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STEADY WORK

AN ACADEMIC MEMOIR



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STEADY WORK: An Academic Memoir¹

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To Robert K. Merton, without whom it never could have happened

Some years ago at a cocktail party in Washington, I approached General Colin Powell, then still head of the Joint Chiefs, and told him that he and I had a lot in common. The General, who did not know me, reacted with a quizzical look. I commented that we were both born in Harlem, moved when quite young to the Bronx, and went to and graduated from City College. I did not add what was more relevant, that he joined the ROTC, the Reserve Officers Training Corps, while I joined the youth section of the Trotskyists, then known as the Young People's Socialist League, Fourth International. Our different behaviors after entering City College determined much of our later life, although the General exhibited more consistency in his career than I did in politics. He remained with the military until retirement. I left the Trotskyists within a year after joining them in 1940, although I remained active in various left socialist groups for a number of years. I served, among other things, as the national chairman of the Youth Section of the Socialist Party, also known as the Young People's Socialist League, or YIPSILS. My final resignation from socialist organizations occurred around 1960 when I quit the Socialist Party, which had become a futile organization. Intellectually I moved a considerable distance, from believing in Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism to a moderate form of democratic socialism and finally to a middle-of-the-road position, as a centrist, or as some would say, a conservative Democrat. In recent decades, leftist critics of my writings and subsequent politics have placed me in that category known as neoconservative.

My parents were both born in Czarist Russia in Minsk and Pinsk. My mother, Lena, came to America as a young child in 1907. Her parents, who died before I was born, in the 1918 flu epidemic, were religious Jews. She was a seamstress

¹I am indebted for this title to Irving Howe, who used it for a book of his essays.

before she married, and she kept a kosher home afterwards. My father, Max, arrived as a young adult in 1911. He had apprenticed as a printer (compositor) in Russia. Shortly before he died in 1945, he told me of his experiences in Russia. The most noteworthy related to his membership in the printers' union in Kiev. Since the Russian printers, while supporting the Social Democratic party, refused to ally themselves with the Bolsheviks or Mensheviks, major leaders of both factions spent time at union meetings to win support. He told me Stalin came to a small one in Kiev. When I asked my father how he could remember Stalin, since he was almost unknown at the time, my father responded that he could because Stalin was different. All the others, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, discussed Marxist theory and revolutionary tactics. Stalin, however, talked about organizational structure and efficiency. He told the printers they would gain more economically by working with the Bolsheviks.

The two strands, Judaism and Marxism, that concerned my parents clearly had an impact on me. I joined both Jewish and socialist organizations as a teenager, and some of my earliest research dealt with printer unionism. As noted above, I spent many years in socialist groups until my mid-thirties, largely ignoring Jewish issues and activities. My first and late wife, Elsie, whom I married in 1945, although also a socialist, was much more of a dedicated Jew than I in the early years of our marriage. Starting with the Six Day War in 1967, I became very active in campus-related Jewish groups. I have written many articles and pamphlets, edited one book and coauthored another, dealing with Jewish subjects. And I have remained committed to politics as a scholarly vocation and as my main avocation.

The substance of my academic career flows in many ways from my early and continuing political interests. As a Trotskyist or socialist from high school through graduate school, I became interested in three questions. The biggest one was—why had the Bolshevik revolution in the Soviet Union led to an oppressive, exploitative society? The groups with which I was affiliated, the Socialists and the Trotskyists, had no doubt but that the Soviet Union was a more oppressive system than any in the democratic capitalist world. They recognized that the Soviet Union was a totalitarian tyranny. They also believed that the Communist parties of the world, including the American one, were almost totally controlled by Moscow and served the interests of the ruling class of that country, not those of American workers or workers anywhere. The big question was, therefore, how did a revolution, led by people who had come out of the socialist movement, which had been dedicated to reducing inequality and making the world more free, result in totalitarianism?

The second question that concerned me was: Why had the democratic socialist movement, the Second International, the social democrats, failed to adhere

to policies that would further socialism? By “furthering socialism,” I mean the coming to power in industrial countries of socialist parties who would make their countries more egalitarian, more democratic, and less economically oppressive by enhancing the role of the state in the economy as well as by changing political practices. The social democrats seemed to pursue policies inimical to their coming to full power and enacting socialism. Essentially, the social democrats were following compromising and nonrevolutionary policies that prevented them from gaining the support of the workers and other socio-economically inferior members of the population. When elected, they did not carry out programs that would contribute to the destruction of capitalism. Left socialist critics like myself were pure rationalists. We believed the correct policies would have prevented the Nazis from coming to power in Germany or Franco from winning in Spain, or would have enabled the socialists to win office in various countries. The issue for us was why the democratic socialist parties had failed to follow a correct Marxist line; we asked what had led them to be compromisers, reformists, and advocates of the middle way?

The third political question that interested me greatly was why the United States had never had a major socialist party. The United States is the only industrialized country that has never developed an electorally viable socialist or social democratic party or powerful labor movement. An American Socialist party was founded at the turn of the century; the greatest proportion it ever received of the vote for president was 6%, and that in only one year, 1912. It was not able to win an election in a political unit larger than a city. It failed to secure the support of the trade union movement. The American Federation of Labor, the AF of L, always opposed socialism and efforts to create a labor party. The third question, therefore, was Sombart’s old one: “Why no socialism in the United States?”

Attempting to answer these questions was to inform much of my academic career. That career, I should note, took root in sociology as a result of a discussion I had in 1941 with a then-Trotskyist colleague, Peter Rossi. As a student at City College I had first decided to take a science degree in order to qualify as a dentist. That incongruous objective, given my political interests, was dictated by the fact that the only member of my family who made out well during the Great Depression was an uncle who was a dentist and who had never married. Securing a good income was particularly important because my father, who was a printer, was employed irregularly for most of the 1930s. My family was able to survive economically because he worked occasionally as a “substitute.” That is, he could be employed on a day-to-day basis when printers were in more demand, as before Christmas, although he was unemployed most of the year. On occasion we were forced to go on home relief, as welfare

was known then. But we also depended on largess from my uncle Bill, the dentist. He was my mother's brother, and various members of my mother's family decided that this asset, namely my uncle's practice, should be kept in the family. I was the oldest male and it was therefore incumbent on me to study dentistry.²

Fortunately for my prospective clients, I decided after one year at City that dentistry was not for me, and I shifted to history. This decision was changed when Peter Rossi came to me and said that we should major in sociology. I asked why, and his answer was that the graduate program related to undergraduate sociology was social work. And social workers, who deal with people in economic trouble, would always be in demand, assuming, as he and I did, that the depression with massive unemployment would recur after the war. This made sense to me, and we both became sociology majors.

