
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NATIONAL POLITICS

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Languedoc: 1682

Imagine yourself strolling in sunny Narbonne, France, during a summer almost three centuries ago. On the first of August, 1682, according to the report which the Intendant of Languedoc sent to Paris:

. . . there was a little movement in Narbonne on the occasion of the collection of the cosse tax, which had been ordered by an act of the royal council. Many women gathered with the common people, and threw stones at the tax collectors, but the Consuls and the leading citizens hurried over and put a stop to the disorder . . . (A.N. [Archives Nationales, Paris] C⁷ 296; see also Archives Communales, Narbonne, BB 29, folio 144).

Now a cosse was a local grain measure which held something like five liters. More important, it held one-fortieth of a setier of grain; to collect one cosse per setier, which was the aim of those tax collectors, was to tax grain at 2.5 percent. The royal domain had long held the legal right to collect the cosse on all grain sold by outsiders at Narbonne, but the sixteenth-century wars of religion had interrupted the collection of the tax. In 1682, the royal council (guided by Colbert in its incessant search for revenue to pay for royal wars and regal display) had authorized the royal property agent to begin anew the collection of the cosse. The agent ordered the construction of toll booths at the city's gates, and directed his clerks to collect the tax on all grain brought in by non-residents.

The city's Consuls did what they dared to oppose the cosse -- and, especially, its collection at the gates rather than at the market -- on the ground that it would discourage trade and raise the price of food in the

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city. But their daring did not go very far. While the Consuls filed ineffectual protests, the city's women gathered and stoned the tax collectors. Their "little movement" failed to halt the collection of the tax. Yet after years of conflict and negotiation, in 1691 the Intendant finally arranged the conversion of the cosse into a general cash payment from the Estates to the royal property agent (A.N. G⁷ 298, 299, 300). For all their disapproval of protest in the streets, the authorities recognized that the reinstated tax was inconvenient, and perhaps unjust.

Let us neglect the complexities of seventeenth-century finances, and focus on that "little movement" of Narbonne's women. It resembled many other local French conflicts of the seventeenth century in that it involved direct action against the royal attempt to levy new taxes. It resembled many other troubles following the mid-century Fronde (but differed from many before and during the Fronde) in that the authorities, despite their opposition to the royal measure, immediately stepped in to repress the popular resistance. It resembled many other struggles of the time in which women played an especially prominent role in that the immediate issues concerned food, marketing and the cost of living. In these regards, the August confrontation in Narbonne stands for thousands of other seventeenth-century conflicts. (See Bercé 1974, Pillorget 1975 and Porchnev 1963 for numerous examples.)

What should we call it? The local authorities called it not only a petit mouvement, but also an émotion populaire and a désordre. All these terms belonged to the period's standard vocabulary; they designated a localized collective action by ordinary people which the authorities considered necessary and proper to end by force. But what should we call it? That is a conceptual question. Using the terminology of the time is one possible answer to the question; perhaps we should settle for émotion or désordre, much as we usually insist on calling the royal officers of the

time by their rightful titles instead of substituting the closest twentieth-century equivalent. Yet the terminology of the time brings along its own ambiguities, variations and overtones, and makes it the more difficult to undertake the sort of comparison we might want to try between the fighting women of Narbonne in 1692 and the fighting women of, say, Los Angeles in the twentieth century.

Since the authorities of Narbonne themselves used the word mouvement, would it be legitimate to apply the venerable label "social movement"? That would probably cause more confusion than insight. Somehow a social movement should be more durable than that fleeting encounter between Narbonne's women and the tax collectors; it should pursue broader aims than the blocking of a particular toll. If, on the other hand, we were convinced that the little affair of 1682 was only one incident in a long series, that the women of Narbonne were aware of their common interests and distinct identity, and that they were self-consciously seeking a set of changes considerably larger than the suspension of one tax or another, then we might comfortably begin to think in terms of a social movement.

The Camisards

In the Languedoc of that time there was at least one set of people who came close to those demanding standards. They were not the women of Narbonne, but the Protestants -- women, men and children alike -- of the mountains. For about four decades, beginning in the 1670s, the same correspondence of the Intendant which reported the Narbonne affair was packed with discussions of the "fanatics". During the 1670s, the Intendant followed royal policy by squeezing out of public office those Protestants who refused to abjure their faith. The measures against the "R.P.R." (Religion Prétendue Réformée -- So-Called Reformed Religion) broadened and intensified during the early 1680s.

