

Western University

From the Selected Works of Paul W Nesbitt-Larking

2005

United Kingdom

Paul W Nesbitt-Larking

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POLITICS

The Left and The Right

VOLUME 1: *The Left*

GENERAL EDITOR

Rodney P. Carlisle, Ph.D.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

A SAGE Reference Publication

 **SAGE Publications**
Thousand Oaks ■ London ■ New Delhi

Copyright © 2005 by Sage Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Volume 1 Cover Photo: President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on July 2, 1964, as Martin Luther King, Jr. looks on. Credit: LBJ Library Photo by Cecil Stoughton.

Volume 2 Cover Photo: President Gerald Ford (center, right) and former presidential candidate Ronald Reagan (center, left) show solidarity at the Republican National Convention, August 19, 1976. Credit: Courtesy Gerald R. Ford Library.

For information:



Sage Publications, Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

Sage Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
B-42, Panchsheel Enclave
Post Box 4109
New Delhi 110 017 India

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Encyclopedia of politics: The left and the right / Rodney P. Carlisle, general editor.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-4129-0409-9 (cloth)

1. Right and left (Political science)—Encyclopedias. 2. Political science—Encyclopedias.
I. Carlisle, Rodney P.

JA61.E54 2005

320'.03—dc22

2005002334

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

05 06 07 08 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

GOLSON BOOKS, LTD. STAFF:

President and Editor: Geoff Golson
Managing Editor: Laura Laurie
Design Director: Kevin Hanek
Copy Editor and Proofreader: Martha Whitt,
Lori Kranz
Indexer: Gail Liss

SAGE PUBLICATIONS STAFF:

Acquiring Editor: Rolf Janke
Editorial Assistant: Sara Tauber
Production Editor: Denise Santoyo
Proofreader: Doris Hus
Production Artist: Michelle Lee Kenny

pro-business atmosphere prevailed during the Cold War, thus making unions a necessary yet outdated form of protest.

Certain features of the CIO endured. Mass production industries were organized on an enduring basis for the first time in America history. The CIO had lifted a whole section of working-class America out of poverty and integrated them, economically and culturally, into the nation. The CIO had helped to legitimate the idea of a welfare state. But the CIO's more ambitious schemes had been defeated.

THIRD-WORLD UNIONISM

Unlike the partisan unionism of the Europeans and the politicization of the American labor movement, third-world unions have an entirely different set of issues and ideologies to contend with. Specifically, third-world workers not only have to deal with the travails of working class life, like low wages and exploitative living conditions, but they also have to contend with an intense nationalism, foreign intervention, and democratic systems that do not abide by democratic freedoms.

In Latin America, the concept of unionism consistently conflicted with the rise of powerful military and conservative groups, which viewed the unions as predominantly tools of the Communist International (Comintern). In two countries specifically, the main unions became labor confederations and acted as a challenge to the hegemony of the ruling classes. In Argentina, the General Workers Confederation acted as a counterbalance, especially during the Cold War, to the harsh repressive policies of the military regimes after 1950. In Mexico, the main labor confederation clearly has a dominant position within the political system, especially the dominant oil workers. Like Argentina and Mexico, unions in Latin America have acted as a pressure interest group constantly threatening a work stoppage whenever the political policies of the ruling classes exceeded their constitutional boundaries.

In the past few years, certain countries like Venezuela have seen the reemergence of a powerful labor confederation, acting independently of any political party. In 2001, President Hugo Chavez, who many political observers believe to be a socialist, experienced one of the greatest political work stoppages in both Latin American and Venezuelan history. Through an alliance of oil workers and anti-Chavez businesspeople, the work stoppage lasted for months and led to bloodshed and chaos in the streets of Caracas and Maracaibo. The strike showed the strength of the powerful oil

workers union, Fedepetrol, and more important, the idea that prevails in many Latin American unions, that when a national patrimony, in this case, petroleum, is believed to be under attack through a foreign ideology, the working class, through their respective unions, will be united in action.

