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in Britain, 1900-1911, and the United States, 1880s-1920**



Ann Shola Orloff; Theda Skocpol

American Sociological Review, Vol. 49, No. 6 (Dec., 1984), 726-750.

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American Sociological Review

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WHY NOT EQUAL PROTECTION? EXPLAINING THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SPENDING IN BRITAIN, 1900-1911, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1880s-1920*

ANN SHOLA ORLOFF
Princeton University

THEDA SKOCPOL
University of Chicago

Britain was a pioneer in launching a modern welfare state. Before World War I, it instituted workers' compensation, old age pensions, health insurance, and the world's first compulsory system of unemployment insurance. By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States had expanded Civil War pensions into de facto old age and disability pensions for many working- and middle-class Americans. However, during the Progressive Era, as the Civil War generation died off, the United States failed to institute modern pensions and social insurance. Conventional theories of welfare-state development—theories emphasizing industrialization, liberal values, and demands by the organized industrial working class—cannot sufficiently account for these contrasting British and U.S. patterns. Instead, a macropolitical explanation is developed. By the early twentieth century, Britain had a strong civil service and competing, programmatically oriented political parties. Patronage politics had been overcome, and political leaders and social elites were willing to use social spending as a way to appeal to working-class voters. However, the contemporary United States lacked an established civil bureaucracy and was embroiled in the efforts of Progressive reformers to create regulatory agencies and policies free of the "political corruption" of nineteenth-century patronage democracy. Modern social-spending programs were neither governmentally feasible nor politically acceptable at this juncture in U.S. political history.

In 1919, a number of years after the initiation in Great Britain of all of the key programs of what would later come to be called a modern welfare state, a poignant cartoon appeared in a pamphlet put out by the American Association for Labor Legislation (AALL), the leading associ-

ation of U.S. social-reform advocates in the Progressive Era. Two equally brawny workmen were portrayed holding umbrellas for protection against those "rainy days" that inevitably come in capitalist industrial societies. The British workman's umbrella had a full set of panels, symbolizing industrial accident insurance promulgated in Britain in 1897 and 1906, disability coverage instituted in 1906, and the major breakthroughs in old age pensions in 1908 followed by health and unemployment insurance in the National Insurance Act of 1911. Building upon these pre-World War I foundations, during the 1920s Britain would become (according to a measure developed by Flora and Alber, 1981:55) the world's leader in overall "welfare state development."

In contrast, before the 1930s the United States took only small steps towards a modern welfare state. In the 1919 AALL cartoon the unfortunate American workman held an umbrella with only one panel, representing the laws requiring employers to have industrial accident insurance which had been passed in thirty-eight states of the United States by 1919 (Brandeis, 1935:575-77). Between 1911 and 1919, thirty-nine states also passed mothers' pension laws, which mainly targeted respectable working-class widows (Leff, 1973:401), so another panel would have appeared in a still

* Direct all correspondence to: Theda Skocpol, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, IL 60637.

This is a revised and shortened version of a paper originally presented at the session on "Historical Sociology" at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Detroit, Michigan, September 2, 1983. The following people made comments helpful to us in doing the revisions and we gratefully acknowledge their input: Robert Alford, Edwin Amenta, Clarke Chambers, James Coleman, Lewis Coser, Jack Goldstone, Wendy Griswold, Peter Gourevitch, Gary Hamilton, John Ikenberry, Michael Katz, David Knoke, Barbara Laslett, Robert Liebman, William Parish, John Stephens, Gerald Suttles, Charles Tilly, Margaret Weir, William Julius Wilson, and Robert Wuthnow. Special thanks also go to Alex Keyssar, who generously provided some labor-force estimates from his research on Massachusetts, to Bill Skocpol, who helped with some of the figures, and to three anonymous ASR reviewers. Carlos Forment, graduate student in Sociology at Harvard University, obtained library materials about Massachusetts for us.



WHY NOT EQUAL PROTECTION ?

American workman's social insurance protection compared with British workman's.

Figure 1. A Cartoon about British and U.S. Social Insurance

Source: Andrews, 1919:120.

very skimpy umbrella for the American workman's wife.

This article aims to explain why Great Britain was among the world's pioneers in launching social insurance, while the early twentieth-century United States failed to adopt old age pensions and health and unemployment insurance, settling only for workers' compensation and mothers' pensions. The skimpy existing literature on the emergence of modern welfare states focuses almost exclusively on periods of major positive breakthroughs, and does not sufficiently explore why breakthroughs that might well have happened did not occur at relevant points in nations' histories.

Yet an excellent case can be made for looking at the United States in comparison to Britain in the early twentieth century.

During the two decades following Bismarckian Germany's pioneering institution of social-insurance programs in the 1880s, reformers and politically active leaders in all of the major industrial-capitalist nations of the West investigated and debated how similar or alternative measures might be devised to meet the needs of their own countries. In both the United States and Britain, innovators of similar class and occupational backgrounds participated in this transnational reform ferment (Hecló, 1974:310-11; Skocpol and Ikenberry,

1983:18–21; Lubove, 1968: passim; Mann, 1956:675; Hennock, 1981). In due course, similar legislative proposals for social insurance and public pensions emerged in both countries. The early twentieth-century United States, in short, was part of the same community of policy discourse as Britain, and the U.S. Progressive Era of about 1906–1920 roughly coincided with the British “Liberal reform” period of about 1906 to World War I. So it seems obviously appropriate to ask why these two nations did not respond in the same way.

The need to take a close look at the failure of major modern social-spending reforms in the United States during the Progressive Era becomes even more apparent once we take account of some important but usually ignored facts about social spending by the federal government in the late nineteenth century. Historians and social scientists have long assumed that the U.S. federal government had no major social-welfare role before the 1930s, but the remarkable expansion of “Civil War” pensions after the 1870s utterly belies this assumption.

Figure 2 helps to show what happened to the Civil War pension law as it evolved from a provision for compensation of combat injuries into a de facto system of old age and disability protection. Benefits under the original 1862 law were extended only to soldiers actually injured in combat or to the dependents of those disabled or killed. As one might expect, the numbers of beneficiaries and total expenditures were falling off in the late 1870s. Subsequently, however, legislative liberalizations occurred, the most important in 1879 and 1890 (McMurry, 1922; Glasson, 1918). The 1879 Arrears Act allowed soldiers who “discovered” Civil War-related disabilities to sign up and receive in one lump sum all of the pension payments they would have been eligible to re-

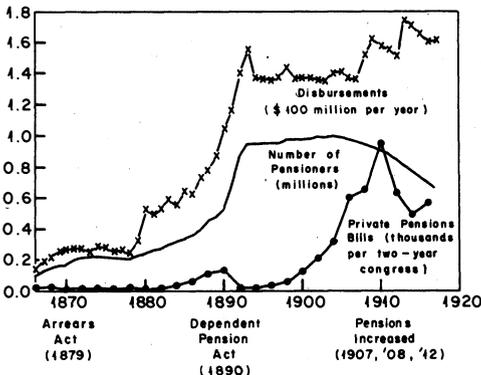


Figure 2. The Expansion of Civil War Pensions, 1866–1917

Source: Glasson, 1918:273,280.

ceive since the 1860s! Then the 1890 Dependent Pension Act severed altogether the link to combat-related injuries. Any veteran who had served 90 days in the Union military, whether or not he saw combat or was injured in the Civil War, could sign up for a pension if at some point in time he became disabled for manual labor. In practice, old age alone became a sufficient disability, and in 1906 the law was further amended to state explicitly that “the age of sixty-two years and over shall be considered a permanent specific disability within the meaning of the pension laws” (U.S. Bureau of Pensions, 1925:43).

Given that a considerable proportion of men then in their twenties and thirties served in Civil War regiments, and given that these men were in their sixties by 1890 to 1910, it is not surprising that at least one out of two elderly native-born white men in the North, as well as many old and young widows, were receiving what were in effect federal old age and survivors’ pensions during this period.¹ Between the 1880s and 1910s the total cost of these pensions sopped up between one-fifth and one-third of the federal budget (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960:718) and constituted the largest item of expenditure, except for interest on the national debt, for every year from 1885 to 1897 (McMurry, 1922:27). Meanwhile, social expenditures in Britain—expenditures of all kinds at all levels of government—amounted to only 21 percent in 1890 and 18 percent in 1900, and rose to only 33 percent in 1910, after the passage of old age pensions and at a time when Britain was not at war (Peacock and Wiseman, 1961:87). Of course, in 1890 and 1902 U.S. federal expenditures were only 2.4 percent of G.N.P., and total U.S. government expenditures were 6.8 percent of G.N.P. (Borcharding, 1977:22,29), while total British governmental expenditures went from 8.9 percent of G.N.P. in 1890 to 14.4 percent in 1900 and 12.7 percent in 1910. Still, in terms of the pro-

¹ I. M. Rubinow (1913:406–407) correctly estimated that in 1913 half the native white men over 65 in the entire United States were receiving pensions. However, his guess that two-thirds of the native white men of the North were pensioners was an overestimate. From our examination of data in *Historical Statistics of the United States* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975:15–18, 23–37, 1144–45) and in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1913* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1914:620–21), we estimate that in 1910 56% of the native-born white men of the North (i.e., outside the Confederate South) were pensioners. This was 30% of all men over 65 in the entire nation. We also estimate that about 36% of all men then between 15 and 44 years old in the Northeast and the Midwest served in the Union armies during the Civil War.

portional effort devoted to public pensions, the American federal government was hardly a "welfare laggard"; it was a precocious social-spending state.