The Protestants prepared to defend themselves. "The Huguenots of the Vivarais," reported the Intendant in August 1683,

. . . continue not only to preach in forbidden places, but also to prepare for war. It is true that they have no chiefs, not even halfway-qualified gentry, in their party; we took care of that by seizing all the leaders that appeared, or that we suspected, right at the start. All the same, they have managed to set up a sort of military base. They have organized companies under specific commanders. They have captured some castles. They are digging in, they have ammunition and arms. In a word, whipped up by ministers who preach nothing but sedition and rebellion, they give every appearance of planning to resist the king's troops . . . (A.N. G⁷ 296)

The most serious was yet to come. In 1685, with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, began the major drive to convert, or at least to suppress, the many Protestants of the Cévennes, the Vivarais, and other regions of Languedoc. From that time on, relations between the province's royal officials and its Protestants swung between open war and troubled peace.

Immediately after the revocation, a new Intendant of Languedoc, Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, declared his hope of mastering the enemy by means of severe and ostentatious repression; an early effort was his hanging seven and decapitating one of the illegal assembly of "new converts which had killed two of the soldiers sent to break it up." ("New converts" were people who had nominally subscribed to Catholicism, but had actually retained their Protestant ties.) "There are no ministers preaching," he wrote contemptuously, "there are nothing but miserable preaching carders and peasants who lack even common sense; I hope to arrest two or three of

them that I haven't been able to find yet" (A.N. G⁷ 297, October 1686). Vain hope. The "assemblies in the desert" multiplied, Protestant military forces sprang up in the backlands, and the royal troops found themselves beginning a guerrilla operation which lasted intermittently for 25 years.

By the end of the 1680s, inspired prophets -- men and women, boys, and, especially, girls -- were preaching in the Vivarais. By the end of the century, poor men and women possessed by ecstatic trances and the gift of prophecy were communicating divine instructions to the people of the Cévennes. There in the Cévennes the Protestant rebels took on the name of Camisards. In 1703, the same Intendant who had hoped, seventeen years earlier, to break Protestant resistance through spectacular but limited punishment resorted to ordering the entire Protestant countryside of the Diocese of Mende evacuated, and dozens of villages burned to the ground. The strategy of scorched earth did not begin in the twentieth century. Even with that ferocious treatment, it took another year to check the major Camisard rebellion, another six years to smash the last Camisard military force, another ten or twenty years to fragment and tame the region's Protestants to the point that they no longer posed a serious challenge to royal authority. As late as 1710, a royal patrol fell upon "an assembly in the parish of Saumane, of five armed men and twenty women", killing two men and four women in the process (A.N. G⁷ 314, July 1710).

Who were these zealots? The question is a nettle, difficult to grasp without being stung; the answer varies according to our choice of time point, region and (most importantly) criterion of membership. At one extreme, we might be thinking of all the Protestants in Languedoc: 202,794 of the province's 1,561,541 inhabitants, according to the ludicrously precise statistics reported by the Intendant in 1698 (A.N. H 1588²⁶). At the other extreme, we might take only the few thousand who at one time or an-

other actually engaged in armed combat with royal troops. Somewhere in the middle, we might place the many thousands who at least one time joined one of those illegal "assemblies in the desert" to hear a sermon, a prophecy, a reading of the Bible and an exhortation to resist the Antichrist.

One might justify the first definition -- the entire Protestant population -- by pointing out the important moral, political and material support the activists drew from the general population of the Protestant regions; then the Camisards would appear to be a movement drawn disproportionately from the prosperous and commercial milieu of Languedoc. But the more stringent the criterion of membership, the more plebeian the Camisards become: wool carders, weavers, carpenters, bakers, agricultural laborers and other ordinary rural workers seem to have provided the bulk of the day-to-day activists, female and male. By the standard of open rebellion, it was clearly a popular mouvement.

And what did they want? Again the answer varies with the precise phrasing of the question. At times Camisard leaders bid for the abolition of taxes. They often declared against the ecclesiastical tithe. They consistently sought -- and acted out -- the freedom to assemble in the name of their faith. From time to time they dreamed and prophesied the return of their exiled pastors. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie writes of "an explosive mixture of prophetic neurosis and fiscal agitation," while Philippe Joutard emphasizes the Camisard "refusal to submit blindly to the central power, and affirmation of the superiority of the conscience (Le Roy Ladurie 1966: I, 629; Joutard 1965: 19). All these, and more, are possible definitions of the interests, grievances, beliefs and demands around which the Camisards built their movement.

A Social Movement?