SEE ALSO

Volume 1 Left: Third International (Comintern); Socialism; Debs, Eugene V.; South America; United States.

Volume 2 Right: Capitalism; Globalization; United States; South America.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

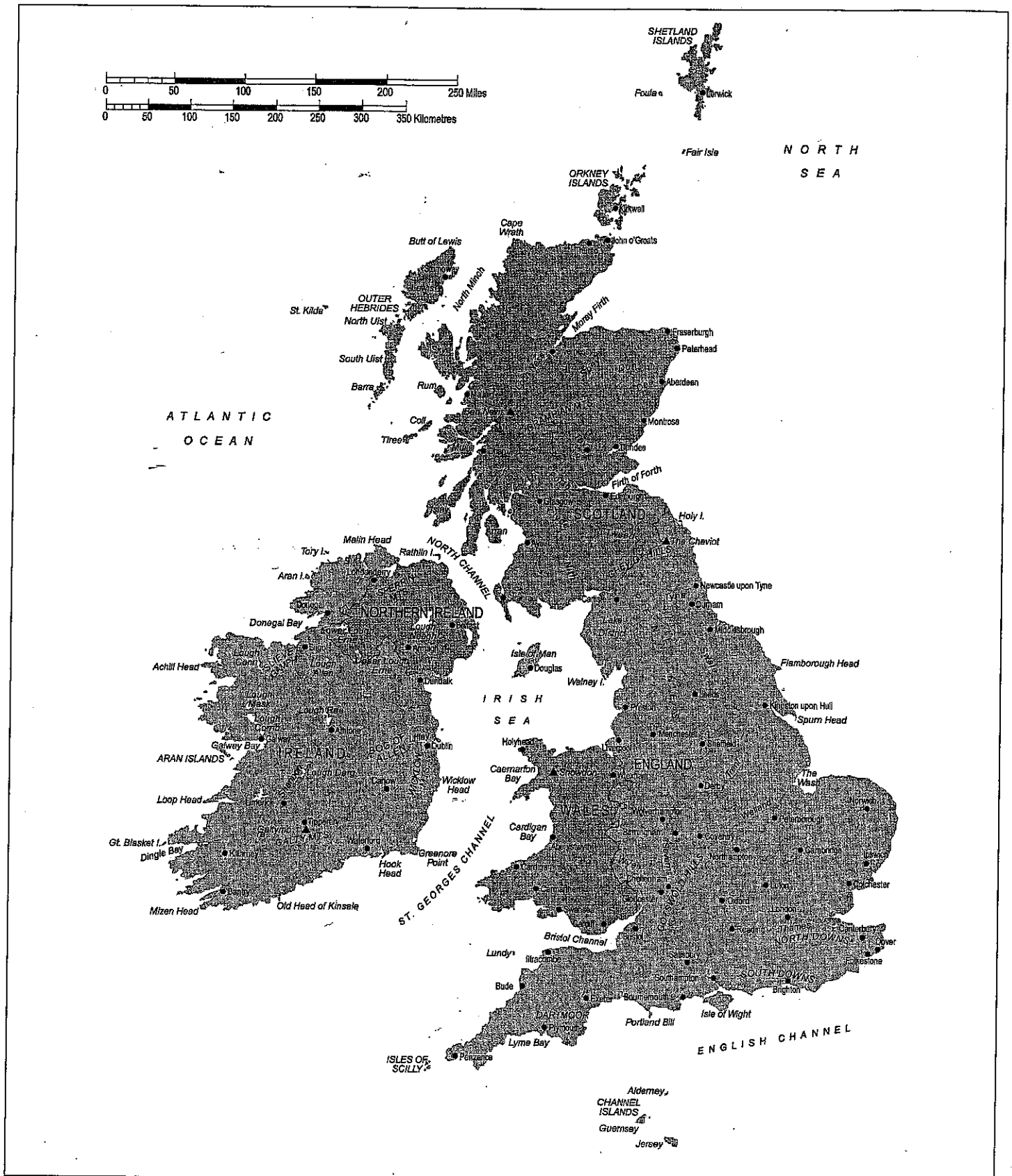
Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (Random House, 1975); Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (South End Press, 1979); Noam Chomsky, *World Orders Old and New* (Columbia University Press, 1994); Sidney Fine, *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-37* (University of Michigan Press, 1969); Mary Jones, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* (Charles Kerr, 1925); Patricia Sexton, *The War on Labor and the Left* (Westview Press, 1994).