The post-Civil War pension system was uneven in its coverage of the American population. Southerners were left out, unless they received help from state pensions for Confederate veterans (see Glasson, 1907). Also excluded were most blacks and all post-Civil War immigrants, which meant most unskilled workers. Middle-class native whites and the more privileged industrial workers were disproportionately helped (Rubinow 1913: 408-09). Yet precisely such people, not the very impoverished, were the ones targeted by early European social-insurance measures. For the idea was to keep "respectable" working people out of demeaning and repressive poorhouses (Flora and Alber, 1981:53; Thane cited in Hay, 1981:126-27).

During the Progressive reform period, some politicians, reformers, and social scientists believed that the United States might move easily from the liberalized post-Civil War pension system toward a modern welfare state. When Representative William B. Wilson, a former labor leader, introduced the first national pension plan into Congress in 1909, he made a creative symbolic connection to the Civil War system, proposing "to create an 'Old Age Home Guard of the United States Army,' in which all Americans sixty-five and over were invited to 'enlist' as privates, if their property was less than \$1500, or if their income was under \$20 a month. Their duty was to report once a year to the War Department on the state of patriotism in their neighborhoods" (Fischer, 1978:171). At least as far as protection for the aged was concerned, Wilson seemed to bear out the hopeful projection of University of Chicago sociologist Charles Henderson (1909:286) that "the logic of national conduct" on military pensions would lead "straight toward a universal system for disability due to sickness, accident, invalidism, old age, and death." Moreover, social-insurance advocate I. M. Rubinow (1913:409) used economic reasoning to argue that Civil War pensions would serve as "an entering wedge" for a modern welfare state: the steadily declining numbers of older Civil War survivors meant that "a large appropriation will . . . become available," permitting "the establishment of a national old-age pension scheme without even any material fiscal disturbance—something which no important European country has been able to accomplish" (see also Squier, 1912:330-31).

Why did Henderson and Rubinow—both able social analysts—turn out to be so incorrect in their assessments? Scholars today need

to take this question seriously. Thus the issue to be faced in this article is not simply why Britain and the United States responded differently in the early twentieth century to similar proposals for modern pension and social-insurance legislation. We must also ask why the United States allowed an extraordinary system of publicly funded old age and disability pensions for many working- and middle-class Americans to pass out of existence with the Civil War generation without immediately launching modern pensions and social-insurance programs in its place.

EXPLAINING THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN WELFARE STATES

We plan to make sense of the contrasting trajectories of social reform in Britain and the United States during the early twentieth century by first providing comparative historical evidence questioning the sufficiency of some major existing explanatory approaches, and then offering a new explanatory approach of our own. Before we plunge into detailed historical evidence, though, it makes sense to introduce the major alternative lines of argument that will be at issue.

Logic of Industrialism arguments about the development of modern welfare states emerged from cross-sectional, aggregate-quantitative studies of large numbers of nations (e.g., Jackman, 1975; Kerr et al., 1964; Wilensky, 1975: Ch. 2). Although specific arguments vary, such studies argue that thresholds or processes of industrialization, decline of labor-force participation in agriculture, and/or urbanization, demographic dependency ratios, and the sheer longevity of programs are far stronger variables for explaining cross-national variations in social spending and program coverage than regime types or political or ideological variations within regime types. Despite their ahistorical research designs, extrapolations about causes of welfare-state origins and the likely sequences of modern social programs have been put forward in some of these studies (cf. Cutright, 1965; Kerr et al., 1964:14-29; Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1965:230). Breakthroughs toward modern social insurance are expected to come as nations develop economically; and as development proceeds, subsequent policies are expected to build upon and "fill out" early beginnings.

Scholars have had to contend with the fact that both Britain and the United States launched their modern welfare states only after they were at comparatively high levels of industrialization and urbanization (cf. Flora and Alber, 1981:61; Collier and Messick, 1975:1309). Often, this difficulty has been

handled—especially for the U.S. case, where the gap between industrialization and the start of most modern pensions and social insurance was extreme—by stressing the unusual strength and historical persistence of *Liberal Values* in these nations (for Britain, see Thane, 1978:19; Ogus, 1982:165; for the U.S., see, among many examples, Birch, 1955:27; Collier and Messick, 1975:1313; Gronbjerg et al., 1978:4–5; Kaim-Caudle, 1973:184–85; Rimlinger, 1971:62–71). Indeed, so normal has it been for investigators to treat the United States as an “exceptional case” due to the strength of its liberal values that rigorous efforts have not been made to incorporate U.S. social politics before the 1930s into the same analytic frameworks as those used to account for the emergence of European welfare states, Britain included.

Working-Class Strength explanations of welfare-state development have emerged since the 1970s as the most prominent of various sorts of “political economy” arguments made in critical response to the Logic of Industrialism school. Scholars developing these arguments have concentrated on explaining variations among twelve to eighteen rich capitalist democracies. At this intermediate range of comparison, levels of economic development and demographic variables no longer account for so much of the explained variation. Taking off from a certain understanding of Swedish Social Democracy as an ideal type (Shalev, 1983a), Working-Class Strength theorists view the welfare state as shaped by class-based political struggles (e.g., Korpi, 1978; Korpi and Shalev, 1980; Castles, 1978, 1982; Stephens, 1979). According to the boldest variant of this line of reasoning, put forward by Stephens (1979:89), “the welfare state is a product of the growing strength of labour in civil society,” and the way to explain its historical origins as well as its subsequent growth is to examine variations in the emergence of trade unions and variations in the strategic ability of trade unions to create—or reorient—electoral political parties into tools for the acquisition and use of state power to effect welfare measures.

Despite their obvious disagreements, proponents of the Logic of Industrialism, Liberal Values, and Working-Class Strength perspectives all share basic assumptions. They all understand the development of the modern welfare state as an inherently progressive phenomenon, perhaps launched and completed sooner by some nations than by others, yet appearing and growing in recognizable stages in all national societies as a necessary and irreversible concomitant of fundamental social and economic processes such as urbanization,

industrialization, and demographic change—or else capitalist development and the emergence of the industrial working class. Moreover, at the root of these perspectives lies a way of thinking about government activities that has been shared by pluralists, functionalists, Marxists, and others: Government activities are understood to be expressions of—or responses to—social demands. Organized groups, including political parties, are conceptualized as vehicles for the expression of such demands, which are seen as socioeconomically or culturally rooted. After groups or parties weigh in at the political arena, some perhaps more effectively than others, governments generate policy outputs to meet the social demands. The overall process therefore looks something like this:

SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHANGES → CHANGING CLASS/GROUP FORMATION AND PERCEIVED NEW SOCIAL NEEDS

SOCIAL GROUPS & NEEDS → WHAT POLITICALLY ACTIVE GROUPS PROPOSE → WHAT GOVERNMENTS DO

A different view of the process by which social policies emerge is more historical, structural, and state centered. This frame of reference draws on ideas from Hecló (1974), Skocpol (forthcoming), and Shefter (1977).

From Hecló's (1974) perspective on “political learning” comes the insight that policy-making is an inherently historical process in which all actors consciously build upon, or react against, previous governmental efforts dealing with the same sorts of problems. This means that the goals of politically active groups and individuals can never simply be “read off” their current social positions. Instead, the investigator must take into account meaningful reactions to previous policies. Such reactions color the very interests and goals that social groups or politicians define for themselves in struggles over public policies.

Skocpol (forthcoming) argues that social scientists need to “bring the state back in[to]” their explanations of social change and policy developments. States are first and foremost sets of coercive, fiscal, judicial, and administrative organizations claiming sovereignty over territory and people. According to this conception, states independently affect politics in two major ways. First, *states may be sites of autonomous official action*, not reducible to the demands or preferences of any social group(s). Both appointed and elected officials have organizational and career interests of their own, and they devise and work for policies that will further those interests, or at least not harm them. Of course, elected or appointed officials are sensitive in many ways to social preferences and to the economic envi-

ronment in which the state must operate. Yet politicians and officials are also engaged in struggles among themselves, and they must pursue these struggles by using the capacities of the organizations within which they are located. If a given state structure provides no existing (or readily creatable) capacities for implementing a given line of action, government officials are not likely to pursue it, and politicians aspiring to office are not likely to propose it. Conversely, government officials or aspiring politicians are quite likely to take new policy initiatives—conceivably well ahead of social demands—if existing state capacities can be readily adapted or reworked to do things that they expect will bring advantages to them in their struggles with political competitors.

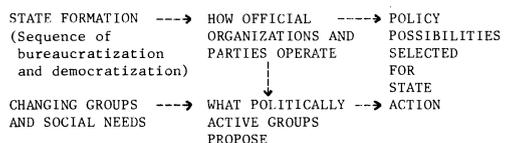
Secondly, states matter not only because officials and politicians can be independent actors but also because *the organizational structures of states indirectly influence the meanings and methods of politics for all groups in society*. This happens in various ways, only some of which can be highlighted here. One way can be understood as an extension of Heclo's (1974) argument about "political learning": Not only do groups react to existing public policies when they formulate their political demands, they also react to existing state structures. Definitions of what is feasible or desirable in politics depend in part on the capacities and the qualities that various groups attribute to state organizations and to the officials and politicians who operate them. Especially in periods when the very structure of the state is at issue and in transformation, particular policies may be advocated or opposed for reasons other than their perceived relevance to socioeconomic needs or cultural ideals. The appeal of particular policies may also depend on how well groups think that they could be officially implemented or how new policies might affect the fortunes of particular kinds of politicians and political organizations.

Historically changing state structures also affect the modes of operation of the very political organizations through which policies can be collectively formulated and socially supported. Martin Shefter's (1977) work on political parties is especially relevant here. Shefter investigates why it is that some political parties—and, indeed, *systems* of competing political parties—operate by offering followers "patronage" jobs and other kinds of divisible payoffs out of public resources, while other parties and party systems offer ideological appeals and collectively oriented programs to groups, classes, or "the nation" as a whole. The traditional answers to this question refer to the inherent cultural proclivities and socioeco-

nomnic preferences of given nationalities or social classes: e.g., Irish people and peasants or first-generation ex-peasants want patronage, so that is what their governments and parties offer. But Shefter provides evidence against such answers and instead highlights the effects historical sequences of state bureaucratization and electoral democratization have on parties' modes of operation.