But, once again, is the word "movement" appropriate? The query is not a finicky doubt about English usage, since a precisely parallel concept appears in other European languages: Bewegung, dvizhenie, movimento, r relse. So far as common English is concerned, for that matter, we unquestionably have the right to call the actions of the Camisards a movement of some kind; all the dictionary requires is a "series of actions and endeavors of a body of persons for a special object." Yet consider one of the more careful efforts to turn the catch-phrase "social movement" into a workable tool of analysis:

A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavor to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into "utopian" community . . . A social movement's commitment to change and the raison d'etre of its organization are founded upon the conscious volition, normative commitment to the movement's aims or beliefs, and active participation on the part of the followers or members (Wilkinson 1971: 27).

Well! If that is a social movement, it is debatable whether the Camisards qualify. The commitment to change is debatable, the minimal organization is debatable, even the normative commitment to a presumably unitary set of aims raises a shadow of doubt. If the coherent Camisards do not qualify as a social movement, on the other hand, who does? In fact, a number of groups which have formed and acted in Languedoc over the last century do seem to meet Wilkinson's tests for a social movement: deliberate collective endeavor to promote change, and so on. One dramatic case in point is the winegrowers of the Midi, who responded to the over-production crisis which began in the 1890s by organizing unions, staging strikes and demonstrations and, in 1907, mounting a great "revolt" which featured vast meetings, huge demonstrations, attacks on prefectures, and temporary takeovers of major cities.

The phylloxera blight had wiped out a large part of Languedoc's vines in the 1880s, but the replanting and expansion of the 1890s soon made up the deficit. At the same time, the growing importation of cheap Algerian wine and the employment of beet-sugar in the manufacture of potable wine from inferior grapes flooded the market and provided the Midi's winegrowers with unprecedented competition. Their markets contracted and their prices fell. From shortly after 1900, various leaders of the region's winegrowers began to agitate for the prohibition of the new sugar-wines, for the right to distill part of their vintage and, sometimes, for the suspension of taxes. The day-laborers of the winefields began to organize unions and to demand better wages.

After a roving parliamentary commission had come to hear the complaints of the producers in March 1907, a great campaign of organizing, meeting and federating took place throughout the vineyard areas. By the 5th of May, some 60 to 80 thousand people were meeting in Narbonne, and being addressed by the socialist mayor Ferroul. In succeeding weeks, to take the minimum estimates, there were 120 thousand at Béziers, 170 thousand at Perpignan, 220 thousand at Carcassonne, 250 thousand at Nîmes, 600 thousand at Montpellier. Soon a tax-payers' strike and a series of ostentatious resignations by municipal officers were under way. By mid-June, the government was sending troops into the region, demonstrators were fighting gendarmes and, back in Narbonne, militants were attacking the sub-prefecture. From June through September, the government replied with a few concessions and a good deal of repression. There were hundreds of arrests, and a half-dozen deaths. The formation of a General Confederation of Winegrowers, at another meeting in Narbonne the 22d of September, marked the end of the year's turbulence. Then began the negotiations, the trials, the acquittals, the amnesties and the demobilization of the Midi's winegrowers.

Was that a social movement? It is interesting to scan the text of the speech that Ernest Ferroul, physician, socialist and mayor of Narbonne gave at

Perpignan on the 16th of June. At that point, Ferroul faced an acute political problem: the most visible organizer of the agitation was the innkeeper Marcellin Albert, head of the winegrower's committee in the village of Argelliers; but it was time, thought Ferroul, to shift the agitation from its village base and loose organization to an urban base and a larger scale -- led, perhaps, by the socialist mayors of crucial cities. If the Argelliers committee, said Ferroul,

. . . has prepared magnificent, unprecedented marches, without historical parallel; if it has organized the great winegrowers' demonstrations you know, which are characterized by a marvelous calmness, solidarity and agreement, it is now impossible for the committee to direct from its own home such a grand movement, spread across four departments.

And later he declared:

This movement is not political. It is deep and human. It is not the agitation of a party, but the uprising of men who want to live, and who are protesting against their hunger.

The word "movement" recurs in a different context and with a different tone from the petit mouvement of 1682. Narbonne's mayor wants to stress the winegrowers' numbers, commitment and internal discipline, their orientation to deeply serious matters, the fact that they stand above and beyond routine party politics. Somehow that series of actions at the beginning of our century exemplifies what Wilkinson and other scholars have in mind when they discuss and define social movements. So do a number of other phenomena -- labor movements, political movements, even Protestant religious movements -- which Languedoc has produced since the later nineteenth century. The comparison of the twentieth-century winegrowers with the seventeenth-century Protestants raises the suspicion that the notion of the social movement is more closely tied to

the social organization of our own time than the abstract phrasing and universal sweep of the usual definitions suggest.