Various experiences as an undergraduate reinforced my political interests and beliefs. I had occasional difficulties with some of the Stalinist teachers, particularly in the English department, but I will not elaborate on that here other than to say I believed they deliberately downgraded me for my political commitments. As many alumni of the City College radical movements have written, the political groups spent much of their time in what were known as the alcoves. The alcoves were partitioned areas off the large cafeteria of the college. Different groups used different alcoves. Alcove One was inhabited by the anti-Stalinist leftists, that is, the Trotskyists, the socialists, the anarchists, and Zionist socialists. Its noteworthy alumni include people like Daniel Bell, Irving Kristol, Irving Howe, Nathan Glazer, Philip Selznick, and many others. Alcove Two, right next door, was the Stalinist hangout. I had frequent arguments with some of them. Alcove Three was inhabited by the right wing Zionists, the followers of Jabotinsky. Beyond Alcove Three not much attention was paid to politics.

The student radicals of the 1930s and early 1940s, at least at City College, took study and reading seriously. We were particularly dedicated to the Marxist classics and to securing a knowledge of comparative politics. We read and discussed Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We also studied the political events that led to the Russian Revolution, the triumph of fascism in Italy, of Nazism in Germany, the Spanish Civil War, the experience of Popular Fronts in various parts of Europe as well as American politics. The Marxist critics of reformism, from Lenin onwards, had no good explanation of why various socialist leaders or parties had "betrayed" the revolution, other than that they somehow came to represent the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, of the middle class, rather than

²Knowing this would have delighted Trotsky. He once described the American Socialist party, which he did not respect, as a party of dentists.

the proletariat. The critical commentary tended to be moralistic rather than sociological.

For some of us in Alcove One, one book changed this: *Political Parties* by Robert Michels. Michels had been a German social democrat and sociologist. He became interested in trying to understand why his political party, the Social Democratic party of Germany, the largest and most important socialist party in the world before the great war, had become bureaucratized and was not, as he understood it, internally democratic. Michels was a protege of Max Weber, who had urged him to study party organizations and machines. His book, published in 1911, focused on the German Social Democrats. The German party and, he argued, all other parties as well were and necessarily had to be dominated by an oligarchy. Parties competed with each other for electoral support in the larger polity, but within their own organization there was, Michels argued, no democracy. Policy was set from the top; new leaders were chosen by the existing elite.

The bulk of *Political Parties* was devoted to explaining why oligarchy is inherent, not only in the nature of large-scale organizations, but also in the characteristics of the masses, of the rank and file. Michels basically argued that voluntary organizations like parties or trade unions, professional bodies, veteran groups, and the like have a one-party internal structure. The paid officials, the leaders and bureaucracy, control access to relevant information, dominate the press of the organization, have a near monopoly on political skills, and can therefore overwhelm opposition, which is inevitably less well organized and politically incompetent. In any case the membership lacks the interest, knowledge, and skills to take part in internal politics and to counter the leadership. Given the privileged position of the union leaders or party bureaucracies, it followed that they are not in the same economic class as the membership, that the organization's policies reflect the position of the higher status and more powerful officials, not of the rank and file.

Political Parties was brought to the attention of Alcove One by Philip Selznick, who was a few years older than me. Selznick was the first among us to go on to graduate school, studying sociology at Columbia where he worked with Robert Merton, who had just arrived at Columbia as an assistant professor. Selznick had become the leader of a small group within a secessionist Trotskyist party, the Workers Party. The Party had rejected Trotsky's argument that in spite of Stalinism the Soviet Union was still a workers' state, albeit a "degenerated" one, which should be defended by left-wing groups. Selznick went further to proclaim a major heresy, namely, the rejection of Bolshevism and of Leninism. He argued that Stalinism was rooted in Leninism. He founded a small anti-Bolshevik faction with about 25 members, known as the Shermanites, after

his party name, Philip Sherman. It did not last long within the Trotskyists. The group published a small magazine, *Enquiry*. Its one “adult” adherent was Dwight MacDonald. But it included a high percentage of eventually distinguished scholars and writers: Gertrude Jaeger, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol, Martin Diamond, Herbert Garfinkle, Peter Rossi, William Peterson, and others.

Political Parties was an eye opener to me and to others. It seemed to explain two of our questions—why the Soviet Union had become a dictatorship after the Russian revolution, and why the social democratic parties were so inept at fighting for socialism. Michels, in effect, said that there was a ruling stratum within all parties and that if a socialist party came to power it would reproduce within the larger polity the kind of hierarchical political system that existed inside the party. He concluded his book by saying that while socialists may triumph, that is, capture office, socialism never would. He argued that since the socialists were ideologically more concerned with extending democracy in Germany and other European countries than was any other party, the fact that they, even though extreme democrats, were authoritarian internally demonstrated that democracy was impossible. (I came to disagree substantially with this conclusion, recognizing that competing parties that offer a choice defines democracy, even though the internal structure of subordinate groups representing interests and values are oligarchic, but that recognition occurred later.)

The Russian Bolsheviks had a party structure more elite controlled than that of the German Social Democrats. Because they operated in a dictatorial regime, it was understandable that on coming to power, the Bolsheviks created a repressive system. And since the oligarchs of social democratic parties, like all dominant strata, were largely concerned with maintaining and extending their power, status, and privileges, it was also understandable that the parties they controlled would not be revolutionary, that they would not be interested either in really extending the participation of the masses. Michels’ theory of the “iron law of oligarchy” went a long way to accounting both for Stalinism and the failures of the Social Democracy.

Exposure to these political and intellectual ideas helped liberate me from Leninist or Trotskyist beliefs and contributed to my decision to follow in Selznick’s footsteps and study sociology in graduate school. But to be honest, I must report that the actions were largely a result of fortuitous circumstances. I graduated from City College in 1943 in the middle of World War II. I received a draft deferment in 1942 that lasted for close to a year to enable me to graduate. As it turned out, when I was given a physical examination by Selective Service I was deferred for being severely nearsighted. Given this rejection, I had to do something else. The sociology department at City College offered me a teaching

fellowship. A condition for the fellowship was to be registered as a graduate student, so I applied to Columbia, which was a mile away, and went there.

Political developments in Canada at the time affected my interests since they bore on the question of "Why no socialism in the United States." The Canadian social democratic party, then known as the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, or CCF, had taken off electorally during the war. It had been formed in the depths of the depression in 1933 and had a fair amount of early electoral success, winning about a dozen members in parliament, largely from western Canada, particularly in the provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia. In a 1943 provincial election in Ontario, Canada's wealthiest and most populous province, the CCF was a close second, missing being first by two legislative seats. This development was naturally of considerable interest to American socialists. For the first time in North America a socialist party had gained significant electoral strength. I began to read everything I could find on the CCF and attended a national convention in Montreal.

