women the vote in order to blunt outside criticism and to fend off unbelievers —in particular the young bachelor miners brought in by the transcontinental railway. See Grimes, op. cit., ch. 2.

[62] For France see M. Duverger, *Droit constitutionnel et institutions politiques*, Paris 1959, Vol. I, p. 87. However, Duverger unreservedly accepts the explanation of the Swiss case by the institution of male referenda. Campbell, op. cit., p. 102. The Belgian Liberals adamantly opposed the female vote in 1919, while the Social Democrats, who secured its introduction in municipal elections, agreed to postpone it for national ones. (Höjer, op. cit., pp. 95–6.) A survey of Swiss developments up to 1958 is provided by two articles in *Revue française de Science politique*: A. Quinche, 'Le suffrage féminin en suisse'; J.-F. Aubert, 'Le suffrage féminin en suisse', in Vols. 4 and 8 (1954, 1958) respectively,

as well as by the official report of the Federal Council on women's suffrage—*Bundesblatt*, Vol. 109, no. 10, Berne 1957. According to the latter, the female population of Berne canton obtained a restricted vote during the radical movement of the 1830s, but were deprived of it by the cantonal government in 1887 (p. 691). *Kessing's Contemporary Archives* contains reports of the 1959 and 1971 referenda, and of the 1971 parliamentary decision. The last outpost of Swiss political sexism seems to have been the small rural, German-speaking Catholic cantons, while Protestant Zurich and Catholic Lucerne were of decisive importance in 1971. My hypothesis of the role of bourgeois anti-clericalism finds little direct confirmation in the above surveys—it would appear that where anti-clericalism is more of a proletarian than a bourgeois current, it serves as no obstacle to the achievement of women's rights.

[63] G. Ionescu–I. de Madariga, *Opposition*, Harmondsworth 1972, ch. 2.