In some European absolute monarchies state bureaucratization preceded the emergence of electoral democracy (and even the emergence of parliamentary parties in some instances). When electoral parties finally emerged in such countries they could not get access to the "spoils of office," and therefore had to make programmatic appeals based on ideological world views and (if their prospects of forming governments with some authority were good) promises about how state power might be used for policies appealing to organized groups in their targeted constituencies. But, in countries where electoral politics preceded state bureaucratization—as it did in both Britain and the United States—parties could use government jobs and policies as patronage. Later, there might be struggles over how to overcome "political corruption" in order to create a civil service free of patronage. If bureaucratic reform succeeded before full democratization—as happened in Britain—political parties might then change their operating styles toward more programmatic appeals. However—as happened in the United States—if patronage was established in (or survived into) a fully democratic polity, it was, according to Shefter, extraordinarily difficult to uproot thereafter. Mass electorates and the party politicians appealing to them had continuing stakes in using government as a source of patronage, and reformers had to wage uphill, piecemeal battles to overcome democratized "political corruption" in government and party politics.

Ideas from Heclo, Skocpol, and Shefter alike will figure in due course in the historically grounded and politically macroscopic explanation that we will offer for British and American social policymaking in the early twentieth century. At this point, let us simply summarize the theoretical frame of reference we will use, one which amalgamates emphases from the traditional frame of reference outlined above with the more state-centered ideas we have just discussed.



Overall, we maintain that the politics of social-welfare provision are just as much grounded in processes of statebuilding and the organization and reorganization of political life as in those socioeconomic processes—industrialization, urbanization, demographic change, and the formation of classes—that have traditionally been seen as basic to the development of the modern welfare state. Before we develop this argument for Britain and the United States, however, we shall present the comparative historical evidence for the insufficiency of explanations derived from the Logic of Industrialism, Liberal Values, and Working-Class Strength perspectives. In the process, we highlight specific patterns for Britain and the United States that have to be explained when we apply our own theoretical frame of reference to these cases.

Some brief words should be added about the sources of evidence for the comparative historical arguments of the following sections. Many points are documented with secondary evidence—that is, references to specific sections of books and articles by historians of Britain and the United States. Our contribution in these instances is the careful juxtaposition of findings that the historians themselves have usually presented without awareness of cross-national patterns. This can often make a major difference in the interpretation of the facts. In addition, we have drawn evidence from such primary sources as government statistics, records and reports, periodical publications, and the writings and speeches of contemporary public figures. We try to convey some of the texture of historical events, but place more emphasis on presenting systematic juxtapositions of British and U.S. patterns in order to test or elaborate causal arguments (see Skocpol and Somers, 1980:181–87 for a discussion of the methodological approach used here).

CAN SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPLAIN THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN SOCIAL POLICIES IN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES?

Logic of Industrialism arguments about the *relative timing* of the emergence of modern welfare programs in various nations have not fared well in recent research (cf. Collier and Messick, 1975; Flora and Alber, 1981). Nevertheless, Britain did become an industrial and urban nation much sooner than the United States, and one might suppose that factor straightforwardly accounts for the earlier emergence of a modern welfare state in Britain. In our study we have devised ways to control for the overall socioeconomic differences be-

tween the two nations in the early twentieth century.

First, we not only examine federal policy-making in the United States, but also probe possibilities for parallel legislative developments across states, especially the more industrial states. This approach addresses an objection often made to comparing the pre-1930s United States to other nations. The United States is a federal not a unitary polity, and before the 1930s most social policies were enacted at local and state levels, not at the level of the federal government. During the Progressive Era, cities and states were the major sites of policy innovation, and such "national" changes as occurred—including the laws establishing workers' compensation and mothers' pensions—did so in the form of waves of similar legislation across many states (Graebner, 1977).

Secondly, in addition to examining the U.S. case at the federal and "multiple-state" levels, we also draw on detailed evidence about the particular state of Massachusetts. This is the best single state to investigate for a comparative study of social politics in Britain and the United States before 1920, since it enables us to control for important social and economic characteristics that might be invoked in a pure Logic of Industrialism argument. As the first state in the United States to industrialize and urbanize in forms and tempos close to Britain throughout the nineteenth century, Massachusetts, more than the United States as a whole during the period of interest, very closely resembled Britain on a series of important socioeconomic and demographic measures. Table 1 summarizes relevant data on workforces in agriculture and industry, urbanization, and proportions of the population over 65 years of age for Britain, Massachusetts, and the entire United States.

Massachusetts is ideal for our purposes for other reasons as well. It is well known that this state's upper social classes and professionals closely resembled—and constantly communicated with—their counterparts in Britain (Mann, 1954: *passim*). Moreover, Massachusetts was the pioneer in economic regulation, labor statistics, and social legislation in the nineteenth century, often serving as the "gateway" for British-style reforms to pass into the United States (Abrams, 1964:1–13; Lieby, 1960; Linford, 1949:8; Whittelsey, 1901). From the mid-nineteenth century onward, there were strikingly close parallels in the *regulatory* labor legislation actually passed in Britain and Massachusetts (see Gronbjerg et al., 1978:178–93; and compare Fraser, 1973:xiv–xvii to Brandeis, 1935). As we shall document below, only when *social-spending* measures came onto the

Table 1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Britain, Massachusetts, and the United States, 1870s-1920s

<i>Percent of Population Age 65 and Over</i>				
England and Wales		Massachusetts		United States
1881	4.6%	1880	5.0%	3.4%
1901	4.7%	1900	5.3%	4.3%
1921	6.0%	1920	5.4%	4.7%

<i>Percent of Population in Towns of 2,500 and Above</i>				
1871	65%	1870	66.7%	25.7%
1901	78%	1900	86.0%	39.7%
1911	79%	1910	89.0%	45.7%

Sources: U.S., Mass.: Linford, 1949:6-7.
 England and Wales: Crouzet, 1982:90;
 Mitchell and Deane, 1962:12.

<i>Percent of Labor Force in Agriculture</i>				
United Kingdom		Massachusetts		United States
1890-99	15%	1895	7.2%	1890-99 42%
1910-19	12%	1915	4.8%	1910-19 31%

<i>Percent of Labor Force in Manufacturing, Mining, and Construction</i>				
1890-99	54%	1895	50.5%	1890-99 28%
1910-19	43%	1915	48.4%	1910-19 31%

Sources: U.S., U.K.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1966:103.
 Mass.: Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, 1900:275; 1918:490.

public agenda after the turn of the century did the two polities diverge, despite their striking socioeconomic similarities.

CAN LIBERALISM EXPLAIN AMERICAN IN CONTRAST TO BRITISH SOCIAL POLITICS?

One way to explain why Britain moved decisively toward modern pensions and social insurance before World War I, while the United States took only minor steps, is to maintain that although both countries were classically liberal in the nineteenth century, liberal practices and/or ideals actually became more strongly entrenched—and therefore remained more persistent—in the United States. If such an explanation is to be something more than a tautology, it has to be validated through precise definitions and comparative testing showing that "liberalism," however defined, really was stronger and really did obstruct breakthroughs to new forms of public assistance and social insurance in the United States as contrasted to Britain. In our survey of various authors who invoke the "strength of lib-

eralism" to explain turn-of-the-century (non)developments in the United States, we have found that some refer to economic *laissez faire* and others place more stress on attitudes and cultural ideals of individualism and voluntary group action free from state controls. Yet neither of these approaches properly distinguishes the United States from Britain.

Liberalism as Economic Laissez Faire

Some scholars argue that modern social-spending programs were difficult to establish in the early twentieth-century United States because the nation was committed in the nineteenth century to "self-adjusting," *laissez-faire* market capitalism. Supposedly, this ruled out positive national-state interventions for economic purposes, thereby discouraging social-welfare interventions as well (see for example: Gronbjerg et al., 1978:5-6; Starr, 1982:240). In fact, however, under its regime of "free trade" Britain came closer to this ideal type, and when British Liberal politicians proposed pensions and social insurance after 1906, they did so partly in order to *maintain* free trade by heading off Conservative proposals for new protective tariffs on British industries (Emy, 1972:116). In contrast to the situation in Britain, U.S. public policies in the nineteenth century were quite interventionist—for distributive purposes (McCormick, 1979). Tariffs, of course, were the prime example of economic interventionism, but there were also major governmental distributions of public lands, economic charters, and regulatory privileges. And in the area of social intervention, as we have seen, Civil War pensions were distributed ever more widely as the nineteenth century moved toward its end. There simply never was a "night watchman state" in U.S. capitalism or in American society.

Liberalism as Individualism and Voluntarism

Most arguments about the United States as a "welfare laggard" discuss American liberalism as an unanalyzed amalgam of attitudes, cultural ideals, and ideological or intellectual developments. Value commitments to individualism and voluntarism stand out in these presentations. Americans, it is said, emphasize the freedom and responsibility of individuals so much that virtually any kind of collective provision for individuals' needs becomes suspect as "socialism" or "tyranny." As Gaston Rimlinger (1971:62) puts it: "In the United States the commitment to individualism—to individual achievement and self-help—was much stronger than . . . in England. . . . The survival

of the liberal tradition, therefore, was . . . stronger and the resistance to social protection more tenacious." And Roy Lubove's (1968) well-known history of the U.S. social-insurance movement before 1935 posits that the long-delayed U.S. acceptance of the modern welfare state can be attributed to the persistent faith of Americans not only in rugged individualism but also in *voluntary associations* rather than governments as instruments for the pursuit of collective purposes.