I visited Columbia for the first time in the fall of 1943 and, on the strong advice of Phil Selznick, met with Robert Merton. Merton was to become the most important intellectual influence on me in my academic career. In talking to him on this first visit, I told him that two topics interested me as possibilities for my PhD dissertation. This was a fairly unusual statement from a novice, who had not taken any graduate courses. I recall Merton looking somewhat puzzled. The topics I described to him were studies of the CCF and of the political system of my father's union, the International Typographical Union (ITU). My interest in the latter was not to reaffirm a family tie, although that tie had enabled me to learn the about ITU's unique (for unions) internal politics. It was the only labor organization to have an institutionalized competitive party system with turnover in office. And, therefore, it challenged Michels's "iron law of oligarchy." I went on to do both "theses." When I finished the work on the Typographical Union, which appeared as *Union Democracy* (1953), I went into Merton's office with a copy of the manuscript under my arm and told him: "Here's my second dissertation." He, of course, had no recollection of the conversation we had had ten years earlier.

My interest in the CCF, which was the beginning of a lifelong concern with Canadian society and politics, stemmed, as noted, from the issue of why there was no socialism in the United States. I had assumed at the time (although I now know better) that Canada, particularly English Canada, is very similar sociologically to the United States. Hence, if Canada could develop an important socialist movement, so presumably could the United States. I thought it should be possible to learn about the conditions that could produce a socialist movement in this country by finding out how this had happened in Canada.

When I finished my graduate work at Columbia, I received a fellowship from the Social Science Research Council to go to Saskatchewan where the CCF had elected a government in 1944, to study the party and the government. The research enabled me to learn a great deal about Canada, about social science methods, and about the United States. Perhaps the most important lesson, as I have reiterated many times since, is that the best way to learn about your own country is to go abroad and discover the ways that behavior, practices, and institutions you take for granted at home are different elsewhere.

Most of the political analysis in my work on Saskatchewan helped to explain the occurrence in the midwest of populism and other forms of agrarian radicalism on both sides of the US-Canadian border in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. The analysis did not, however, contribute to solving the “why no socialism in the United States” puzzle. The one answer suggested by the Canadian-American comparison was a political science argument, namely that the parliamentary system, which characterizes Canada and other Commonwealth countries, is much more conducive to the formation of third parties than is the direct national election of the chief executive required by the American Constitution.

Comparing different, yet similar, outcomes in Saskatchewan and the neighboring Republican state of North Dakota was especially useful. North Dakota has been governed by Republicans and Saskatchewan by a third party of social democrats. The Non-Partisan League, which had secured control of North Dakota in 1918 after winning the Republican primaries, held office in the state during the 1930s and was basically a social democratic group with a state program very much like that of the CCF in Saskatchewan. It, however, functioned within the Republican party. In comparing the history of radical groups on both sides of the border, the evidence suggested that the major differentiating factor has been the variation in electoral systems. Choosing presidents in a national vote undermines third parties’ efforts, while parliamentary single district elections are much more encouraging to such. In the former, the American, multiparty coalitions are impossible, and those who wanted to sustain a third party are pressured to support the “lesser evil” of the two major parties, not to “waste their vote.” In Canada, which follows the British parliamentary system, the electorate can vote only for a member of the House of Commons or provincial legislature. Hence if third party sentiment is strong in a given constituency, that party is a viable choice, even if it is weak nationally. Prime ministers are chosen by the House of Commons, and a small party can affect that decision when no one party has a majority. A four-member independent labor-left group led by the future leader of the CCF, VS Woodsworth, was able to do so in 1925 and so secured important policy concessions for their votes.

The thesis that the presidential system severely discourages third parties in the United States was advanced by a major Socialist party leader, Morris Hillquit, before World War I, and by Norman Thomas, the perennial Socialist candidate for President, on a number of latter occasions. The Canadian-American comparison, and particularly the Saskatchewan-North Dakota one, seemed to reinforce the argument strongly. Added to the wasted vote thesis is the impact that the less-disciplined American congressional parties have on encouraging factions to work inside the old parties. This is made possible by a popularly elected chief executive who holds office regardless of support in Congress, and by employing a primary nomination system that permits diverse groups to compete for popular backing within the two major coalitions.

More important than the conclusion about the impact of the electoral system was my formulating an understanding of the relationship between what is now referred to as civic society, or the role of mediating institutions, grass roots or voluntary associations, and the development of and institutionalization of democracy. My first published article, which appeared in 1947 in the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, dealt with the topic, as did my subsequent work on the Typographical Union and democracy in unions and other private governments. Saskatchewan sensitized me to the relationship as I began to realize that this intensely politically active area, with a population of 800,000, had at least 125,000 positions in community organizations and government that had to be filled. Public positions included many rural municipalities, which were smaller units than counties in the United States, and thousands of school and library boards. Communal groups were comprised of a variety of farm organizations, such as cooperative elevators which stored grain, telephone companies which were locally owned and controlled, coop stores which existed in every community, hospitals which were controlled by the local residents, and the like. Questionnaire data indicated that the same people served in a number of local posts. These community activists were involved in politics, and they could create new social movements and parties. Here was Tocqueville's description and analysis of the role of voluntary associations in the United States in the 1830s still operative in North America in 1945 and, as I was to learn later, also among printers. Saskatchewan and the Typographical Union had strong civil societies.

The decision to study the CCF not only bore on my political interests, it also reflected my concerns for class analysis and the study of social movements. Much of *Agrarian Socialism* deals with the processes of class formation, of the ways a class becomes organized and conscious of its collective interests. The study also was intended as a contribution to organizational sociology, to indicate the ways bureaucratic interests and expertise affect policy. This concern was

linked to Michels' and Weber's theories of organization. Methodologically, the Saskatchewan study was an example of what Paul Lazarsfeld called "deviant case" analysis, the specification of new variables and hypotheses to account for exceptions to a general rule. Clearly responsive to my desire to further the socialist cause, the book presents a bridge to the study of what would eventually become my major substantive and political interest, democracy. It is an empirical analysis of the political consequences of a vibrant civil society, a topic that formed the main theme of *Union Democracy* and which informs my current work on democratic systems.

My second major study, the analysis of the political system of the International Typographical Union, had two sources. One, of course, was my father. He had been a lifelong member of the union since he had arrived in New York from Russia before World War I. He would occasionally take me to union meetings which were held every month in a New York high school. More significant, or more important intellectually, as a stimulus to me to study the ITU, was Michels' *Political Parties*. Michels had argued that all large-scale voluntary associations like unions and parties have a one-party system, are controlled by a self-coopting oligarchy. The academic literature on the governance of trade unions in America and elsewhere basically agreed, emphasizing the absence of organized opposition in unions (though it should be noted, not in American parties). Uncontested elections and conventions controlled by almost permanent officers have meant relatively little in the determination of policy in most unions. However, if this was true for the bulk of the union movement, it was not for the Typographical Union.