The suspicion is well founded. Both the concept and the phenomenon it represents are largely nineteenth-century creations. The concept "movement," in the sense of sustained collective action, drew some of its initial appeal from its mechanical analogy, and then there was the Social Movement -- die soziale Bewegung -- the historical trend which most observers identified with the rise of the working classes. That idea of a dominant historical trend tied to the changing position of a particular class of people was one of the chief tools of social analysis bequeathed by the nineteenth century to the twentieth. The idea of many such movements, not all of them beneficent or even connected with one another, is a simple adaptation of the basic concept in the face of a stubbornly diverse reality.

The Rise of Social Movements

The reality itself was largely a nineteenth-century creation. People have, to be sure, banded together more or less self-consciously for the pursuit of common ends since the beginning of history. The nineteenth century saw the rise of the social movement in the sense of a set of people who voluntarily and deliberately commit themselves to a shared identity, a unifying belief, a common program and a collective struggle to realize that program. The great bulk of the earlier uprisings and popular fervors to which we are tempted to apply the term were fundamentally defensive actions by groups which had long existed; during the aggressive expansion of states in the seventeenth century, the standard case was the concerted resistance by the people of long-established communities to the imposition of new forms of taxation which infringed their rights and jeopardized their survival. Although plenty of nineteenth-century movements had defensive origins, the remarkable feature of that century was the shift to the deliberate constitution of new groups for the offensive pursuit of new rights and advantages.

The rise of the social movement belongs to the same complex of changes which included two other profound transformations in the character of popular collective action: the growth of national electoral politics, and the proliferation of created associations as the vehicles of action. Notice the difficulty faced by Rudolf Heberle, in a standard American textbook on social movements, when he seeks to dissociate the movement from the political party. After adopting Schumpeter's description of a political party as a group of people who "propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power," Heberle goes on to say:

A genuine social movement, on the other hand, is always integrated by a set of constitutive ideas, or an ideology, although bonds of other nature may not be absent. Furthermore, a party is by definition related to a larger group, within which it operates against at least one partial group of similar character. Parties can appear in all kinds of corporate groups, but a political party by definition can occur only within a body politic, that is, only within a state. A social movement, on the other hand, need not be restricted to a particular state or to a national society. In fact, all major social movements have extended over the entire sphere of Western civilization and even beyond (Heberle 1951: 11).

The net result of all this maneuvering is, ironically, to stress the resemblance between social movements and political parties. They are frères ennemis, each taking part of its identity from the contrast with the other. A social movement is essentially a party with broad aspirations and a unifying belief system. A political party is a tamed, nationalized social movement. That is why Heberle can step easily into the analysis of Nazism and Communism, and why we sense a vague unease when attempting to treat the seventeenth-century Camisards as a social movement.

Let me spare you a review of the various, ambiguous and sometimes sloppy uses to which the concept "social movement" has been put. My aim here is neither to castigate other conceptualizers, nor to plead for more precise, adequate and comprehensive definitions, nor yet to argue that "social movement" is a poor concept because it is historically specific. Far from it. I want to argue that the recognition of the historical specificity of the forms of collective action is the beginning of wisdom. I hope to situate the concept of social movement in its historical setting, and to suggest how its strengths and weaknesses reflect the realities of that historical setting.

To be specific, I want to argue the following points: It is a mistake to conceive of a social movement as a group, somehow parallel to (but also opposed to) a party. Indeed, it is a mistake to think of a social movement as a group of any kind. Instead, the term "social movement" applies most usefully to a sustained interaction between a specific set of authorities and various spokespersons for a given challenge to those authorities. The interaction is a coherent, bounded unit in roughly the same sense that a war or a political campaign is a unit. Such interactions have occurred from time to time ever since there were authorities of any kind. The broadest sense of the term "social movement" includes all such challenges. In a narrower sense, however, the social movement draws its form and meaning from an interaction with the authorities who staff a national state. To improve on Wilkinson, Heberle, and other group-oriented theorists, we need a definition on this order:

A social movement is a sustained series of interactions between national powerholders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly-visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support.

Like all such definitions, this one poses practical choices: setting some minimum number of interactions, arriving at tests of the "success" of claims to speak for a constituency, deciding how little formal representation is a lack of it, defining thresholds for the visibility of demands and the demonstrations of support for them, and so on. But the definition excludes a variety of phenomena -- religious innovations, crusades, local rebellions and others -- to which the term social movement has often been loosely applied. In this narrower sense, both the concept of social movement and the sort of interaction the concept fits best are products of the nineteenth-century growth of popular electoral politics on a national scale. In any case, the definition does not single out groups, but interactions.