To validate such lines of reasoning, one would need to demonstrate that popular or elite attitudes were different between Britain and the United States and/or that the two countries experienced markedly different cultural and intellectual trends around the turn of the century, making possible collectivist departures from Victorian liberalism in the one case, and leaving nineteenth-century liberal values virtually unchanged in the other. By drawing systematically upon the available secondary literatures for Britain and the United States, we can tentatively conclude that existing arguments about the unusual strength of U.S. liberalism are open to serious question.

In the absence of attitude surveys, the best evidence we have about popular attitudes toward state social spending refers to the orientations of voluntary social-benefit associations in Britain and the United States. It was in England that the most spectacular instance of voluntarist resistance to the coming of the modern welfare state occurred. Resistance from the British friendly societies, which enrolled over half the adult male population by the end of the nineteenth century, delayed the passage of public old age pensions for over two decades (Treble, 1970; Gilbert, 1966:165-221). Veritable bastions of "the Victorian ethic of providence and self-help" (Gilbert, 1966:165), the friendly societies collected contributions from respectable British workmen (and lower-middle-class people) and offered sick pay, medical care, and benefits to cover funeral expenses among their members. Even though their finances were being terribly strained, as by the late nineteenth century workers unexpectedly lived longer, the societies fiercely opposed contributory, state-run old age pensions because these would compete for the workers' savings and subject the affairs of the societies to increased government interference. Until just a few years before the 1908 pension legislation, when *some* societies retreated into cautious acquiescence, the friendly societies also refused to accept—let alone champion—noncontributory, public old age pensions. These would have relieved them of the unmanageable burden of caring for

older members unable to work, but as Bentley Gilbert (1966:180) puts it, the societies "preferred insolvency to immorality."

In the United States various voluntary benefit societies may have enrolled up to one-third of the voting population (i.e., adult males minus most southern blacks) (Stevens, [1907] 1966:116), yet they did not vociferously oppose public social provision, and in some cases supported it. During the last third of the nineteenth century the Grand Army of the Republic—which seems to have functioned not only as a lobbying group but in many localities as a fraternal association and voluntary benefit society as well—championed the extension of Civil War pensions (Dearing, 1952). Later, during the 1910s and 1920s, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, a mainstream voluntary benefit association (with a white, predominantly native-born middle- and working-class membership of about 500,000 in 1924) waged campaigns in many states not only for workers' compensation and mothers' pensions but also for public old age pensions as an alternative to the almshouse for the elderly poor (on the Eagles, see Preuss, [1924] 1966:132-34; Schmidt, 1980; on the old age pension campaign, see Lubove, 1968:137-38; Hering, 1923, 1930:3-5; and *The Eagle Magazine* from 1921-29, where reports to the membership appeared almost monthly).

The clearest case in the United States of voluntary-group resistance to public social spending came in the fierce battle that most U.S. charity societies put up against the passage of state-level mothers' pension laws during the Progressive Era (Leff, 1973). Despite the very broad political support for these laws, the charity societies argued on old-fashioned liberal grounds that the task of providing for—and supervising—worthy widows and their children ought to be left in the hands of private voluntary agencies run by middle- and upper-class people like themselves. This U.S. reform, however, passed in spite of such principled resistance.

The evidence of British history suggests that Victorian ideals of individualism and voluntarism could remain strong among the people at large (as well as conservative elites) without preventing the coming of a modern welfare state. This was true because the cultural and ideological trends that mattered most were those affecting well-educated minorities of upper- and middle-class people. In this respect, British and American trends were remarkably parallel from the 1870s onward—obviously in part because there was constant communication back and forth (Mann, 1956; Morgan, 1976; Keller, 1980:463-64).

Initially, Charity Organization move-

ments—launched in Britain in 1869 and imitated in American cities from 1877 on—tried to put individualist ideals about the poor, charity, and relief on a “scientific” basis. These movements advocated the firm separation of the “deserving” needy, who should be helped by the “friendly visitors” of voluntary associations, from the “undeserving” poor, who should be left to the discipline of the marketplace to force them to take responsibility for themselves (Mowat, 1961; Bremner, 1956a). In time, however, investigations by charity reformers led some of them—as well as their critics—toward the discovery of environmental and economic causes for mass poverty in the urban centers of Britain and America (Bremner, 1956b:55–56; Mowat, 1961: Chs. 6–7). From the 1880s, celebrated pieces of muckraking and early empirical social surveys undermined the earlier elite consensus that poor individuals were personally responsible for their troubles (Bremner, 1956b:55–56; Fraser, 1973:123–27; and Mowat, 1961: Chs. 6–7).

The awakening of social awareness and social conscience was further spurred in both countries through “settlement house” movements (Davis, 1967; Gilbert, 1966:42–45). University or college-educated young people moved into urban neighborhoods to live with, bring cultural improvements to, and learn about the working classes and the poor. Toynbee Hall was established in the East End of London in 1884, and by 1911 there were 46 settlement houses in Britain (Davis, 1967:8). Meanwhile, some Americans traveled to English settlement houses and carried models home; others arrived at similar ideas without such direct contact. U.S. settlements sprang up in New York, Boston, Chicago, and many other cities, especially in the Northeast and Midwest. “In 1891 there were six . . . ; in 1897 there were seventy-four. . . . and by 1910 there were more than four hundred” American settlement houses (Davis, 1967:12).

Varieties of “socialist” notions about how the collective needs of industrial-capitalist Britain and America should be met were spreading in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and some settlement-house people as well as other reformers became socialists or maintained close working contacts with fellow reformers who were socialists. The really important story, however, was not the spread of socialist doctrines in either Britain or the United States.² It was,

instead, the reworking of liberal ideals away from pure self-help and distrust of state intervention toward “new” or “progressive” liberal conceptions (Clarke, 1974; Emy, 1972; Freedon, 1978; Wiebe, 1967: Ch. 6; Bremner, 1956b: Ch. 8; Mowat, 1969; Keller, 1980:462–63; Fine, 1956). Industrial society, more and more educated Britons and Americans were recognizing, makes people interdependent, and in such a society government becomes an indispensable support for individual dignity, providing security and regulating competition to undergird responsible personal initiatives. Thus cultural and intellectual resources were present in both England and the United States to justify new public-welfare efforts in terms of redefined liberal ideals.

Nor was this just a theoretical potential. Precisely such justifications actually were invoked by the progressive liberals in Britain who sponsored the old age pensions and social insurances of 1908 to 1911 (Freedon, 1978: Ch. 6). Similar arguments were used by the social progressives in the United States, ranging from settlement workers and environmentally minded social or charity workers, to the reformist social scientists and other professionals who worked through the American Association for Labor Legislation and then the Progressive Party (see Addams, [1902] 1964; Seager, 1910; Henderson, 1909; Rubinow, 1913; *American Labor Legislation Review*, 1911–20: passim; and the Progressive Party platform of 1912 in Porter and Johnson, 1970:175–82, the social-policy planks of which were written by reformist liberals and social workers).

We are certainly not arguing here that elites and new middle-class people in Britain and the United States held, overall, exactly the same attitudes toward state action for social-welfare purposes. As we will soon show, American reformers as well as elites and middle classes in general were more fearful about “political corruption” and concomitantly less willing to accept *social-spending* measures. The point is simply that new liberal understandings of the uses of state action to support the dignity of individual citizens were sufficiently well developed in both nations to allow new public welfare departures to be discussed and legitimated in liberal terms.

dential vote in 1912 (Weinstein, 1974:314–15), while in Britain Labour, which had socialist along with nonsocialist components, gained 5.9% of the parliamentary vote in 1906 and 7.6% in 1910 (Butler and Freeman, 1969:141). Some interpreters cite “the socialist threat” as an impetus to liberal reform in Britain or America. We doubt this interpretation, but in any event the socialist presence was comparable in the two nations before World War I.

² Socialists were a modest presence in both British and U.S. politics in the pre-World War I years. The American Socialist Party peaked at 6% of the presi-

CAN "WORKING-CLASS STRENGTH" EXPLAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES?

If turn-of-the-century Britain and the United States were both sufficiently industrial and urban that new social protections for citizens were potentially needed, and if both nations experienced cultural and intellectual reworkings that made it possible to legitimate such changes, nevertheless it is possible that politically expressed working-class demands for pensions and social insurance were significantly different between the two nations. Was the British industrial working class "stronger"—did it more effectively demand public social benefits than the U.S. industrial working class?

Trade Unions and Social-Benefit Programs

British friendly societies delayed the advent of a modern welfare state in the name of Victorian self-reliance and voluntarism, and throughout the period before World War I the membership of this type of "working-class organization" exceeded British trade-union membership by threefold. Nevertheless, analyses of British social politics in the early twentieth century highlight the demands of rapidly growing unions for social protections, especially old age pensions, outside the cruel restrictions of the New Poor Law (Gilbert, 1966:196,211; Fraser, 1973:129; Stephens, 1979:145). In 1899, trade unions helped to launch a campaign through the National Committee of Organized Labour on Old Age Pensions, calling for noncontributory public pensions to cover all British citizens over 65 years of age. Later that same year the Trade Union Congress endorsed universal pensions for all citizens at age sixty. By 1908, the British government partially satisfied this extraparliamentary campaign by legislating pensions.

Arguably, therefore, union pressures were pivotal in triggering the entire set of major social-spending breakthroughs in Britain from 1908 through 1911. In contrast, many students of social politics during the Progressive Era in the United States portray unions, led by the craft-dominated American Federation of Labor, as weak, defensive, and strongly opposed to all kinds of public social provision (Rimlinger, 1971:80–84; Nelson, 1969: Ch. 4; Horowitz, 1978: Chs. 1–2; Stephens, 1979:149–56). Our research shows, however, that matters are much more complex than the conventional portraits of British versus American unions suggest.