JAIME RAMÓN OLIVARES, PH.D.
HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CENTRAL

United Kingdom

THE BROAD POLITICAL beliefs, values, and ideals of the British people are set in the context of a constitutional monarchy that has evolved into a modern political system on the basis of democracy and the rule of law. Thus, while there is an ever-present strand of deferential and traditional conservatism in the British political culture, there is also a deep-rooted liberal tradition that underpins participatory democracy, human rights, and a range of freedoms. There is also a strong socialist heritage in the United Kingdom (UK), manifest in the longevity of the British Labour Party as well as the growth of the British welfare state.

Like other western nation-states, the UK (comprising England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) has experienced major shifts in its political culture over the past 30 years. Increasingly better-educated citizens have become politically more self-confident and assertive, and at the same time decreasingly satisfied with the major political organizations, institutions, and lead-



The United Kingdom, comprising England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, has a rich tradition and history of the left, including its Labour Party, which has been in and out of office in one form or another for 100 years.

ers. Their sense of political efficacy has increased as their levels of political trust have decreased. This era has also seen the reawakening of ideologies most of which had been latent in the immediate post-World War II era, including feminism, racism, anti-racism, nationalism, regionalism, and environmentalism.

Of greater importance than the overall British political culture is the proliferation of subcultural forces resulting from the principal sociopolitical cleavages. Of these, the most important is social class. While the class structure has changed in the United Kingdom since World War II, with a sharp diminution in the proportion of manual workers and the skilled working class, social class—as measured by occupation, education, and income—retains its political salience.

Ethno-racial differences are also important in the British context. Throughout its period of decolonization, the UK attracted nonwhite immigrants from the new Commonwealth countries. In 1996, racial minority Britons numbered 3.3 million, just under 6 percent of the population. Of these, 27 percent were of Indian origin, 23 percent were of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, and 26 percent were Afro-Caribbean.

REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

While the United Kingdom is officially a unitary state, there is good reason to question this legal-constitutional status in light of recent political developments from below and above. Following a series of failed attempts, the UK finally joined the European Economic Community (now the European Union or EU) in 1971 under the Conservative government of Edward Heath. Both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party contained supporters and opponents of entry, and support for Britain's role in Europe has vacillated since the early 1970s. In a national referendum (1975), a two-thirds majority voted in favor of remaining in Europe. The UK has never been an entirely committed member of the European Union and held out against joining the European Monetary System in the 1980s and 1990s, retaining the British currency rather than adopting the euro. Despite some enthusiasm among the British for greater European unity, "Euro-skeptics" are dominant and UK policy remains cautious.

The UK has been called into question by three principal territorial fault lines in recent decades. The first is the ongoing issue of Northern Ireland. Following the partition of Ireland in 1922, the Protestant population became a majority in the six counties of Northern Ireland. The Catholics, now a minority, became increas-

ingly aggrieved at their loss of status and began to organize and mobilize for political change and civil rights in the 1960s. A series of conflicts arose and the two communities became entrenched in a protracted and bloody struggle between the Catholic Irish nationalists, who called for a reunification of Ireland, and the Protestant loyalists, who asserted the essentially British character of Northern Ireland. These communities formed armed militia, engaging in sectarian bombings and killings. A peace agreement, signed on Good Friday in 1998, offered a limited and contingent peace, but the intercommunity tensions remain and there is a climate of political volatility.