No groups? Let me be clear on that point. Groups are crucial to social movements, as armies are crucial to wars and parties to electoral campaigns. At one point or another in the history of every social movement, the organizers of the challenge in question claim to speak for at least one important group which has an interest in the challenge's outcome. (In the French winegrowers' movement of 1907, one of the points at issue between Marcellin Albert and Ernest Ferroul was who had the right to speak for the winegrowers as a whole.) The organizers may well recruit participants and supporters from the group whose interest they claim to represent. (Albert's genius was his ability to draw local communities of winegrowers into the common regional effort.) The activists with respect to any particular challenge commonly originate in well-defined groups, and often form new groups in the process of making the challenge. (The creation of the General Federation of Winegrowers marked a major transition in the movement of 1907: the start of sustained negotiations between group and government.) At the very center of the nineteenth-century transformation which made the social movement a standard way of doing political business, indeed, came

a great broadening of the conditions under which new groups could form and mount challenges to the authorities, and old groups could bring challenges into the public arena.

In order to see the nineteenth-century transition more clearly, we should reflect on the specific means that ordinary people use to act together on their interests, and on how those means changed in the nineteenth century. Over the last few hundred years, ordinary people have used a remarkable variety of means to act together. If we run forward in time from the era of the Camisards to our own day, we encounter inter-village fights, mocking and retaliatory ceremonies such as Riding the Stang and Katzenmusik, attacks on tax collectors, petitions, mutinies, solemn assemblies and many other forms of action, most of them now long abandoned, in the early period. As we approach our own time we notice electoral rallies, demonstrations, strikes, attempted revolutions, mass meetings and a great variety of other means, most of them unknown in the time of the Camisards.

Now, there are two important things to notice about these forms of action. First, they are forms: learned, understood, sometimes planned and rehearsed by the participants. They are not the "outbursts" and "riots" dear to authorities and crowd psychologists. Second, at a given point in time a particular group of people who shared an interest had only a few of these means at their disposal. At their disposal? The group knew, more or less, how to execute them, had some sense of the likely consequences of employing them, and was capable of identifying some conditions in which it would be both possible and legitimate to use those means. Our women of seventeenth-century Narbonne knew how to attack the tax collector, but they also knew how to assemble and deliberate, how to seize the goods of a baker who overcharged for bread, how to conduct a charivari. They did not,

however, have at their disposal the creation of an association, the launching of a strike, the organization of a demonstration, or any number of other means which are commonplace in our own time.

Let us think of the set of means which is effectively available to a given set of people as their repertoire of collective action.¹ The analogy with the repertoire of theater and music is helpful because it emphasizes the learned character of the performances and the limits to that learning, yet allows for variation and even continuous change from one performance to the next. The repertoire of collective action typically leaves plenty of room for improvisation, innovation and unexpected endings. Change in repertoires occur through three main processes:

1. the invention or adoption of new means, e.g. the deliberate creation of the "sit-in" by American civil rights workers of the 1950s;
2. the evolution and adaptation of means which are already available, e.g. the way London Radicals expanded the long-established custom of sending a delegation to accompany a petition into mass marches with thousands of supporters for a petition to Parliament;
3. the abandonment of means which have proved inappropriate, ineffective, impractical or dangerous, e.g. the Parisian crowd's abandonment of ritual execution, with the display of traitors' heads on pikes, after the initial years of the Revolution.

This last example identifies one of the difficulties in the serious study of repertoires: how to distinguish a form of action which is in some sense known and available, but is in fact never used because a likely opportunity for its

¹For a much more detailed discussion, see a companion paper, "Repertoires of Contention in America and Britain, 1750-1830."

effective use never comes along. The answer must again draw on the analogy with music and theater: if the performer never performs the piece in public or in private we eventually conclude that the performer has forgotten it, or never knew it. That commonsense rule of thumb has the advantage of confining the study of repertoires to forms of action which real actors have performed, rehearsed, or at least discussed.

Why Study Repertoires?

The study of repertoires provides a splendid opportunity for joining the general analysis of collective action to the concrete realities of day-to-day contention. For any particular set of people who share an interest, we may undertake to describe the means of action realistically available to them. In the context of their time, what forms of action did the Protestants of the seventeenth-century Cévennes have at their disposal. What forms did they know, and what forms were feasible? What were the likely costs and consequences of the alternative open to them? Assembling in village councils to petition the Intendant, for example, was a standard procedure of the time, but it was a dangerous and ineffectual way to resist a royal policy as vigorously pursued as the drive against Protestantism. The collective appeal to a powerful patron had worked well in an earlier age, but became less and less feasible as the seventeenth-century French state expanded its range and power. And so on. The inventory of available means of collective action draws us at once into a specification of opportunities, threats, repression, facilitation, power and -- most important -- the relative costs and likely benefits of the array of choices actually confronting the group in question. It is not necessary to assume that the Camisards, or any other set of collective actors that concerns us, were cool calculators in their own right. In fact, the Camisards had an extraordinary capacity for hysteria, rage, delusion and blind devotion. All that is necessary is a logic of the

situation which limits the options, entails some likely costs and consequences for each option, and provides us with enough information to begin the reconstruction of the decision rules the participants followed.