During the relevant periods of the early twentieth century, British and American

unions of not such different organizational strength took similar if not identical stands toward possibilities for new public benefits. Figure 3 shows trends in "union density"—proportions of the total labor force unionized—for Britain, the United States, and Massachusetts. The data show that, while British unionization exceeded U.S. unionization throughout our time period, the percentages of the labor force unionized were comparable—from nine to sixteen percent—during the respective periods of greatest reform ferment, between 1900 and 1910 in Britain and between 1906 and 1920 in the United States. The imperfect data we have been able to develop also show that unionization in Massachusetts more closely paralleled the British trends—and indeed quite a few of the most industrialized U.S. states must have been much more similar to Britain than was the United States as a whole.

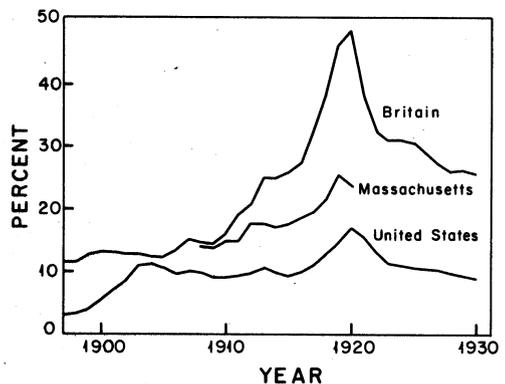


Figure 3. Trade Union Membership as a Percentage of the Labor Force in Britain, the United States and Massachusetts

Note: For the United States and Britain, trade union membership is calculated as the percentage of the labor force (including unemployed, but excluding proprietors, self-employed, unpaid family workers and armed forces) who are members of trade unions. For Massachusetts, it is calculated as the percentage of employees who were members of trade unions. To determine the number of employees in Massachusetts, it was necessary to use Massachusetts and U.S. Census data on the "gainfully employed" (anyone who worked, including proprietors and self-employed), along with the estimate of Keyssar (forthcoming) that 79% of men and 100% of women in the Massachusetts workforce were employees. Workforce data for the years between the Censuses of 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1920 are linear extrapolations.

Sources: Britain and the United States: Bain and Price, 1980:39,88. Massachusetts: Keyssar, forthcoming: Ch. 3, Appendix B; Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, 1918:490; 1919 (pt.4):14; Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries, 1921 (pt.3):16; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1923:271.

Not only was unionized American labor more weighty in the more industrialized states, it was also the case that labor unions and the Federation of Labor exercised most of their political influence at local and state levels (Taft, 1964:233; Rogin, 1962:534-35; Fink, 1973:161-82). Especially at those levels, stances toward unemployment and health insurance were much more positive than conventional generalizations about the national A. F. of L. suggest. During the Progressive Era, labor organizations—including the state federations of labor in such leading industrial states as Massachusetts, New York, California, Ohio, New Jersey, Missouri, and Pennsylvania—joined reformers to support either proposals for health insurance or unemployment insurance, or both (cf. Nelson, 1969:18, 70-71; Tishler, 1971:173; Numbers, 1978:79; Starr, 1982:250; *The Survey*, 1918:708-709).

Even more to the point, *British developments reveal that it was not necessary for unions (or any working-class groups) to initiate or demand health and unemployment insurance in order for them to come about.* In the words of C. L. Mowat (1969:90-91), these contributory social insurances—which taxed workers as well as providing benefits to them—“owed their introduction to the fruitful collaboration of minister and civil servant.” As the detailed historical studies of both Gilbert (1966: Chs. 5-7) and Hecló (1974:78-90) spell out, the key policy initiators operated from within the Liberal government and the British state, and they persuaded many reluctant—or uninterested—labor unions to accept their proposals through delicate negotiations about specific methods of implementing insurance taxes and payments.

Given that U.S. state and local labor groups were at least as willing to accept social-insurance programs as their British counterparts, it seems probable that comparable co-optive efforts directed at them by state-government leaders would have succeeded. Yet in the United States, in contrast to Britain, governmental leaders did not make efforts to devise social-insurance programs and coopt organized working-class support for them, and it was surely this lack, rather than the lack of demands or acquiescence from the unions, that pinpoints a crucial mechanism by which the social insurances succeeded in Britain and failed in America.

As we move from contributory social insurances to noncontributory old age pensions, it becomes still easier to pinpoint that the important contrast between Britain and the U.S. did not lay with the unions. Pensions were advanced by a cross-class alliance in Britain

which had no U.S. counterpart. In Britain, the extraparliamentary National Committee that agitated for universal old age pensions from 1899 on was initiated by upper- and middle-class reformers and flourished through the cooperation of reformers and some trade-union leaders (Hecló, 1974:165-66). Moreover, the Liberal pension program passed in 1908 did not simply concede to union-backed demands (Gilbert, 1966:215-26). In the United States, meanwhile, the missing ingredient was not the willingness of A. F. of L. unions to support proposals for noncontributory public old age pensions. That willingness came a little later than in Britain, but the Federation endorsed a need-based national pension scheme in 1909, and reiterated its support for national pension plans in 1911, 1912, and 1913 (American Federation of Labor, 1919:303-304). Indeed, A. F. of L. President Samuel Gompers was more willing to go along with old age pensions than with unemployment and health insurance (Reed, 1930:117), and state-level A. F. of L. leaders often supported both pensions and social insurance.

During the Progressive Era, it was not U.S. trade unions but rather many social reformers—and, in general, the upper and professional strata from which they came and to which they oriented their arguments—who were reluctant to push for or accept public old age pensions. Events at the elite level in the United States make a telling contrast to Britain. In Britain, from the 1880s onward, social investigators and national commissions acknowledged the problems of the elderly poor and grappled with various solutions, leading increasingly toward broad acceptance within the British establishment of the inevitability, if not the desirability, of some sort of public support outside the Poor Law (Gilbert, 1966: Ch. 4). In America, however, exactly the opposite happened.

The first serious official investigation of old age poverty occurred in Massachusetts and dealt a virtual death blow to what had previously been a promising movement toward old age pensions in that state and beyond (Fischer, 1978:161; Linford, 1949: Ch. 1). An investigatory commission staffed predominantly with professionals and upper-class Bostonians gathered data on the elderly poor in Massachusetts, considered various pension policies and alternatives to them, and reported back that public pensions were neither needed nor morally desirable (*Report of the Commission on Old Age Pensions*, 1910). A labor representative, Arthur M. Huddell, dissented from commission arguments about the preferability of contributory as opposed to noncontributory pensions and cited Civil War pensions as a

favorable precedent. He did not call for state-level old age pensions, arguing instead in favor of Representative William B. Wilson's 1909 bill proposing national-level legislation for an "Old Age Home Guard."

In 1916 yet another Massachusetts commissioner, appointed by a progressive Republican governor, reconsidered noncontributory old age pensions. This happened only after the state Labor Federation supported pensions and voters in eight towns and urban districts endorsed them in referenda by almost a four-to-one margin (*Report of the Special Commission on Social Insurance*, 1917:57)! Even so, the commission members did not unite in support of old age pensions (or unemployment or health insurance), and it was not until 1930 that Massachusetts established old age pensions for the needy (Linford, 1949:79).

Across the nation, old age pensions were downplayed throughout the Progressive Era even by the reform-minded elites who worked through the American Association for Labor Legislation (AALL). In 1913–14—just as the commitment of the American Federation of Labor to old age pensions was solidifying—the AALL moved toward promoting not old age pensions but health insurance as the "next great step" after workmen's compensation in the "inevitable" progress toward a full-scale modern welfare state in America (*American Labor Legislation Review*, 1914:578–79). From 1915 onwards, the AALL also advocated a model bill for unemployment insurance as part of an overall plan for dealing with the problems of the unemployed (*American Labor Legislation Review*, 1915:593–95). Not until the 1920s, when the upsurge of Progressive social reform was over and the Association was willing to associate itself with virtually any positive effort that remained, did the AALL finally begin to push for public old age pensions (Hering, 1923; MacKenzie, 1920).

In sum, the comparative picture of Britain and the United States looks like this: Encouraged by elite reformers and building on a climate of broad elite and governmental acknowledgments of a problem requiring new public action, British union leaders were able to campaign effectively for noncontributory old age pensions. British unions also went along with contributory unemployment and health-insurance measures devised and pushed forward by intragovernmental elites, politicians and civil servants. In the United States, many union leaders, especially at state levels—and also at the national level in the case of old age pensions—supported social-benefits programs, but for unemployment and health insurance, intragovernmental leadership was missing. American elites, including most

of the prominent reformers, did not coalesce with unions to campaign for old age pensions; nor did they pave the way for them through official investigations.

The Working Class in Electoral Politics

Perhaps looking only at trade unions is too narrow a way to investigate "working-class strength." Working-class pressures for public social protections may have been registered not simply, or primarily, through trade unions, but more broadly through the processes of democratic electoral politics.

As both the British and the U.S. cases reveal, modern social programs do not come as automatic by-products of electoral democratization. The American electorate was fully democratized for white males by 1840, and the key phases of British working-class enfranchisement occurred well before 1908–11, when better-off workers got the vote through the reforms of 1867 and 1884, and later, when everyone except women under 30 received the franchise in 1918 (Clarke, 1972; Blewett, 1965). Yet far from stressing the sheer fact of working-class enfranchisement, many proponents of the Working-Class Strength perspective argue that modern welfare programs arise from the *combined* efforts of trade unions and a political party based in the industrial working class and programmatically oriented to furthering its interests. From this perspective, the slow arrival of a modern welfare state in the United States is basically attributed to the absence of a working-class-based socialist or labor party, while the British Labour Party, along with some of the trade unions, is given the basic credit for developing the British welfare state (cf. Stephens, 1979:140–56; Quadagno, 1982: Ch. 7).