That organization, as those who have read *Union Democracy* know, had an institutionalized two-party system. All elections were contested, both local and national. The role of the opposition within the ITU was like that of political antagonists in the larger polity, that is, to present alternative programs and to criticize the activities of incumbent administrations. Members could have an impact on policy as well as help determine who became officers by choosing between two opposition slates. Here was a living system that illustrated Joseph Schumpeter's conception of democracy, a system in which the rank and file, or the electorate, can select between competing elites, basically opposing parties. The research was conducted in collaboration with two sociology graduate students, Martin Trow, who was involved from the start, and James S. Coleman, who joined in the later stages of the study. Coleman also wrote his dissertation, which I supervised, using data from the study.

Union Democracy is an analysis of the social conditions for democracy within private governments. But much of what has been written about democracy in national polities, an important topic in recent years, is dealt with in *Union*

Democracy. We emphasized the role of what is now called civil society, a myriad of mediating institutions between the top of the organization or society and the rank and file of citizenry, in stimulating and sustaining opposition. Surprisingly, a true civil society existed within the Typographical Union. The printing industry had produced an occupational community that subsumed many voluntary associations. Using survey data, we were able to show that printers were led to seek out each other's company for two reasons: (a) many of them worked nights or evenings and therefore had to see people who were on the same job shift as themselves, and (b) the marginal status of printers, on the border between the (white collar) middle and (manual) working class, also pressed them to interact with each other off the job. These resulted in the creation of an occupational community of many clubs and organizations of printers. In New York, there was a baseball league, bowling groups, veterans organizations, ethnic associations, and various social groups. The occupational community of wheat farmers that I described in Saskatchewan clearly had parallels within the printing industry. To extend our hypotheses we looked at printers' unions in other countries. While the party system of the ITU was unique, printing unions elsewhere tended to be more democratic than the rest of the labor movements and were involved in occupational communities.

Michels' theoretical perspective formed the guiding framework for the study, for the analysis of a deviant case, of an exception to the "iron law of oligarchy." The Typographical Union did not have an oligarchy. Its leaders could be, and were, voted out of office. We consciously dealt with it methodologically as a deviant case, and, as Paul Lazarsfeld suggested, this meant that the theoretical model had to be modified or amplified. What made the ITU different from other unions was institutionalized opposition, a functioning two-party system. Support for the union parties were linked to fixed cleavages—ideological, ethnic, religious, and economic subgroups within the industry. In subsequent writings on democracy, I have occasionally referred to material in the book; I regret that, because it came out in the 1950s and dealt with unions, its theoretical generalizations, particularly its emphasis on subgroups, on civil society, have not in the main fed into the literature on democracy that has appeared in the past two decades.

Following *Union Democracy* my next major work was a series of studies of social mobility in the United States and other countries, some of which I conducted with my friend at Berkeley, Reinhard Bendix, and Hans Zetterberg, a Swedish sociologist who taught for some years at Columbia when I was on its graduate faculty during the early 1950s. My interest in social mobility stemmed to some considerable degree from the "why no socialism" question. A friend, William Peterson, wrote an article in *Commentary* in 1954 dealing with the

issue. He argued that the main reason for the absence of a strong socialist movement was that the United States had a higher rate of mass social mobility than did European societies, that in an open society it was much more difficult to organize a radical, class-conscious party than in more highly stratified, less open, societies.

I knew the literature on social mobility because I was teaching a course on stratification at Columbia at the time. One of the major works available in English, published in 1928, was a book by Pitirim Sorokin, *Social Mobility*. Sorokin, who hailed from Russia and knew many languages, reported on hundreds, if not thousands, of small studies, some dating back to the nineteenth century. He documented considerable social mobility, upward movement into the dominant strata as well as into the middle classes, in many countries. It seemed that the comparative image of Europe as a more closed postfeudal society, in contrast to the United States as a more open one with considerable mobility, was untrue. This conclusion was reinforced by the findings of another friend, Natalie Rogoff, who was then at the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia, comparing mobility in France and the United States based on national survey data. She reported that there was very little difference in the mobility rates in the two countries, particularly when people were classified dichotomously as manual/nonmanual, middle class/working class.

What, then, was the difference between the stratification systems of the United States and the European countries? Basically, they had varying class values. The American ideology stressed those of an open society—achievement, upward mobility, getting ahead for all. Most of Europe, however, was postfeudal. Its social class structures had emphasized social status as a relatively permanent characteristic linked to family origin and occupation. In Germany and Sweden, people were addressed by their occupational title. The Continental countries had different words to address those who were higher and lower than the speaker. Class, or status identity, therefore, has continued to be a much more explicit part of European social structure than in the United States. But the differences in status structure, though affecting class identity and propensity for class politics, presumably did not yield varying rates of social mobility on the mass level.

One of our principal assumptions, derived in part from Thorstein Veblen, was that regardless of how societies perceive class, as rigid or open, people are motivated to try to move up. Even in a status-bound society, those who are lower class regard being socially inferior as a negative factor, as punishment, and will seek to improve their situation if the economy and other structures allow. Conversely, since the factors related to class or status position, such as intelligence, education, and achievement motivation, are not fixed inherited characteristics, some will lose position and will wind up beneath the status

of their parents. Hence many will rise or fall in all societies. What most determines varying national rates is the degree of expansion or contraction of stratified positions, mainly economic ones. Hence Europe during the Industrial Revolution necessarily experienced high rates of mobility. A society could emphasize status differentiation and still be quite open.

These assumptions underlay the conclusions that Rogoff and I wrote in an article in *Commentary*, stating that varying national rates of upward or downward mobility do not account for class consciousness or the lack of it. What does help to explain it is the value system of societies, and we noted that ideological egalitarianism characterized the United States. Following Tocqueville, we emphasized that Americans believed in equality of opportunity and of respect, that people should be treated equally. Such values helped prevent the formation of class-conscious political movements in America. Conversely, in European postfeudal societies, social class, with its emphasis on deference and superiority, was an explicit part of the social landscape and made it much easier to form class-conscious parties.

I left Columbia in 1955, where I had become an associate professor, for a year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. I did not return. It is hard to explain why I gave up the opportunity to remain permanently in what I considered to be the greatest center of sociology, to work with the three scholars I most respected—Merton, Lazarsfeld, and Lynd. The answer, which I once shared with Lazarsfeld, was that my very respect, admiration, for them was inhibiting. I was intimidated by the thought that they were in a position to evaluate my every action. Whatever I knew as a sociologist I learned from them. I entered Columbia as a political activist, I left as a scholar. What they had taught me was to respect facts, research findings, especially when they challenged my beliefs, and to think “multivariately,” to understand the complexity of society, to think through the need to hold variables constant, doing the mental equivalent of a regression analysis. Wherever I went thereafter, I would always be a product of Columbia sociology in that intellectually glorious revolutionary decade.

