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Book Reviews
Comparative Politics

In the Name of Social Democracy: The Great Transformation from 1945 to the Present. By Gerassimos Moschonas. New York: Verso, 2001. 320p. \$70.00 cloth, \$22.00 paper

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For students of social democracy, the big debate of the contemporary era concerns change: Has the Left been transformed in fundamental ways over the past decades, and if so, how and why? Gerassimos Moschonas's new book attempts to give a definitive answer to at least the first of these questions by marshaling an impressive amount of evidence in a wide range of areas relevant to the development of social democracy. As the book title indicates, he falls firmly into the camp of those who believe that the Left has indeed undergone a "great transformation." As he puts it: "[A]ccording to the central hypothesis of this book ... we are witnessing a recasting of the European social democracies ... [it is] the end of a political and social cycle" (p. 6). But Moschonas understands that such a claim alone is both commonplace and unhelpful; a real contribution to the debate requires clearly delineating what social democracy was and what it has become, and as anyone who knows the literature on social democracy can attest, this is easier said than done.

To tackle this surprisingly difficult task Moschonas therefore sets out to precisely document the nature and extent of the changes social democracy has undergone during the postwar era, and here is where the book will be most helpful to scholars of the Left and European politics more generally. The book is comprehensive and well organized thematically and provides an excellent review of the secondary literature tracking the development of social democracy. The book begins with a discussion of the myriad ways in which social democracy has been defined, and Moschonas draws primarily upon two of these traditions in particular when constructing his own tale of social democracy's transformation. In his view, in its "classic" form, social democracy was defined both by its championing of a distinctive political, economic, and social project and by the support and representation of the working (or lower) classes.

The bulk of the book then proceeds to analyze the evolution of social democracy's organization, electorate, and program, and in each of these areas, Moschonas argues that fundamental changes have occurred. Beginning with party organization, he notes that social democratic parties were the first modern parties—they aimed at mobilizing and socializing the masses and therefore developed complex and sophisticated internal organizations, large membership bases, and a wide range of affiliated organizations. However, during the past decades, all of these characteristics have faded away. Social democratic parties have become more leadership oriented, with experts and specialists rather than memberships setting policy. The social democratic milieu has become a thing of the past, and the movement's socialization and mobilization capacities have declined accordingly; membership has dropped dramatically. The consequence of all this has been that the "social democratic organization conceived as a 'community of solidarity' no longer exists." Social democratic parties have lost the organizational capability as well as the ambition "to fulfill a function that was traditionally theirs: 'the creation and preservation of collective identities'" (p. 146).

With regard to social democracy's electorate, here too dramatic changes have occurred. Moschonas argues that up through the 1960s, social democratic parties were parties of the working class; in particular, the most successful social democratic parties were those that mobilized the working class best. However, beginning in the 1970s, a decline in working-class support set in at the same time that white-collar workers, and public sector employees in particular, began to switch their sympathies to social democracy. The consequence has been a reshaping of social democracy's support base: For the first time in their histories, social democratic parties have become truly "interclassist." Furthermore, Moschonas argues that as a result of "the salaried middle strata's massive entry into the organization," this group has replaced the working class as the movement's "ruling social category" (p. 225). A critical consequence of social democracy's new social profile is that the movement currently finds itself with a much less stable electoral base than it had in the past, since voting is now the result less of class or tradition than of "instrumental" calculations.

Finally, Moschonas finds that social democracy's program has undergone a critical transformation. During the early postwar decades, social democracy was defined by its championing of things like corporatism and Keynesianism, stances that allowed the party to reconcile efficiency and equality. In particular, corporatism served to validate the role of trade unions and to bend public policy to interests of wage labor, while at the same time promoting social stability and wage moderation. Keynesianism, meanwhile, justified an active state and allowed social democrats to argue that it was possible to further working-class and general interests at the same time. However, over the past decades, social democrats largely abandoned these policies and have more or less begun to toe the neoliberal line. Particularly critical, according to the author, is that social democracy has "for the first time elevated the market and devalued the utility of the economically active state." It has thus made "a decisive ideological leap" and abandoned its position as the champion of "social capitalism" (pp. 293, 292). The result is that there no longer exists any "coherent, specifically social democratic project" (p. 294).

In short, Moschonas makes a powerful case that on the basis of all the critical criteria he identifies, social democracy has indeed undergone a "great transformation." By extensively laying out the nature and extent of this transformation, *In the Name of Social Democracy* nicely complements other broad surveys of the movement, such as Donald Sassoon's *One Hundred Years of Socialism* (1996), as well as narrower but more in-depth treatments of particular aspects of social democracy's development, such as Stefano Bartolini's *The Political Mobilization of the Left* (2000) or Tom Notermans's *Money, Markets and the State* (2000). However, critical questions relating to both the history and future of social democracy remain. For example, while Moschonas does an excellent job of documenting social democracy's change, there is no way of knowing how these changes compare to the changes that have occurred in other parties and movements: If we examined the electorates, organizations, and programs of Christian Democratic parties over the past decades, would they show comparable levels of change? If so, then what we are perhaps facing is a general transformation of European polities, rather than a specifically social democratic phenomenon. Similarly, we need to know more about why social democracy has changed in the ways it has. Is the movement's transformation the necessary result of a reshaping of society and economy over the past decades, or the consequence of conscious choices on the part of leaders and activists? Finally, are the changes that have occurred permanent or cyclical? After 1945 extreme Left and extreme Right parties were forced to accommodate to social democracy's agenda; now the situation seems to be the reverse, with social democracy battered by the forces of the new Left and the new Right. Will there be a shift back to social democratic hegemony or are we really in a new political era?

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