Obviously, such an argument cannot tell us how or why the U.S. democratic polity of the late nineteenth century extended social benefits to many working-class and middle-class Americans under the reworked rubric of the Civil War pension system. Yet it is also misleading about the origins of the British welfare state. By the end of World War I, the Labour Party overtook the Liberals and became thereafter the chief defender and extender of public social benefits in Britain (Gilbert, 1970; Marwick, 1967). But the original legislative breakthroughs of 1908–1911 were *not* the direct achievement of the fledgling Labour Representation Committee (L.R.C.) founded in 1900 to elect worker representatives to Parliament. It was a Liberal government, newly invigorated in 1908 by a strong progressive faction under Herbert Asquith, that proposed and put through pensions and social insurance.

At the juncture in question, the still tiny L.R.C., though increasingly successful in elections and by-elections, remained dependent for its electoral and parliamentary prospects on an alliance with the much stronger, established Liberal Party (Cole, 1941:202; Bealey, 1956). Meanwhile, the progressives within the Liberal Party were looking for ways to appeal to working-class voters. British voter turnout was increasing in the early twentieth century, and the Liberals were pressed by competition from the Conservatives (Butler and Freeman, 1969:141). Between the 1906 and 1910 elections, the Liberals lost significant ground to the Conservatives. For progressively minded Liberals, social benefits and pro-trade-union measures, besides being morally desirable according to new liberal values, were a way to keep working-class voters loyal to their party, with its free-trade priorities, rather than allowing Conservatives to woo them with a combination of tariffs and social spending (Freedon, 1978:142-43).

In contrast to the causal emphasis placed by Working-Class Strength proponents on pressures from labor organizations, we view pensions and social insurance as grounded in cross-class alliances and as tools of politically mediated social control within industrial capitalism. Thus we have highlighted the greater willingness of British elites to cooperate with, or co-opt, industrial labor in furthering social insurance and (especially) noncontributory old age pensions.³ To explain why British and American elites took different stances, the analysis of labor's strength or demands is not sufficient. We must understand the overall structures of the British and U.S. states, and analyze the sequences of democratization and bureaucratization that

³ Why are we talking about "elites" rather than "capitalist classes" or "business"? Some interpreters of welfare developments in the early twentieth century have emphasized partial business support for public initiatives in Britain (Hay, 1977, 1981) in contrast to the preference of even the most "progressive" American capitalists for corporate rather than public action in the social welfare area (Berkowitz and McQuaid, 1980: Chs. 1,2). We do not deny those realities, but propose to explain them in political rather than economically determinist ways. Capitalists or business leaders have no fixed attitudes toward public welfare measures, as comparisons across times, places, industries, and enterprises will readily attest. Business leaders were part of broader elite networks that included professional experts, reform advocates, and middle-class political activists in both Britain and America, and their attitudes toward the possibility or desirability of state, as opposed to private, solutions to welfare problems were shaped by the same forces that determined balances of preference among all such groups.

transformed the two national polities from the nineteenth century into the early twentieth. Then it will become apparent why the British Liberal Party and government was able and willing to launch modern pensions and social insurance in 1908-11, while America's extraordinary post-Civil War pension system could not serve as an "entering wedge" (Rubinow, 1913:409) for a similar modern welfare state.

STATE STRUCTURES AND SOCIAL POLITICS IN TWO INDUSTRIALIZING LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

When the international ferment over modern social insurance and pensions spread to Britain and the United States around the turn of the century, it caught these nations and their social and political elites at very different conjunctures of political transformation. Essentially, these were two liberal polities that had moved from patronage-dominated politics toward public bureaucratization at different phases of industrialization and democratization. Britain already had a civil service, programmatically competing political parties, and legacies of centralized welfare administration to react against and build upon. Modern social-spending programs complemented the organizational dynamics of government and parties in early twentieth-century Britain. The United States, however, lacked an established civil bureaucracy and was embroiled in the efforts of Progressive reformers to create regulatory agencies and policies free from the "political corruption" of nineteenth-century patronage democracy. At this juncture in American history, modern social-spending programs were neither governmentally feasible nor politically acceptable.

From Oligarchic Patronage to a Modern Welfare State in Britain

Britain's polity in the nineteenth century started out as a liberal oligarchy ruled by and for landlords (cf. Namier, 1961; Thomson, 1950:21; Webb, 1970:53-57). During the course of the century this polity underwent several intertwined transformations which laid the basis for the Liberal welfare breakthroughs of 1908-1911: the expansion of national administrative activities, especially in the realm of social-welfare policy; the reform of the civil service; the step-by-step democratization of the parliamentary electorate; and transformations in the modes of organization and electoral operation of the major political parties.

For quite some time British historians have recognized the "Victorian origins of the welfare state," in an administrative sense (Roberts, 1960). Laissez faire may have been the charter myth of nineteenth-century British government, but despite the reality of free-market and free-trade economic policies, in the realm of domestic social-welfare policy the implementation of the New Poor Law called for administrative supervision and social planning on a national scale. The 1834 New Poor Law was radical not only in its substantive precepts embodying the ideals of market capitalism, but also because it established a central authority, the Poor Law Commission, to supervise local poor-relief institutions, and substituted elected boards of guardians governing groups of parishes for the local magistrates who had formerly monopolized supervision of the poor (Roberts, 1960:43-45; Hecllo, 1974:55-58). The very structure of welfare administration in the unitary British polity meant that tensions generated by the workings of the local workhouses, asylums, and sick wards, and by the implementation of other policies to deal with the poor, inevitably and recurrently generated pressures for *national* debates, investigations, and policy changes.

Meanwhile, important changes also occurred in the workings of the British civil service. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, oligarchic patronage predominated and "the public services were the outdoor relief department of the aristocracy" (Smellie, 1950:69). Industrialization and urbanization—along with the geopolitical exigencies of maintaining British imperial domains and coping with growing international economic competition—generated pressures for the British government to become more efficient and technically competent than patronage would allow (Smellie, 1950:69-70). Governmental change did not come automatically; reform advocates were initially frustrated by those with a vested interest in the existing system (Finer, 1937:45-49; Cohen, 1941: Ch. 7). Yet, finally, proposals for civil-service reform succeeded politically in the 1870s. Prior changes in universities made them plausible as agencies for training and credentialing civil servants (Cohen, 1941:81-83). Once it became clear that working-class political influence might grow as the electorate expanded, the landed and business groups and the existing governing elites of Britain came together in order to maintain the elite civil service on a new basis (Shefter, 1977:434-37; Greaves, 1947:21-32).

Civil-service reform in Britain did *not* ensure that bureaucrats would subsequently become policy innovators. At both the Local Govern-

ment Board and the Home Office, two of the departments most concerned with questions of domestic social policy, there developed after 1870 a "general inertia and disinvolvement from reform," accompanied by a view of the civil service "as a source of income and status" (Davidson and Lowe, 1981:268-69). In this period, however, the British state structure was not administratively monolithic. The Board of Trade, a competing agency outside of the control of the L.G.B. and the Home Office, was able during the 1880s and 1890s to develop independent capacities in the collection and use of labor statistics (Davidson, 1972). The Board's activities expanded rapidly and it recruited a remarkable core of young, progressive-minded officials, eventually including William Beveridge, an expert on labor markets and issues of unemployment, who had gone from Oxford into settlement-house activities, journalism, and unemployment-relief work before coming into government service under the Liberals in 1908.

Finally, and perhaps most important, civil-service reform along with step-by-step electoral democratization had important implications for the organization and operation of the political parties. With the credentialization of the civil service, the parties had to stop relying on elite patronage and develop new methods of raising funds and rewarding activists and new ways of winning votes in an expanding electorate. In the 1870s and 1880s, both the Liberal and Conservative parties created constituency organizations and began to formulate programs to appeal through activists to blocks of voters and financial subscribers (Hanham, 1959; McGill, 1962; Douglas, 1971:1-17; Shefter, 1977:438-41).

We are now in a position to see how the historical legacies of the New Poor Law, along with the state structure and party system in place in Britain by the early twentieth century, facilitated the Liberal welfare breakthroughs of 1908 to 1911. From the 1890s onward, there was widespread elite and popular disgruntlement with the way members of the respectable working class who became impoverished due to old age, ill health, or unemployment were handled by poor-law institutions. National politicians, Conservative and Liberal alike, became interested in reforming or replacing the New Poor Law to deal better with the problems of the "worthy poor" (Harris, 1972; Collins, 1965). Some of their concerns were generated from administrative dilemmas within established programs as well as by the threat to the whole edifice of local government finance posed by the rising and uneven costs of the poor law. Other concerns arose from the obvious political fact that the votes of working-

class people—and the support of their organizations, the unions and friendly societies—had to be contested by parties engaged in increasingly programmatic competition.

During the 1890s, the voluntarist resistance of the friendly societies to old age pensions helped to delay new welfare breakthroughs, and then the Boer War of 1899 to 1902 provided political diversion and temporary financial excuses for avoiding new domestic expenditures (Gilbert, 1966:179–88, 196). After the war, the Liberal welfare reforms—which bypassed the New Poor Law without abolishing or fundamentally reforming it—crystallized along two routes. In the face of the cross-class campaign waged by the National Committee of Organized Labour and Old Age Pensions, the Liberals devised their noncontributory and need-based old age pensions as a tool of programmatic competition with the Conservatives. The Liberals hoped to retain the loyalty of working-class voters and reinforce their party's alliance with the Labour Representation Committee. After the passage of pension legislation, proposals for contributory unemployment and health insurance came through initiatives from Liberal Cabinet leaders allied with civil administrators at the Board of Trade and the Treasury. For unemployment and health insurance alike, intragovernmental elites took the initiative in persuading both working-class and business interests to go along. Once this persuading was done and the Cabinet was set on its course, the discipline of the Liberal Party in Parliament ensured passage of the National Insurance Act, and there were no independent courts to which disgruntled parties could appeal.