I moved to the University of California at Berkeley in 1956. I continued to work on stratification and social mobility, often collaborating with Reinhard Bendix. We completed a reader in stratification, *Class, Status and Power*, which had considerable influence. We also pulled together various articles, some based on original research in California, others on secondary analysis of survey data from different countries, and on the published literature, and produced a book by Bendix and myself, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (1959). The work was basically a series of related essays, some by me and some in collaboration with Bendix and Zetterberg.

At Berkeley I chaired a group of social scientists, mainly political scientists and sociologists, but also some economists, who were interested in issues of political, economic, and social development in Third World countries. A number had been working in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. My personal interest was in the conditions for political modernization and democracy. These activities led to my appointment as Director of the University's Institute of International Studies, which helped support and coordinate comparative and area research.

My work on democracy, which had begun with *Union Democracy* (1953) and was continued subsequently with *The First New Nation* (1963), extended in a curious way some of my earlier efforts as a young socialist at comparative political analysis. I used to give lectures on the reasons for the failure of the revolution and the socialist movement in different countries. I discussed why the Nazis triumphed in Germany, the Francoists in Spain, why the British Labour party failed to inaugurate socialism, and so forth. This concern for the failure of social democracy or the conditions for the success of socialism was in a sense transmuted into analyses of the transition to democracy in comparative perspective, a subject that continues to be a major interest. My most important book on the subject is *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics*, which appeared in 1960. *Political Man* basically is a comparative study of the democratic order. In it, I reported my effort at a quantitative analysis of the factors differentiating democratic countries from undemocratic ones; this was first published as an article in the *American Political Science Review* (1959). The quantitative methods employed were primitive by contemporary standards, simply arithmetic and percentages. Still, I was able to document that the emergence and spread of democracy were related to socioeconomic development, to changing occupational and class structures, to higher per capita income, to widespread diffusion of education, to social homogeneity, and other factors. The book takes off from Aristotle, from his generalization that democracy is most likely to be found in polities with a large middle class. Inegalitarian countries are more disposed to be either oligarchies or tyrannies, i.e. old fashioned dictatorships or modern totalitarian systems.

Political Man was intended to demonstrate the utility of sociological approaches to politics, not only to democracy. Thus it also includes a lengthy analysis of the relation of different forms of legitimacy to types of governance, as well as of studies of partisan and ideological choices and of levels of electoral participation. It was originally planned as a reprint of various articles I had written in the late 1950s, but the editors at Doubleday suggested making it a more integrated book by rewriting these, which I did. For over a decade, the book became the text in political sociology, sold over 400,000 copies, and was translated in 20 languages, including Vietnamese, Bengali, Serbo-Croatian,

Burmese, and Hungarian. It received the book award of the American Sociological Association, then called the MacIver Prize.

Considering what I might do to further contribute to the analysis of sociopolitical development, I noted that the study of development did not involve just looking at the so-called developing countries of the Third World, since the industrialized nations necessarily had once been developing countries. This generalization, of course, includes the United States. As a member of the Program Committee for the then forthcoming 1962 World Congress of Sociology, I proposed that we emphasize development, in both historical and comparative perspective. I agreed to organize a session on the developed nations, in which I would report on the United States. This meant looking, on one hand, at how it had changed from the eighteenth century on, and, on the other, how it differs from other contemporary developed democratic countries. What are the variables that have made for different patterns of governance and class relations?

The book that came out of this project, *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (1962), was a National Book Award finalist. It begins with the early United States and examines the role of George Washington and others of the Founders, as well as structural factors, in determining the organizing principles of the new nation. It sought to deal with Tocqueville's question of why the United States became the first institutionalized mass democracy. In reading through the literature on this early period, I became interested in and fascinated with George Washington, who I concluded was one of the most underestimated figures in American history. This may be a curious observation to make about the man recognized as the father of our country, the leader of the revolution, the first president, but I believe it is true. Washington is perceived by Americans as a two-dimensional picture on the wall, not as a vibrant living person who made major decisions and showed real intelligence when so doing.

I emphasized in the early part of the book that Washington understood the problems of new nationhood and new democracy, particularly of legitimacy. A new nation by definition is low in legitimacy, has a weak title to rule. To establish the principle that incumbents should turn over office if they lose an election is not easy. Democratic rules of the game have to be institutionalized. As I read the record, Washington consciously recognized many of these considerations. He understood that his prestige, what might be called his charisma, had to be used to legitimate the new polity. He, therefore, deliberately stood above the fray. Although he was sympathetic to the Hamiltonians, he did not enter publicly into controversy—hence, the debates, the political struggles could go on under him. Washington, in effect, legitimated the new polity. He also, then, set an

important precedent in retiring from the presidency without being defeated. The first contested election, that of 1796, could take place under his aegis.

Democracy in the United States benefited greatly from antistatist and egalitarian revolutionary ideology. The American creed is sometimes referred to as classical liberalism, or libertarianism, emphasizing laissez-faire and suspicion of the power of the state as well as equality of respect and opportunity. This ideology led to the system of checks and balances, designed as Madison put it, to have part of government limit the power of other parts in order to prevent a popular tyranny, and to the insistence on a bill of rights to constrain the power of the central government. These developments occurred at a time when unified monarchical power, mercantilism, and aristocracy prevailed elsewhere.

Other sections of *The First New Nation* deal with contemporary variations by comparing the United States with other economically developed democratic countries, with the predominantly English speaking nations—Canada, Australia and Britain—and also with Germany and France. To do so I tried to use a modified format of Talcott Parsons' pattern variables. These are dichotomies for classifying social action. I characterized countries as stressing egalitarianism or elitism, specificity or diffuseness, particularism or universalism, and other such polarities. I rank-ordered the four predominantly English speaking countries on these polarities and then attempted to relate their values to their political styles and institutions. These cultural differences, of course, stem from varying histories and structures—from having been new nations or not, experiences of revolution, of sustaining monarchy, of continuing aristocracy, and of different types of religion, e.g. voluntary, predominantly Protestant, congregational and sectarian denominations in the United States, or hierarchically organized state-related churches in the other countries.

Religion was to become a major component of my efforts at comparative country analysis. America is the most religious and moralistic nation in the developed world. These attributes flow in large part from the country's unique Protestant sectarianism and ideological commitments. Given this background, it is not surprising that Americans are also both very patriotic and pacific and can be very critical of their society's institutions and leaders. Europeans, who take their national identity from common historical traditions, not ideologies, and are reared in a state church tradition, have been unable to understand the American response to Watergate or the sexual peccadilloes of politicians.