A solution to the regional and national aspirations of Scottish and Welsh citizens has been found in devolution. Devolution is a soft form of governmental decentralization that grants powers to legislate in certain fields to regional jurisdictions. Lacking the legal sovereignty of federal arrangements, devolution is nonetheless a serious decentralization of authority. A limited and yet persistent Welsh nationalism found expression in a Referendum in 1997, in which a bare majority voted in favor of devolution. There was more robust support for Scottish devolution in the same referendum. The new Welsh assembly had 60 members and passed secondary legislation—within the framework of laws passed in the English capital—over matters such as economic development, planning, health, education, and transport. The Scottish Parliament is altogether more powerful. Its 129 members possess the capacity to modify the Scottish tax rate, to pass primary legislation, and to shape the Scottish economy and society. Devolution has contributed to a renaissance of Scottish political identity and an increasingly independent approach to public policy in Scotland.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

The modern British political economy can be traced back to World War II. The Great Depression that preceded the war, as well as the war itself, had created many hardships for the British people. Poverty, inequality, sickness, and insecurity were widespread among the British public. These facts persuaded many politicians and thinkers that a new relationship between the state and the free market was essential to achieve a just and stable order. Among the most notable thinkers was John Maynard Keynes, whose name has become synonymous with the rise of the British welfare state and mixed economy. Wartime politician W.H. Beveridge wrote a highly influential report that formed the basis of

the postwar introduction of a National Health Service, universal secondary education, unemployment insurance, an expanded state pension scheme, and the provision of universal family allowances for mothers.

Both the Labour government of Prime Minister Clement Atlee and subsequent Conservative governments supported the basic provisions of the welfare state and favored an enhanced role for the state in economic planning through policy instruments such as nationalization, which took industries such as coal, steel, gas, electricity, and the railways under public ownership and control. Labour and Conservative governments also became more interventionist in attempting to use tax rates and interest rates to regulate the overall economy and thereby balance full employment with moderate inflation. Governments in this era also engaged in moderate forms of corporatism, in which the peak organizations of industry and the trade unions were brought into the heart of government itself for regular consultations on policy directions and to devise compromise solutions to wages and profit levels. The political economy of the welfare state and the mixed economy was crafted under the leadership of two chancellors of the exchequer (finance ministers), Hugh Gaitskell of the Labour Party and R.A. Butler of the Conservative Party. So closely were the economic policies of the governments associated that their policies came to be referred to as "Butskellism."

The broad consensus on macroeconomic steering policy came into question in the 1960s and 1970s. A globally overcommitted Britain discovered that its responsibilities as a former imperial power outstripped its capacity. The British economy was performing relatively poorly in comparison with its European neighbors, and the British currency, the pound sterling, was overvalued. By the early 1970s, declining productivity, combined with increasing public debt, was producing serious inflation, aggravated by the sudden quadrupling of oil prices by the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil cartel in 1973.

Contrary to the expectations of the time, a stagnating economy coincided with rising inflation, a situation referred to as "stagflation." The combination of stagflation, rising unemployment, and increasing burdens on the British welfare state caused governments to question the Butskellite assumptions of the Keynesian era. The Labour governments of 1975 to 1979 began to introduce wage controls, to limit the expansion of state spending, and to introduce monetarist economic policies to attempt to restrict the money supply and thereby to reduce inflation. The 1979 general election marked a

sudden turning point on the economic front. A revived Conservative Party under the leadership of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher introduced radical economic surgery, including placing the top priority on "wrestling inflation to the ground," through a combination of direct assaults on organized labor as well as allowing unemployment rates to increase to levels that would have been unacceptable in the immediate postwar era. In this political economy, the Thatcher government attempted to inject stimuli to growth in the private sector through macroeconomic techniques known as supply-side economics. These measures included overall deregulation of the economy, tax cuts for the wealthy and for business, reduction in state spending on the welfare state, the ending of universal programs, the development of more selective benefits, and a series of privatization measures. The era of council housing (public housing) came to an end as the Thatcher government allowed long-standing state tenants to purchase their homes. A nation of new homeowners also became a nation of shareholders as the Thatcher government floated equities in newly privatized corporations. Schools, hospitals, and social service agencies were recreated as "quasi-markets," expected to show efficiencies and to operate profitably. The era of the mixed economy was over.