If the prevailing repertoire of collective action changes significantly at some point in time, the change is prima facie evidence of a substantial alteration in the structure of power. In France, to take the case I know best, the largest repertoire changes of the last four centuries appear to have occurred around the middle of the seventeenth century and again around the middle of the nineteenth century. The Fronde and the Revolution of 1848 are convenient markers for the shifts in repertoire. At the earlier point, the most visible change was the rapid decline of the classic form of rebellion of some constituted body (a village, a military unit, a trade or something else) which consisted of assembling, deliberating, stating grievances, formally suspending allegiance to the governing authority, choosing a temporary alternate leader, then setting conditions for a return to obedience. In contemporary English, only the word "mutiny" comes close to capturing the character of that old form of rebellion.

During the Wars of Religion and the many rebellions of the early seventeenth century, groups of peasants and artisans who rebelled had frequently elected a local noble as their capitaine. That is one reason why, at the end of the seventeenth century, the Intendant of Languedoc scanned the Camisards anxiously to see if they had access to Protestant nobles; a link between Protestant countrymen and the regional nobility was much to be feared. By then, however, that link and that form of rebellion had almost disappeared. The defeat of the Fronde and the seventeenth-century cooptation of the nobility, I believe, played a major part in destroying it. The seventeenth-century rise of royal power and expansion of the state was one of the two or three most important alterations in the structure of power over the last four centuries. A major alteration in the repertoire of popular collective action accompanied it.

The nineteenth-century change in the prevailing repertoire of collective action is better documented, and no less dramatic. Around the time of the Revolution of 1848 the tax rebellion consisting of an attack on the collector or his premises went into rapid decline. Although protests of high prices and food shortages continued in other forms, the standard bread riot practically disappeared. So did the charivari and a number of other theatrical displays of contempt or moral disapproval. During the same period, the pre-planned protest meeting, the electoral rally, the demonstration, the strike and a number of related forms were crystallizing and becoming frequent. A great alteration in the repertoire was going on.

Was there a concomitant alteration in the structure of power? I believe there was. It included an emphatic nationalization of politics, a greatly increased role of special-purpose associations, a decline in the importance of communities as the loci of shared interests, a growing importance of organized capital and organized labor as participants in power struggles. As a consequence of these massive changes, the available means of acting together on shared interests changed as well. The same sorts of correlated transformations were occurring elsewhere in western Europe during the nineteenth century: perhaps somewhat earlier in Great Britain, perhaps a bit later in Germany, on varied schedules according to the particular interplay of capitalism and statemaking in one region or another.

Repertoires, Social Movements and Contemporary Collective Action

Mapping and explaining the changes in the collective-action repertoire is an important task, but it is not the task of this paper. The nineteenth-century changes connect with the previous discussion of social movements in two important ways. First, the nineteenth-century repertoire is still with us today. The strike, the demonstration, the protest meeting and other forms of action that were novelties then are commonplaces today. As compared with the large alterations in the nineteenth century, the

subsequent changes of repertoire have been relatively minor. To be sure, new forms of terrorism have arisen, demonstrations have motorized, mass media have reshaped our perceptions and our tactics. Set against the disappearance of the food riot, the withering away of satirical street theater or the first flowering of the various forms of action based on special-purpose associations, the twentieth century's innovations nevertheless look small. The nineteenth-century repertoire comprises the basic means of action open to today's participants in social movements.

Second, and more important, the rise of the concept and of the reality of the social movement were part of the same transformation that brought the new repertoire into being. As parties, unions and other associations specializing in the struggle for power grew in importance, so did the idea -- and the reality -- of parallel streams of people, guided by shared interests and beliefs, which overflowed the narrow channels of elections or labor-management negotiations which were being dug at the same time. Those parallel streams were social movements. Seen from the perspective of national power structures, they were (and are) coherent phenomena; they exist so long as they offer a challenge to dominant interests and beliefs. Seen from the bottom up, they are usually much more fragmented and heterogeneous: shifting factions, temporary alliances, diverse interests, a continuous flux of members and hangers-on.