I decided that if I was to deal with political development I should have some Third World area competence, and so in the early sixties I started studying Spanish. But as leftist student protest, endemic in Latin America, began to grow, with its denunciation of the role of the United States abroad, including its scholars, I dropped the project. It did, however, have two products, one, a small

book in Spanish on student politics, *Estudiantes universitarios y política en el tercer Mundo* (1965), and an edited volume (with Aldo Solari) which appeared in English and Spanish, *Elites in Latin America* (1967), in which I discuss the role of values in economic development.

In 1965, I moved to Harvard University to become the George Markham Professor of Government and Sociology. Again, it is hard to explain the move, particularly in a line or two. My best recollection is that I felt I had become overly involved in Berkeley academic politics and administration as the Director of the Institute of International Studies and as a close adviser of the President of the University, Clark Kerr. Moving to Harvard seemed a way out.

Following *The First New Nation*, and continuing in a Parsonian mode, I and my Norwegian friend Stein Rokkan edited a book of papers presented at a conference held in the mid-sixties by the Research Committee on Political Sociology, of the International Political Science and Sociology Associations, which we had organized and led. The conference dealt with the ways that political cleavages and elections affect parties in various countries. Rokkan and I then wrote a long article, introductory to a book reporting on the papers of the conference called *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (1967). In it we tried to systematize the emergence and institutionalization of the cleavages that underlay democracy in European polities. We noted cleavages stemming from the national revolution, the conflicts between the periphery and the center, e.g. ethnic, linguistic, and economic groups located in outlying regions and the national center. Cleavages also flowed from church-state tensions, a land-industry division between the landed elite and the growing bourgeois class, and—the eventually overriding one, derivative from the industrial revolution—the class struggle between capitalists and workers. We tried to tie this analysis to Parson's analytical approach. This introductory essay has been important in establishing the linkage of parties to cleavages in democratic polities. It received the Leon Epstein prize in Comparative Politics from the American Political Science Association and is frequently cited in research dealing with the new party systems of emerging democracies in former Communist and Third World countries. I have added to the theory a new cross-cutting “postindustrial” cleavage between the better educated, concerned for an improved quality of life, e.g. environmentalists, and the materialist strata, both workers and owners, concerned with increased production, derived from D Bell and R Inglehart.

A few years later, I put together a book of essays mainly written in the 1960s, called *Revolution and Counterrevolution* (1970). The articles followed up on themes formulated in *Political Man* and *The First New Nation*. The first section is an effort to show how history and sociology may contribute to each other's analytic framework. Another seeks to tie together, in theoretical terms, the

approaches to stratification of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. The relationship of religion to politics is also analyzed.

Following this work, I returned to another topic treated in *Political Man*—the politics of intellectuals. I tried to explain why American intellectuals were on the left politically. A political science colleague and friend, Everett Ladd, and I used the opportunity presented by a massive study of American faculty conducted by Clark Kerr's Commission on Higher Education to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the outlook of American faculty. The Kerr Commission had gathered 60,000 questionnaires from what was initially a random sample. I had taken part in planning the research, together with Martin Trow. Trow was interested in analyzing educational behavior, I in the politics. Given a sample of 60,000, it was possible to test many hypotheses about variations in attitudes and activities, particularly the factors related to the liberal left emphasis of academics. One of the most interesting findings, documented in *The Divided Academy: Professors and Politics* (1975), reiterating conclusions of earlier studies, is that the more research oriented, the more successful, the more recognized, the more creative an academic is, the more likely he is to be on the left. Conversely, faculty who are primarily teachers and/or who are at the least prestigious institutions are the most conservative.

Explanations for these seemingly anomalous results that inverted class analysis among intellectuals had actually been presented earlier by Thorstein Veblen in a 1919 article, by Joseph Schumpeter in some essays on intellectuals in politics in the forties, and by Paul Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens in their book *The Academic Mind* in the mid-fifties. These scholars suggested that intellectual creativity involves rejection of what has been the intellectual status quo, what has been taught. Veblen explicitly argued that innovation in science is an act of rebellion. Hence, those people who are most innovative and most creative were also most likely to be on the left, at least in the context of American politics (they could be on the right in leftist dominated politics). The finding that the established intellectuals are more radical than the less prestigious countered the assumptions of left-wing scholars and writers, who wanted to believe, particularly in the activist sixties, that the successful are sellouts.

Creativity is not the only source of leftism. Friederich Hayek wrote in 1949 that as he traveled around the faculty clubs of America, he found the dominant tone was socialist, by which he, of course, meant supportive of the welfare state. And though an archsupporter of free enterprise and laissez faire, he reported that the socialists in academia were smarter than his cothinkers. Hayek's explanation for this finding was selective recruitment. He believed that a study of a cohort of young people over time would reveal that the brightest on the right would choose occupations that support the system, particularly business and the free

professions. Conversely those critical of business or other established activities would prefer intellectual and nonprofit pursuits. The data from the Carnegie survey of 1969, as well as various studies of student values, basically confirm Hayek. Undergraduates who plan to go into academia or other forms of public service are much more to the left than those who look forward to business careers or, for that matter, other monetarily rewarding occupations, such as the free professions or engineering.

The politics of academe and intellectuals continued to inform a major part of my research agenda through much of the seventies. Ladd and I published two monographs in 1973, in addition to *The Divided Academy, Professors, Unions and American Higher Education* and *Academics, Politics and the 1972 Election*. We also conducted two national surveys of faculty in 1975 and 1977, the results of which were published in two series of articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. My concern over the politicization of the American university was also reflected in various writings on student politics. The most important of these is *Rebellion in the University* (1972). The book is historical, noting the role of students as the shock troops of protest and rebellion through much of western history. It also deals with the content of the protest of the 1960s and with the characteristics of the protesters. It is congruent in many ways to the analyses of the politics of academe or professors.

The “Why No Socialism in the US?” issue remained of central interest to me. In 1974, I signed a contract to write a book that would explore the question. Over the decade of the seventies, I wrote a rough draft of over 700 pages, which sought to evaluate all the hypotheses in the literature from the Marxist fathers through latter day socialist and communist writers, and from the many social scientists and historians who have dealt with the subject. Essentially, I reiterated with abundant supporting evidence that the major factors fall into two categories: sociological, or the antistatist and egalitarian value system and egalitarian social relations that negate proposals to enlarge state power and prevent class consciousness; and political, or the constitutional elements that determine the Presidential system and the electoral framework, which serve to undermine third party efforts.

Curiously, however, I was unable to bring myself to finish the book. I could not understand this, since as my vita will attest, I have not been reluctant to finish and put whatever I am working on into print. In fact, I mined the manuscript for many articles, including one of almost book size length (170 pages), “Why No Socialism in the United States?” in *Sources of Contemporary Radicalism* (1977), ed. S Bialer & S Sluzar. Together with John Laslett, I edited *Failure of a Dream? Essays in the History of American Socialism* (1974), which includes a number of my articles and comments. In other essays, I applied the

analytic schema and variables used to explain socialist failure in America to the variations in left politics across the Atlantic. These included "Industrial Proletariat in Comparative Perspective" (1981) and my presidential address to the American Political Science Association, "Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-Class Politics" (1983).