The election of the Tony Blair Labour Party government in 1997 did not alter the basic direction in political economy, despite a less confrontational attitude toward the trade unions, selective increases in public spending, and modest reregulation of privatized national utilities.

THE CONSTITUTION

As a constitutional monarchy in which the principal revolutions occurred before the modern age of written declarations and constitutions, the British lack a written constitution. The 17th-century revolutions, notably the Glorious Revolution of 1688, ushered in the modern era of liberal-democratic and representative democracy in the United Kingdom in a way that modified the power of feudal institutions, such as the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the common law system, without supplanting them altogether.

Thus, there has been no formal written statement to usher in a new order. Following the Glorious Revolution, the authority of the crown was retained on the understanding that parliament would henceforth be supreme. The old order never died, it just faded away to some extent.

The contemporary constitution in the United Kingdom is grounded in a series of constitutional conventions. These conventions are commonly agreed-upon understandings that the constitution will be interpreted in certain ways and that key governmental actors will act in certain ways. Conventions are not legal agreements and have no force in law. Despite this, they are essential to the smooth functioning of the British constitution. A core constitutional convention is at the heart of the British constitution: that despite the formal constitutional authority of the crown, the "royal prerogative" will be used sparingly and in a restrained manner, leaving substantive policy decisions to the elected executive of the prime minister and cabinet (themselves entities only known through convention) and the parliament.

The authority of the "crown in parliament"—in practice, the prime minister and his government—is the basis of parliamentary or statute law, which is a further key element of the British constitution. Apart from conventions, the royal prerogative, and statute laws, the most important element of the British constitution is the accumulation of common law through centuries of court decisions in specific legal cases. The common law incorporates certain historically important precedents such as the writ of habeas corpus and the Magna Carta of 1215, which between them establish the basis of the Rule of Law. The principles of justice contained in the Rule of Law ensure that the law is applied in a manner that is fair, open, consistent, and equal. Since the 1970s, the British constitution incorporates elements of European law, notably as British law relates to Europe and also with respect to European human rights legislation.

Not everyone is happy with the unwritten British constitution and some, like the group Charter 88, are calling for a formal written document to deal with the ever-present possibility that basic rights of British people are denied.

PARTIES, GROUPS, AND MOVEMENTS

Using a single member, simple majority or "first-past-the-post" principle, the British electoral system mathematically favors the existence of two major parties of the center-left and center-right that alternate in power. These two parties are, respectively, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. The party that gains the plurality of votes in a general election is normally favored disproportionately in the eventual distribution of seats. Depending on the particular result, the second-place party may also gain a proportionate share of seats

or better. Minor parties suffer from extreme disproportionality. It is for this reason that many in the United Kingdom have been calling for substantial electoral reform and why the Jenkins Report on the Electoral System (1998) called for an entirely new proportionate electoral system for the constituents of the United Kingdom.

The British Labour Party began its life outside parliament in the latter years of the 19th century as the Labour Representation Committee. Its purpose was to represent working men in the House of Commons. It made modest gains in the election of 1906 and by the 1920s was beginning to displace the Liberal Party as one of the two parties of government. The first minority Labour government was in 1924, and its first majority government was in 1945. The postwar Labour government created the welfare state and was still very much a party of the trade unions and traditional socialism. The modern party, under leaders Neil Kinnock and Tony Blair, has moved away from both of these pillars. The influence of the unions has diminished substantially, while the historical socialist "clause 4," sacred to many in the party for so long, has been abandoned. The modern New Labour Party is a mass membership, leader-centered, sophisticated marketing machine, which has been able to attract the electoral support of the moderate center in British political spectrum in recent years.

The British Conservative Party, began its life as a loose coalition of MPs in the House of Commons in the 18th century. Grounded in pragmatism, tradition, and adaptability, the party has successfully made the transition from the traditional Tory party of the 19th century to a modern party that incorporates elements of neoliberal fiscal beliefs with elements of social conservatism, notably a continued emphasis on British nationalism, law and order, and the social sanctity of the family.