National states, then, played an essential part in the creation of the modern social movement. They play an essential part in the movement's operation today. No doubt rough equivalents of the social movement appear any time authorities at any level monopolize decisions and resources which are vital to the interests of the rest of the population. The distinctive contribution of the national state was to shift the political advantage to contenders who could mount a challenge on a very large scale, and could do so in a way that demonstrated, or even used, their ability to intervene

seriously in regular national politics. In particular, as electoral politics became a more important way of doing national business, the advantage ran increasingly to groups and organizers who threatened to disrupt or control the routine games of candidates and parties. State toleration or promotion of various sorts of electoral association, furthermore, provided an opportunity, a warrant and a model for the action of associations that were quasi-electoral, semi-electoral or even non-electoral. Signaling that you had a large number of committed supporters became an increasingly effective way to score political points. The short-run logic of the demonstration paralleled the long-run logic of the social movement: in both cases organizers sought to display the numbers, commitment and internal discipline of the people behind a particular set of claims on some powerful body. In both cases, the coalition mounting the action was often fragile and shifting; if from the viewpoint of the powerful the challenge was sustained and coherent, from the viewpoint of the participants it was often a hasty, temporary and risky alliance in a common cause.

That duality of perspective accounts for the chronic puzzlement and empirical difficulty experienced by sociologists and historians who seek to study social movements systematically: from the top down, the rise and fall of a movement does normally have a sort of natural history. In the contemporary United States a frequent scenario runs like this: small, scattered sets of people begin voicing a grievance or making a demand; more people join them; the separate sets of concerned individuals start to communicate and coordinate; activists, leaders, spokespeople and formal associations become visible; the activists make claims to speak for larger constituencies (all blacks, all farmers, sometimes all citizens); the groups involved take action to dramatize their programs, demonstrate their strength and determination, enlist new support; powerholders respond variously by means of

concessions, bargains, cooptation, repression or alliances; the activists routinize and/or demobilize their action. Many protests stall in the earlier phases of this sequence. But the full sequence is roughly what observers of the contemporary United States mean by the rise and fall of a social movement. Other countries have their own standard sequences -- similar, but not identical. In each country, participants, powerholders and observers customarily speak of the sequence as the history of a group: of a fairly determinate set of people sharing a common interest who mobilize and then demobilize around that interest.

The group image is a mystification. In real social movements, involvement ebbs and flows, coalitions form and dissolve, fictitious organizations loom up and fade away, would-be leaders compete for recognition as the representatives of unorganized constituencies, leaders make deals with police and politicians. The parallels with the mounting of demonstrations are impressive. At the extreme (as John McCarthy and Mayer Zald have said) professional Social Movement Organizations manage to keep movements going despite little or no contact with the publics on whose behalf they claim to be acting; they manage by finding elsewhere the resources to sustain a challenge. What is more, organizers, brokers, some participants and some authorities commonly know that they are not dealing with a group durably organized around a well-defined interest. Yet they collaborate in maintaining the illusion. Why? Because the group image is essential to a social movement's political logic: the demonstration that committed, determined citizens support an alternative to the existing distribution or exercise of power. The movement leaders threaten implicitly that the committed, determined citizens will withdraw their support from the existing power structure, devote their support to some alternative, or even attack the current system. Within a system of

parliamentary representation, such a threat is often an effective way of doing political business outside the routines of parties and elections, precisely because of its possible impact on parties and elections.

The social movement's standard sequence does not result from the internal logic of a group's development. It corresponds to the process by which a national political system shapes, checks, and absorbs the challenges which come to it. In the United States, the character of electoral politics strongly affects the course of any "social movement" which passes the first stage of the standard sequence; to the extent that the grievances in question promise to become electoral issues and the people concerned with those grievances an electoral bloc, every existing group which has an interest in the next round of elections responds to the movement as a potential source of competition, collaboration or support. The American system therefore creates three main destinations for any movement:

1. dissolution;
2. merging of the organized activists into one of the major political parties; or
3. constitution of a durable pressure group devoted to influencing both the government and the major parties.

In countries where single-constituency and single-issue parties loom larger, on the other hand, the third destination is less likely. Either dissolution or the cooptation of the activists by an existing party may well occur in such a country, but a fourth outcome is also a distinct possibility:

4. creation of a new, if usually temporary, political party.

If characteristic differences in the standard paths of social movements appear from one country or era to another, then, they are more likely to be due to differences in political contexts than to differences in

the character of the people who join social movements. That domination of the paths of social movements by their political context is not easy to see; among other things, the leaders and entrepreneurs of a movement have a strong investment in making it appear to be continuous, coherent, and an outgrowth of its own internal logic.