I can note that together with Gary Marks, a former student and now a distinguished political scientist, I have turned to finally completing the book. Other than the passage of time and the end of Stalinism with the demise of the Soviet Union, there has been one major development in my thinking, which may have unlocked my inhibitions. I realized in 1995 that one of the major factors I have emphasized, the electoral system, is not as important as I had thought. I owe this insight to Ross Perot, although it could and should have come from earlier third party or independent presidential candidacies. Perot secured 19% of the vote in the 1992 election, and he has maintained that level of support in trial heats in opinion polls through early 1996. He is, of course, far from being a socialist. Other nonsocialists, Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, Robert LaFollette in 1924, George Wallace in 1968, John Anderson in 1980, in addition to Perot in 1992, have received a larger vote than any Socialist nominee ever attained. Eugene Debs secured 6% in 1912, and 3% in 1920. Norman Thomas in six campaigns between 1928 and 1948 never won more than 2%, and that during the depths of the depression in 1932. Clearly, sizable minorities of Americans have been willing to "waste" their ballots by voting for a third party protest candidate, but not if he is a socialist. The direct election of the chief executive undoubtedly does serve to inhibit the emergence and institutionalization of national third parties, as EE Schattschneider contended, but it has not prevented the occasional expression of large-scale protest against both major parties. However, Americans, regardless of how they feel about the political system, have never used statist socialism as a vehicle for the expression of their discontent.

The conclusion that socialists could not overcome the deep-rooted American antipathy to statism is reinforced by the behavior of the labor movement. During the high point of American socialism, in the years before World War I, the party could not win the support of organized labor, which was also antistate. The American Federation of Labor was not meek or conservative. Its record of strikes and violence surpassed almost all European unions; its ideology was syndicalist, for workers' independent power, against support from the government. Its leader for 40 years, Samuel Gompers, when asked his politics, once replied, "I guess, two-thirds anarchist." And the revolutionary labor movement, the Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW, the Wobblies, were explicitly anarcho-syndicalist, not socialist.

Removing the electoral system as a major explanation for socialist weakness leaves value and class systems, ideological equalitarianism, meritocracy, and antistatistism. These form the heart of Tocqueville's discussion of American exceptionalism. And presumably they will constitute the core of the forthcoming book on socialist efforts in America.

To demonstrate that I have not been committed solely to the analysis of left-wing outliers, I can report that I have had a parallel, if less dedicated, interest in right-wing movements. This was first exhibited in an article on "The Radical Right" (1955), followed up by two lengthy ones in a collection *The Radical Right*, edited by Daniel Bell (1955, 1963). These dealt with the social roots of Coughlin's movement in the 1930s, and of McCarthyism and the John Birch Society in the 1950s and early 1960s, and stressed their traditionalist and populist antielitist character.

While I was working on the last of these articles, the Anti-Defamation League approached me to conduct a major study of anti-Semitism in the United States, which they were prepared to fund. I was not interested in this, since I did not think anti-Semitism was a serious problem in the United States. I suggested, however, that I would like to take on a broader subject, right-wing extremism. ADL agreed and I recruited a close friend, Earl Raab, to collaborate on a book, *The Politics of Unreason* (1970, 1978), which dealt with the subject historically from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1970s. We emphasized two sources: Protestant sectarian moralism—though Catholics, who had been targets of bigotry, came into the support picture in the 1930s and later; and status insecurity derivative from mobility, both upwards, more prevalent in prosperous times, and downward, during recessions or depressions. The book was awarded the Gunnar Myrdal Prize. Two chapters in *Political Man* dealt with the right, asserting that fascism has three forms, right or traditionalist, e.g. Franco's Spain; centrist (Nazi); and left (Peron); and that the lower less-educated strata have a greater propensity to support authoritarian movements. These chapters have occasioned much discussion and criticism, largely from the left.

My wife Elsie became a victim of a rare form of cancer in the late 1960s that required recurrent lung operations. She had never liked living in the cold and austere New England climate. Thus when an offer to move to Stanford in 1975 as the Caroline S.G. Munro Professor of Political Science and Sociology and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution came up, I accepted. We spent twelve happy years there before she died.

I have written articles addressed to the debates over the content of sociology. In a book of essays, entitled *Conflict and Consensus* (1983), I sought to counter the assumptions presented by some critics of established sociology that the discipline overemphasizes consensus in society, thereby reflecting a conservative

orientation. In my evaluations, I have stressed the connections between conflict and consensus and noted that some of those criticized for being overly consensual, like Talcott Parsons, have in fact been as much concerned with conflict as with the alternative polarity. Societies necessarily have both, i.e., they must contain mechanisms to sustain conflict and consensus. Marx, himself, stressed the presence of stabilizing elements in all complex societies. The book also includes the Lipset-Rokkan essay on "Party Systems and Voter Alignments." In the early 1980s, William Schneider, who had been a student of mine at Harvard, and I dealt with various tensions, sources of conflict, in American life in *The Confidence Gap* (1983, 1987). We documented the decline of confidence in American institutions, particularly business, government, and labor, from hundreds of opinion polls, and we sought to explain it. The book is both statistical and historical/political. We noted the importance of the rise of television in reporting bad news, which is what all news sources report. Television, however, does this more effectively, because news reported in pictures ("you are there") seems less open to journalistic bias than when it appears in print. The gap, which started during the Vietnam War period, has continued to the present, and as I have noted in a mid-1990s article, there is more malaise, popular discontent, than at any time since pollsters began to monitor the phenomenon.

I returned in the late 1980s to the effort started at Berkeley, to report and specify the conditions for institutionalized competitive politics, particularly in emerging democracies. In collaboration with two former students, Larry Diamond and Juan Linz, who have done most of the work, I edited three commissioned volumes on democratic transitions. Following a conceptual scheme we laid out in *Democracy in Developing Countries* (1988, 1989), area experts reported on the conditions that have affected the success or failure of democratic transitions in many nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Some reports were updated in 1995 in *Politics in Developing Countries*, which described ten nations across the three continents and included a long theoretical and synthesizing introduction. I have elaborated on my 1960 essay on the social requisites of democracy, with two journal articles, "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy" (1993) and "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited" (1994). The latter was given as the presidential address to the American Sociological Association. The first was written with two students, KR Seong and J Torres.

Some years after Elsie's death, I married Sydnee Guyer. We spent a very good year at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York during 1988. Although a fourth generation San Franciscan, Sydnee, whose career had been in public relations and television production, preferred the cultural life of New York and the East Coast. Since I was approaching the retirement age at Stanford, I began

looking for a position in the East. George Mason University, located just outside Washington, made me an excellent offer in their new Institute of Public Policy, which I accepted. I am also affiliated with the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars and the Progressive Policy Institute as a Senior Scholar. Here were to be my first experiences of direct exposure to the Washington scene, while I retained my affiliation to Stanford's Hoover Institution, where I spend summers. Both Sydnee and I like Washington.