Stepping back to put these policy departures in broader context, we must emphasize the fact that in this period the administration of social spending as such was not fundamentally problematic for British elites. The "corruption" of patronage politics was behind them, and disputes were now focused on levels and forms of spending, and especially on direct versus indirect taxation (Emy, 1972). The Labour Party was not yet a major actor in British politics, and both Liberal and Conservative leaders were concerned to attract or retain working-class electoral support through programmatic party competition. Parts of the British state bureaucracy had the capacities and the personnel to take the initiative in devising new social policies. In this context and conjuncture, pensions and social insurance looked like good ways to circumvent for the respectable working class the cruelties, inefficiencies, and costs of the New Poor Law of the nineteenth century. Such policies also looked like appropriate programs to appeal to—and, in the case of the

social-insurance measures, newly *tax*—the working class, involving them more fully in the life of a united nation, yet under the hegemony of enlightened, professional, middle-class leadership.

The Struggle Against Patronage Democracy and the Limits of Social Spending in the United States

America's polity in the nineteenth century has been aptly described (Skowronek, 1982: Ch. 2) as a polity of "courts and parties" operating in a multi-tiered federal framework. The courts adjudicated rights of contract and private property. Meanwhile, highly competitive political parties provided a modicum of integration across the various levels and branches of government. Crucially, U.S. electoral politics was fully democratized for white males in the Jacksonian era. Thus, political parties were able to rotate the "spoils of office" to reward their cadres and followers as the parties swept into and out of office in the constant rounds of close-fought elections characteristic of nineteenth-century American democracy (Shefter, 1978; Keller, 1977: Chs. 7, 8, 14). The entire system worked best at all levels when governmental outputs took the form, not of programs devised to appeal to functionally organized collectivities, but of politically discretionary *distributional* policies, such as financial subsidies or grants of land, tariff advantages, special regulations or regulatory exceptions, construction contracts and public-works jobs (McCormick, 1979).

Ideal sets of distributional policies combined measures that raised revenues—or created jobs—with those that allocated them. Especially from the point of view of the Republicans, the post-Civil War pension system was an excellent example of a policy generated by the distributional proclivities of nineteenth-century patronage democracy. It allowed the Republicans to confer on individuals in many localities pensions financed out of the "surplus" revenues from the constantly re-adjusted tariffs they sponsored to benefit various industries and sections of industries (McMurry, 1922:27). Not surprisingly, Civil War pension laws and practices were transformed from the late 1870s to the 1890s (refer to Figure 2), when electoral competition between the Republicans and the Democrats in the North was especially intense. A few hundred votes could make the difference in states like Ohio, Illinois, and New York, so in addition to supporting recurrent legal liberalizations of the terms of eligibility, Congressmen intervened with the Pension Bureau to help people prove their eligibility and spon-

sored thousands of special pension bills tailored for individual constituents (Keller, 1977:311-12; McMurry, 1922; Sanders, 1980). Moreover, the Republicans were known to time the dispatch of pension commissioners into states and localities to coincide with crucial election battles!

In significant contrast to Britain, there was no national poor law in the nineteenth-century United States, either in theory or in administrative fact. Instead, mixtures of Elizabethan and New Poor Law practices were institutionalized in diverse forms in thousands of local communities, where the prime responsibility lay both financially (as in Britain) and legally (Brown, 1940: Ch. 1). Reactions against poor-law practices would not so readily converge into a series of national debates as they did from the 1830s on in Britain, although the final decades of the nineteenth century did witness the emergence of state-level administrative supervision and policy debates in places such as Massachusetts (Brown, 1940:22-23).

At all levels of government there were, however, growing reactions against the "inefficiency" and "corruption" of nineteenth-century patterns of patronage democracy. As the United States became a truly national economy and society in the decades after the Civil War, problems faced by public policymakers challenged the distributional style of patronage democracy, and vociferous demands emerged for civil-service reform. The initial proponents were "Mugwumps," mostly upper- and upper-middle-class reformers located in the Northeast, especially Massachusetts. Like the successful British civil-service reformers of the 1870s, the Mugwumps wanted public administration to be taken out of patronage politics, so that expertise and predictability could prevail. At first, however, the Mugwumps' reform proposals made only limited headway, for American party politicians had secure roots in the fully democratized and tautly mobilized mass white-male electorate (Skowronek, 1982: Part II). In contrast to the situation in Britain, there was no impending threat of further electoral democratization to prod political as well as social elites into civil-service reform.

Not until the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century did administrative reform really make significant headway in the United States, and then more at municipal and state levels than at the national level (Schiesl, 1977). Social demands for new kinds of collective policies "in the public interest" and for reforms in government to ensure their proper implementation broadened out from the very elite ranks of Mugwump to include the growing ranks of the educated, professionalizing middle

class and (in many places) farmers and organized workers as well (Wiebe, 1967: Ch. 5; Buenker, 1978: Ch. 6).

The legacies of nineteenth-century patronage democracy and the conjuncture of its crisis in the Progressive Era created a much less favorable context for advocates of old age pensions and social insurance in the early twentieth-century United States than the one enjoyed by their counterparts in Britain. Most basically, there was the sheer weakness of public administration, due to the original absence of state bureaucracy in America, the limited achievements of civil-service reform in the nineteenth century, and the dispersion of authority in U.S. federalism. In contrast to the situation in Britain, there were in the early twentieth-century United States no influential high-level public officials strategically positioned to formulate new social-benefit policies with existing administrative resources, press them on political executives, and work out firm compromises with organized interest groups. Typically, reforms in the Progressive Era were not autonomous initiatives from either civil servants or politicians. They were usually urged upon state legislatures by broad coalitions of reform and interest groups (Buenker, 1978).

This made sense, not only because of the weakness of public administration, but also because this was a period when party organizations as such were weakened, even though the Republicans and Democrats remained jointly dominant (Burnham, 1970; Shefter, 1978).⁴ Moreover, U.S. political parties operated differently from British parties. They were democratic, patronage-oriented parties that found their established ties to electoral constituents and business interests under attack by reformers. They were not programmatic parties looking for new policies to attract orga-

⁴ Finegold (1981) analyzes the failure of the Progressive Party between 1912 and 1916 in terms that complement our argument. Advocates of social welfare in the party hoped to organize a constituency base and develop programmatic discipline among party leaders. But the most prominent electoral politicians wanted immediate victories at the polls, and returned to the major parties when quick victories did not come. (On the Massachusetts case, see Sherman, [1959]). Progressives rarely attempted, and less often succeeded in appealing to working-class voters or collaborating with organized labor, and they shared general middle- and upper-class pre-occupations with the need for regulatory reforms free of "political corruption." Only one wing of the Progressive Party advocated social insurance, and the party platform (Porter and Johnson, 1970: 175-82) did not promise noncontributory pensions.

nized labor. The challenge for elected U.S. politicians was to find ad hoc ways to propitiate reform-minded pressure groups while still retaining the loyalty of working-class supporters.

New social-spending measures did not fit this formula. For such policies, politicians could not get support or acquiescence from broad coalitions including middle- and upper-class groups. Throughout the Progressive Era, the common denominator of all reform remained the struggle against political corruption. People doubted that social-spending measures could be implemented honestly, and feared that they might well reinforce the hold over the electorate of patronage politicians (Brooks, 1905:453-54; Van Doren, 1918: 266-67). We have found some direct evidence that such fears were strongest and most openly expressed on the issue of old age pensions, which would have been noncontributory governmental handouts very much like the post-Civil War pensions (in addition to citations below, see Lippmann, 1911).

Back in 1889, leading Mugwump and President of Harvard Charles Eliot had denounced the Civil War pensions as "a crime . . . against Republican institutions" because they "foisted . . . perjured pauper[s] . . . upon the public treasury" (quoted in McMurry, 1922:34-35). Echoes of this revulsion reverberated into the Progressive Era and made even leading social-insurance advocates wary of pensions. For example, Charles Henderson, who wanted to believe that the logic of the Civil War pensions pointed toward more universal social protections, was forced to acknowledge that the "extravagance and abuses of the military pension system have probably awakened prejudice against workingmen's pensions" (Henderson, 1909:227). And Henry Rogers Seager, a professor at Columbia University and a prominent member of the American Association for Labor Legislation, pointed out in public lectures and a book advocating social insurance that "our experience with national military pensions has not predisposed us to favor national pensions of any kind" (Seager, 1910:145).

Seager (1910) simultaneously made a strong case for publicly run disability, health, and unemployment insurance. Such modern social policies would be less risky than old age pensions because they would tax workers as well as providing benefits to them. Seager did not seem to realize, however, that broad political alliances between reformers and popular groups would be much harder to form around contributory measures as opposed to noncontributory old age pensions. And he did not take note of British developments, which demon-

strated that contributory social-insurance measures had come in 1911 only *after* a broad cross-class alliance had supported the non-contributory old age pensions of 1908.

Social Politics in Massachusetts

In Massachusetts the fight against political corruption raged throughout the Progressive period and reinforced tendencies to keep the state out of new realms of social spending. Fortunately for comparative purposes, the same kinds of legislative proposals came up for debate in Massachusetts as in Britain. A regulatory measure that actually passed, the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1911, was partly inspired by Britain's laws of 1897 and 1906 (Asher, 1969). In the area of social spending, pioneering U.S. legislative proposals and investigatory commissions on old age pensions, referring explicitly to British precedents, came in Massachusetts from 1903 onward (Linford, 1949:8-9; *Report of the Commission on Old Age Pensions*, 1910:42, 89-99, 162-64, 224-25), and an Unemployment Insurance Bill directly modeled on the British 1911 Act was introduced in Massachusetts in 1916 as the first such bill in the United States (Nelson, 1969:17-18; Massachusetts Committee on Unemployment, 1916). Finally, a 1916 Massachusetts commission also investigated British-style health insurance. Of course, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, and health insurance failed to pass in Progressive-Era Massachusetts. This state, which had heretofore paralleled or followed Britain closely in social and labor legislation, stopped short when social spending as opposed to regulatory measures came onto the agenda.