From the bottom up, however, the coincidence of a particular interest, a particular population, a particular set of beliefs and a particular program of action which characterizes a social movement turns out to be quite temporary; when the interest, the population, the beliefs and the program move in different directions -- as they inevitably do -- the most active participants are generally quite aware of the change. In fact, they seek to control and disguise it at the same time. But in that case, should the student of social movements follow the interest, the population, the beliefs or the program? So long as we mistakenly think of a social movement as a coherent group rather than as a political product, as a solo performance rather than as an interaction, the problem remains insoluble.

The solution is nevertheless at hand. The solution is 1) to study the collective action of particular groups, and then 2) ask under what conditions, from the perspective of national centers of power, that collective action appears to form part of a social movement. We look for a sustained interaction in which mobilized people, acting in the name of a defined interest, make repeated broad demands on powerful others via means which go beyond the current prescriptions of the authorities.

This way of proceeding shakes off the confusion between abstract definition and historically specific phenomenon. It recognizes the historical specificity of the social movement. It ties the social movement, by definition, to the national state. Like elections and party politics,

social movements are ways of connecting particular interests to the national structure of power. As modes of interaction between citizens and authorities, they grew up with national politics. The implicit attachment of the general concept "social movement" to that historically specific reality clarifies why contemporary sociological models of social movements ring hollow when brought to bear on major conflicts and collective actions outside our own era.

We might, of course, take the opposite tack: instead of narrowing the notion of social movement to the historically-specific phenomenon which brought it into being, broaden our models so they break the bounds of time and place. Suppose we think that, in and out of national states, challenges to authorities or actions in pursuit of shared beliefs have important common properties. Those common properties are, in fact, quite elusive. But if they can be shown to exist, then we need a conception of social movements which does not rely implicitly on the existence of national states and national politics. In that case, nevertheless, we also need recognition of the distinctive type of social movement which came to prominence in the nineteenth century: the sustained challenge to national authorities in the context of electoral politics. In either case, the renewed models of social movements should break with the old group-logic and rebuild around the logic of political processes.

Implications and Conclusions

In proposing that we move away from group models of social movements and that we root our analyses in historical space and time, I am merely floating with a strong tide. Over the last ten years, in both Europe and America, students of social movements have been trying to escape the venerable assumptions 1) that movements are special sorts of groups, or groups in the making, 2) that such groups have their own special laws

of development. Analysts as disparate as Manuel Castells, Mayer Zald, Bo Öhngren, Anthony Oberschall and Frances Fox Piven -- to mention only writers who have held to the metaphor of movement while attempting to revise its use -- have joined the effort. They have moved in one or both of two directions: toward a deeper and more systematic appreciation of the connections between the durable interests and organization of the people involving themselves in social movements, on the one hand, and the character of the movements, on the other; toward a sustained treatment of the interaction between social movements and their political contexts. On the first count, we find Michael Useem and Roberta Ash joining European Marxists in insisting that analyses of social movements begin with a specification of the material interests which are at stake in the success or failure of a given movement -- or, for that matter, in the absence of a movement which could have occurred. On the second count, we find Michael Lipsky and William Gamson joining collective-choice theorists in attaching great importance to the organizational strategies and external coalitions adopted in the course of a social movement.

At best, my proposals take a few faltering steps further along the same paths. I propose that we:

1. jettison group models of social movements;
2. recognize social movements as sustained interactions between changing sets of challengers and authorities;
3. root our analyses of particular social movements in the everyday interests, organization and collective action of potential and actual participants in those interactions;
4. include in those participants not just the aggrieved parties but the brokers, entrepreneurs, patrons and powerholders who take part in the interaction;
5. trace the historical and contemporary interdependence between social movements and national electoral politics;
6. examine how the prevailing repertoire of collective action constrains the paths of a social movement and influences its outcome.

In short, treat the social movement as an established way of doing political business, rather than as a set of deviant individuals.

That agenda is mainly sociological; it is a set of recommendations for improving our understanding of the connections between social movements and other forms of social behavior. There is also an overlapping historical agenda which emphasizes understanding the connections between social movements and their settings in time and space. If the arguments of this paper are correct, the first emergence of the contemporary repertoire of collective action -- including the social movement, the sustained challenge to national authorities in the name of an unrepresented interest -- deserves close examination. Its timing should tell us a good deal about the timing of more general political changes (including those we sometimes loosely call "political modernization") in different countries. Its particular path and character in a given region should help us understand what sort of power structure was coming into existence, and thereby comprehend the structure within which contention goes on in that region today. The close examination of more recent changes in the prevailing repertoire should assist us in detecting gradual alterations of the political system as a whole. Finally, the student of the collective action of a particular group -- women, farmers, regional minorities, or others -- should gain plenty of insight from a systematic comparison of the repertoire of that group with the repertoires of other groups within the same national population. At this point, the history and sociology of collective action merge into a common and fruitful enterprise.

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