My most comprehensive effort at dealing with the response to democracy in historical and comparative perspective appeared in 1995 in a four-volume *Encyclopedia of Democracy*. The set, which I edited, contains more than 400 articles by over 200 authors, including an analytical introduction and four other articles by me. The *Encyclopedia* reports on important democratic figures, events in most countries, and major experiences. They also summarize the theoretical literature.

During the 1990s, I published three books that reflect efforts to come to terms with American exceptionalism. The first one, *Continental Divide: the Institutions and Values of the United States and Canada*, continues themes presented in *The First New Nation*. It seeks to understand the United States by looking at it in comparison with Canada. As I stress, two nations came out of the American Revolution: Canada the country of the counterrevolution, and the United States the country of the revolution. The northern nation is much more statist, Tory (noblesse oblige), communitarian, elitist, group-oriented, and deferential. The southern is much more individualistic, antistatist, antielitist, supportive of laissez-faire, and less obedient. Two countries on the same continent, with most people speaking the same language, vary considerably in outcomes such as church attendance, crime rates, divorce statistics, legal systems, party systems, electoral participation, strength of labor organizations, welfare and health policies, and many others. Canada is much more of a social democratic welfare-oriented country, with a greater emphasis on family and personal security. The United States is more committed to competitive meritocratic values, institutions, and behavior. My continuing work on Canada received the Gold Medal of the International Council for Canadian Studies.

The second book of the 1990s, *Jews and the New American Scene* (1995), in collaboration with Earl Raab, seeks to analyze the American Jewish community as it is today. It notes, as I have in earlier articles, that American Jewry reflects the exceptional and unique characteristics of the United States and differs in systematic ways from Jewry in other countries, where the dominant Christian denomination is more hierarchical and state-related. Raab and I emphasize that the melting pot, i.e. assimilation, continues to characterize the relationship of ethnoreligious groups to the larger American society, exemplified in the

extremely high intermarriage rate of Jews, Catholics, and almost every other ethnic group with the exception of African Americans. The melting pot is melting as never before. Assimilation has been inherent in the welcome America has given to the Jews, evident in George Washington's letter to a synagogue in 1791 in which he stated that Jews were not tolerated in America, that they *were* Americans. The book also reports on the extraordinary success of Jews in the intellectual, political, and business worlds, which demonstrates the openness of the society. And I can report that my writings on American Jewry received the first Marshall Sklare Prize of the Jewish Social Studies Association.

Writing a book on American Jewry helps to cap off my deep interests and participation in the Jewish community. I served over the years as President of the American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, as Chairperson of the National Advisory Board of the National Hillel Foundation, as Chairperson of the Faculty Council of the United Jewish Appeal, and as Co-Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East, headquartered in Tel Aviv. I also have been involved in research activities for the major Jewish defense organizations and the Wilstein Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

My participation in Jewish activities has not meant a lessening of concern for American politics. I have been active in Democratic party politics with two moderate or centrist groups, the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM), which I co-chaired in the seventies, and the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which I have served as a Senior Scholar in its think tank, the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), and for some years as President of the Institute support group, the Progressive Foundation.

Finally, as 1996 opens, I have published a new book, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*, which seeks to pull together much of my research and thinking about the ways in which the United States differs from other countries. The term "American exceptionalism" was coined by Alexis de Tocqueville and has meant that the country is qualitatively different from Europe. It still is, though perhaps in some new as well as old ways. The reference in the title to a double-edged sword reflects the fact that while American exceptionalism means that America is better than other countries on some criteria, it is also worse on various other criteria. The United States has the lowest rate of voting, the highest crime rate, and the most unequal distribution of income among developed countries, but also the most open educational system, the greatest emphasis on equality of respect, the highest rate of mobility into elite positions, and the greatest guarantee of personal rights. It has the least government, the lowest taxes, less welfare and health benefits, a weak trade union movement, and no social democratic party.

Although *American Exceptionalism* is not a book about politics, it argues that the nation's libertarian organizing principles, its ideological identity, go far in explaining both the absence of a socialist party and the fact that the Republican party is the *only* major antistatist libertarian party in the industrialized world. In 1906, HG Wells wrote that two parties were missing in America; there was no conservative, i.e. Tory, noblesse oblige, statist, communitarian party, and no socialist party either. Both American parties, he argued, were (classically) liberal, libertarian in modern parlance. The depression of the 1930s had shifted American politics toward the left; postwar prosperity pressed it back to its traditional values. Perhaps the greatest incongruity that I seek to explain is that America is the most meritocratic nation, open to talent from all strata in elite positions, and yet has the most unequal distribution of income in the developed world. For my explanation, read the book.

A British sociological reviewer of my work once described it as the sociology of a patriot. By this he meant that I think the United States is a great and effective country. I do, in spite of the fact, as I emphasize in *American Exceptionalism*, that there is much in it that no decent person could feel positive about, particularly the state of race relations (which merits a long chapter in the *Exceptionalism* book), the high violence rate, and the changes in sexual morality, e.g. the growth in illegitimacy. But it is important to note that many positive and negative elements are interrelated, e.g., the emphasis on achievement, on getting ahead, is linked to the high crime rate. Populist elements are related to the low rate of voting turnout. A higher percentage of the relevant age cohort has attended school than in other countries; today the United States leads in graduate enrollment. Yet mass, more open, education has helped to produce lower quality outcomes than that reached in the elite-oriented segments of school systems found in some other European and Asian cultures which prepare a minority of students for university.

I have moved around in my academic career, and the changes have affected my research agenda. My position at George Mason University has given me new insights on Washington politics, which should be reflected in future writings. This article is obviously not a comprehensive report on my intellectual activity. I have had to leave untouched the more recent parts of it, for reasons of time and space. Writing this has whetted my appetite for discussing the way the world around me has affected my actions. This article is only an introduction. I look forward to writing a longer memoir, in which I report on my relations with my Columbia mentors as well as my colleagues in the profession. I have known most of the leading political scientists and sociologists since World War II. I will tell how the disciplines and university world changed during the past half-century. I am particularly interested in discussing my relations

with my students, many of whom have become leaders in political science and sociology. Two of my Stanford political science colleagues who studied the impact of dissertation advisors reported that students who worked with me were more productive, published more, than others. My propensity to publish has seemingly an impact on those working with me. I also hope to discuss my relationships with my wives, Elsie and Sydnee, and children, David, Daniel, and Cici. They have added zest to my life.

A complete list of the publications
of Seymour Martin Lipset may be found on
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