Much evidence points to the centrality of upper- and middle-class fears about political corruption. Testifying before the 1907 Massachusetts commission that ultimately killed the first U.S. campaign for potentially popular old age pensions, reformer John Graham Books (*Report of the Commission on Old Age Pensions*, 1910:238) stressed that

the condition of our politics is the first difficulty in the way of the working of a pension scheme . . . We have no end of illustrations of the way that we pension off all sorts of persons in the army; while there are a large number of deserving, there are many thousands who are not, — and pensions are given on account of politics. I do not see how we can save any pension system in this country from running into politics.

Moreover, Massachusetts reformers were already attempting to cope with needs for old age protection through Louis Brandeis's "Savings

Bank Insurance Plan" (Abrams, 1964:140-42; Brandeis, 1906). This interesting plan attacked the vested interest of insurance companies in their profits on life-insurance schemes, thus indicating a willingness on the part of reformers to oppose big business. Yet in order to avoid relying on government action, the law passed in 1907, and later reindorsed by the *Report of the Commission on Old Age Pensions* (1910:323), mandated savings banks to market low-cost old age and/or life-insurance policies to Massachusetts citizens. The author of the Savings Bank Insurance Plan wanted to avoid public social insurance because he believed that "our government does not now grapple successfully with the duties which it has assumed, and should not extend its operations at least until it does" (1907 statement by Brandeis, quoted in Mason, 1938:104).

During the life of the commission to investigate pensions Massachusetts "good government" reformers were engaged through an investigatory Financial Commission in denouncing the extravagant practices of patronage politicians in Boston (Abrams, 1964:146; Silverman, 1977:640-42). With dissent coming only from a labor representative, the 1909 Financial Commission Report censured Boston Mayor John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald for expanding public employment, letting out public contracts without competitive bidding, and hiring patronage workers. The commission's solution was to propose strict controls on public spending.

Ethnic tensions between the Anglo-Saxon Protestant Massachusetts establishment and the predominantly Irish Catholic Boston lower strata obviously underlay the happenings just discussed (for historical background, see Solomon, 1956), and one might wonder whether such ethnic conflicts account for U.S. versus British patterns of social policymaking. Ethnic conflicts in politics were not simply primordial givens, however. They crystallized especially in struggles over the role of political patronage (Silverman, 1977). These struggles, rather than the more often cited ethnic divisions within the U.S. working class, are the primary mechanism by which ethnic variety in America adversely affected the prospects for modern social-benefits programs. Floods of Irish poor also immigrated into industrializing England, creating sharp sociocultural tensions there as well, but without preventing the emergence of a modern welfare state in a British polity *not* wracked with quarrels over patronage at the turn of the twentieth century.

Some important social-welfare innovations did occur in Massachusetts during the Progressive Era. Labor regulations were strengthened, especially for women and children (Abrams,

1964:259-60), and mothers' pensions were enacted. The state also joined many others in passing workers' compensation and—despite the cries of business that the state's competitively pressed industrial economy could be hurt—the 1911 Massachusetts law had the broadest workforce coverage (fully 80%) of any such American law (Asher, 1969:473-74). This helps to make a point more broadly true of Progressive reform: Even with business and other powerful and mobilized interests opposed, purely regulatory reforms often passed. They fit well into the Progressive proclivity to create new regulatory agencies, a kind of "fourth branch" of government beyond the direct control of politicians which employed middle-class professionals to watch over the behavior of business and workers in "the public interest" (McCormick, 1981:268-69; Berkowitz and McQuaid, 1980:37-39; Commons, 1913). In contrast to measures calling for large-scale social spending, regulatory measures and the independent agencies ideally established to implement them were not seen as likely to reinforce "political corruption."

Why Workers' Compensation and Mothers' Pensions?

Indeed, it would not do for us to explain how America's early twentieth-century political context frustrated prospects for old age pensions and social insurance without at the same time underlining why it allowed laws to pass establishing workers' compensation and mothers' pensions, each in almost forty states. The ultimate pressure that pushed through both of these new social-welfare programs came from the wide publicity magazines and investigatory commissions gave the issues and from the lobbying of state legislatures carried on by broad coalitions of reform and interest groups (Leff, 1973:400-413; Berkowitz and McQuaid, 1980:35-36; Tishler, 1971:126-27). This pressure could never have built up in the first place had not elites and the political public generally been broadly receptive to these ideas—receptive through forms, such as official commissions, that were simultaneously used to denounce or delay pensions and social insurance.⁵ Why was this?

⁵ For example, in Massachusetts, where the Commission on Old Age Pensions (1907-1910) chaired by Magnus Alexander reported strongly against state action, a 1910-11 Commission on Compensation for Industrial Accidents (on which Alexander also served) proposed and drafted the state's Workmen's Compensation Act of 1911 (Asher, 1969:466-69). And a 1912-13 Commission on the Support of Dependent Minor Children of Widowed

One feature of both types of laws that recommended them to reformers, elites, and Progressive Era political publics was that they involved little or no public spending, certainly not of the order that would be required for old age pensions or partially state-funded, British-style social insurance. Workers' compensation laws merely required businesses to insure their employees against injuries; in all but a few states this could be done through private carriers or even through self-insurance (Brandeis, 1935:581-87). Mothers' pension laws largely restricted themselves to helping morally "worthy" widows; only 25 percent of the states provided any of the financing; and all the laws were "local option," leaving it to individual counties or towns to decide whether to help mothers, exactly which ones, and at what levels of aid (Lubove, 1968:99).

Equally significant, neither workers' compensation nor mothers' pensions constituted a wholly new departure for public action in America. They did not mandate (as pensions and social insurances would have done) new fiscal functions for barely established civil administrators or for potentially "corrupt" party politicians. Rather, *these laws reworked activities already being handled in the American polity by the courts*. Workers' compensation laws removed disputes over compensation for injured workers from the common law and the courts, and typically placed settlements under the supervision of regulatory agencies that were set up to monitor payments by businesses to injured workers or the dependents of deceased workers (Berkowitz and McQuaid, 1980:37-40). No brand new public jurisdiction was established; the venue was simply changed from common-law courts to regulatory agencies.

Mothers' pensions also involved the courts, this time, interestingly enough, both as proponents of change and as loci for trustworthy administration of social spending. As things were, judges—including those of the new-style juvenile courts established in the Progressive Era—had to decide about the removal of the children of poor women when mothers could not adequately provide for their offspring. Especially where respectable widows were concerned, removal from the home was coming to be a heinous decision, for the idea was growing that children needed maternal care. Juvenile-court judges in Illinois and Missouri helped to initiate the nation-wide movement for mothers' pensions (Leff, 1973:400, 405; Lubove, 1968:99-100). Private charity organizations

strongly opposed the pensions as encroachments upon their voluntary sphere, and some reformers worried, as did Charles Henderson, that even the small sums involved in mothers' pensions might become "another kind of spoils for low politicians" (quoted in Tishler, 1971:153; see also Leff, 1973:404). Most of the new laws, however, obviated this worry by putting juvenile-court judges in charge of deciding who should receive pensions and supervising the performance of the recipients thereafter (Leff, 1973:401; Lubove, 1968:99). Thus, not politicians or bureaucrats, but new kinds of judges operating with "expert" discretion took charge of administering most of these tiny new flows of social spending instituted in the United States during the Progressive Era.

CONCLUSION

Far from finding socioeconomic development, the rise of the industrial working class, and new liberal values irrelevant, this study has repeatedly referred to them in accounting for British and U.S. social politics around the turn of the century. Yet these tendencies were comparably present in both countries. Thus they cannot sufficiently explain why Britain launched a full range of modern pension and social-insurance programs before World War I, while the United States resisted the possibility of launching modern social-spending measures and, in fact, actually allowed a popular system of old age and disability pensions for many working- and middle-class Americans to pass out of existence without replacement.

To explain these contrasting trajectories of British and U.S. social politics, we have invoked a state-centered frame of reference to complement the society-centered factors more usually invoked in the literature on modern welfare states. We have highlighted both the autonomous actions of officials and politicians and the ways in which state structures and their transformations affected the policy preferences of politically influential social groups. Our findings and arguments here dovetail with Michael Shalev's (1983b) recent state-centered arguments about the determinants of social policy in Israel, and with broader comparative findings about the autonomous role of the state in social-welfare policymaking in authoritarian-bureaucratic or late-developing nations (cf. Flora and Alber, 1981; Collier and Messick, 1975; Malloy, 1979; Spalding, 1980). By demonstrating the relevance of variables about state structures and state/society relationships for two liberal-democratic countries that ought, if any do, to fit traditional socioeconomic and cultural theories of welfare-state development, we believe we have

Mothers recommended and drafted the state's mothers' pension legislation, enacted in 1913 (see the *Report of the Commission . . .*, 1913).

underlined the need—and the opportunity—for continuing analytic reorientation in the literature on the emergence and development of modern social policies.

It will not do to imagine public social policies as inevitable and irreversible by-products of industrial or capitalist development, even with class struggles and value orientations introduced to account for variations and possible delays along the march. Welfare policies are also directly grounded in the logics of state-building, in the struggles of politicians for control and advantage, and in the expectations groups have about what states and parties with specific structures and modes of operation could or should do. Our theories will serve us poorly for understanding the past, present, and future of public social policies in the United States and across the world if we do not redesign them to take better account of the macro-political determinants of the making and unmaking of measures that are, after all, thought to add up to "the modern welfare state."

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