The Liberal Democrats are the result of the union of the long-established Liberal Party and a former splinter group from the Labour Party, known as the Social Democratic Party. Officially established in 1988, the Liberal Democrats are a progressive party of the center left, whose nonsocialism initially separated them from the Labour Party. They have been sympathetic to a range of progressive causes, from regional and national aspirations to environmental integrity, constitutional reform, including most importantly reform of the electoral system, and a more positive approach toward European integration.

There is a range of small, but important, nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales and a series of unionist

parties in Northern Ireland. While the official aspirations of both the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru (the Welsh nationalist party) continue to be for independence in Europe, both parties have benefited from the recent devolution of power from the capital, granting limited forms of self-rule.

There is a plethora of interest groups and social movements that, while not seeking elected office, nonetheless seek to influence government policy. These include major organizations such as the Trades Unions Congress, the Confederation of British Industry, and the National Farmers Union. There is also a series of nongovernmental organizations that represent the social movements. These include Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and Oxfam, all included in the left of center in Britain.

SEE ALSO

Volume 1 Left: Labour Party, UK; Socialism.
Volume 2 Right: Thatcher, Margaret; Capitalism; Reagan, Ronald; United Kingdom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anthony H. Birch, *The British System of Government* (Routledge, 1998); Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe, David McKay, and Ken Newton, *The New British Politics* (Longman, 2004); Bill Coxall, Robert Leach, and Lynton Robins, *Contemporary British Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); John Dearlove and Peter Saunders, *Introduction to British Politics* (Polity Press, 2000); Bill Jones and Dennis Kavanagh, *British Politics Today* (Manchester University Press, 2003); Bill Jones, Dennis Kavanagh, Michael Moran, and Philip Norton, *Politics UK* (Pearson, 2004); Dennis Kavanagh, *British Politics: Continuities and Change* (Oxford University Press, 2000); John Kingdom, *Government and Politics in Britain: An Introduction* (Polity Press, 2003).

PAUL NESBITT-LARKING, PH.D.
 HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CANADA

founding. The American creed stresses such values as individuality, liberty, unity, self-government, diversity and equality.

At times, these values may be contradictory. For example, individuality may come under attack when segments of society feel they are disenfranchised or disadvantaged or discriminated against, and therefore these segments of society believe they are unable to equally compete with others in society. In a country as diverse as the United States, people will have different opinions regarding the core values of the country, the direction they believe the country should move toward, and the methods of governmental and societal change. To the left side of liberalism on the political spectrum is social democracy and socialism, and to the far left, communism. These ideologies have existed and persisted in the United States, although they have never dominated American political thought. However, a lack of political domination does not mean that these ideologies have not had an effect on American political thought.

The American party system is a two-party dominated system, and this means that only two political parties have a real chance of dominating either the House of Representatives or the Senate, or of having their nominee elected president. Except for a brief period known as the Era of Good Feeling (1820–24), there have always been two dominant parties in America, although it has not always been the same two parties. Since the Civil War, party politics in America have been dominated by the Democrats and the Republicans (and although these two parties have persisted, they have both altered in their ideologies). This does not mean that other parties have not formed and existed and had an impact on American political life. Other parties, usually referred to as third parties, may represent ideas from either end of the political spectrum. Currently, there are many third parties that are conservative. Current parties that are left of center include the Communist Party, the Freedom Socialist Party/Radical Women, the Grassroots Party, the Green Party, the Labor Party, the Light Party, the Natural Law Party, the New Party, the New Union Party, the Peace and Freedom Party, the Revolution, the Socialist Action, the Socialist Equality Party, the Socialist Labor Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the World Workers Party, and the Young Communist Party, to name a few.

Third parties differ broadly in their origins and their intentions. Some third parties have been literally imported into the United States. For example, European radicals fleeing persecution in Europe in the mid-

United States

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA is a liberal democratic country, and the basic elements of democracy (majority rule, government by popular consent, one person one vote, and competitive elections, to name a few) are revered. In this liberal democratic country, certain core values have persisted since America's