



Reworking Class



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Social Class and the Reemergence of the Radical Right in Contemporary Germany

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IN RECENT YEARS THE RADICAL RIGHT HAS REEMERGED AS A SERIOUS threat across the advanced capitalist world. Right-wing movements and political parties have gained strength in Austria, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Flanders, and since the end of the 1980s they have made gains in Russia, Romania, and other parts of Eastern Europe (Betz 1994; Merkl and Weinberg 1993; Kirfel and Oswalt 1991). Jörg Haider's Austrian Freedom Party has been the most successful right-wing electoral force, attracting over 22 percent of the electorate (one million voters) in the December 1995 national elections and 28 percent in the 1996 Austrian elections for the European Parliament. Le Pen's National Front has gained somewhat smaller percentages—15.3 percent in the most recent French presidential elections—but a larger overall number of voters (4.5 million). In Italy the neofascist Movimento Sociale Italiano actually became part of a coalition government in 1994. And in the United States, at least 250 right-wing paramilitary organizations were operating by mid-1995, forty-five of them with ties to neo-Nazi or other white supremacist groups.¹

1. Cf. *Klanwatch Intelligence Report*, no. 78 (June 1995); and deposition by Brian Levine, Southern Poverty Law Center, before the Militia hearings of the Crime Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, 2 Nov. 1995. Thanks to Anne O'Neill for tracking down these figures.

Should Germany still have a privileged place in the study of right-wing radicalism, fifty years after the downfall of Nazism? Hasn't the final chapter on German "exceptionalism" been written, at least since the collapse of East Germany (Kocka 1990; Steinmetz 1996)? Wasn't the thesis of a "German mind" peculiarly disposed to fascism discounted long ago? All "reasonable" observers have agreed that the Federal Republic has proven itself to be a stable, exemplary democracy. By singling out Germany for a study of the radical right, are we not perpetuating an unfair and obsolete stigma? The single most deadly incident of right-wing violence in recent years took place not in Germany but in Oklahoma City. Radical right-wing parties have been less successful electorally in Germany than almost everywhere else in Europe, and no radical right-wing party has managed to clear the 5 percent hurdle required for representation in the Bundestag.² Comparative European survey data rarely find Germans to be the *most* ethnocentric group of Europeans, even if they usually rank near the top of the list (Willems et al. 1993, chap. 2).

Nonetheless, there are good reasons for focusing on Germany. Right-wing violence has been more brutal and sustained in Germany than elsewhere in Western Europe during the past five years. Hate crimes reached a peak in June 1993, with around fifty incidents reported daily (Willems et al. 1993, 100). The German right has specialized in collective pogroms and deadly nocturnal firebombings directed against migrant laborers and asylum seekers. The German case also presents a methodological advantage in that Germany's "unique" relationship to historical fascism throws into sharp relief the continuities and discontinuities between the contemporary far right and the interwar period. Worries about the Nazi past are also responsible for the relative wealth of information on contemporary radical right-wing activities and opinions in Germany. These data allow us to identify the social class location of right-wing voters and hate crime participants, revealing an overwhelming preponderance of male workers. This information then provides us with the question guiding this paper—why the class base of fascism has become more proletarian over the course of the twentieth century.

2. The right-wing Republikaner (Republicans) received 7.5 percent of the vote in the 1989 West Berlin elections, 10.9 percent in the state of Baden-Württemberg in 1992, and 7.1 percent in the 1989 European elections; and they are represented in other local political assemblies. See Falter 1994, 18–21.

There has been a flood of writing on the radical right in recent years, but the explanatory problem has rarely been framed in a satisfactory manner. Many analysts ignore evidence about the movement's social base. Some have traced right-wing violence to the antiauthoritarian educational practices of the sixties generation,³ even though arrest data show an almost complete absence of children from the more educated social strata within the movement (Willems et al. 1993, chap. 6). Moreover, those writers who do emphasize the movement's proletarian base have typically not been able to say exactly why it is anomalous. Traditional Marxism and political sociology assume that there are certain timeless features of working-class existence or objective class interests which make the turn to fascism paradoxical (e.g., Lipset 1963). But the overrepresentation of manual workers in the movement is a surprise for historical, not sociological, reasons. Until recently, German far-right movements have had less success recruiting workers than other social groups.

A further shortcoming of much of the existing literature is that its explanations tend to focus on the far right in either western or eastern Germany, but cannot make sense of both. The most influential approach in current German sociology explains right-wing radicalism in terms of the pressures on the "victims of modernization" of contemporary "risk society" (Heitmeyer 1988, 1992a; Beck 1986). This perspective must resort to ad hoc explanations to explain the rise of a radical right-wing movement in the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR), where pressures of competition and hyper-individualization were minimal (cf. Heitmeyer 1992b). Another set of explanations apply *only* to the east. The radical right-wing leanings of some East Germans have been traced to their experience of cradle-to-grave social security or to the GDR's authoritarianism, parochialism, and homogeneity (e.g., Farin and Seidel-Pielen 1992). The exclusive focus on the east was intelligible in the period immediately following German unification, when the most egregious violations seemed to be occurring in the eastern *Länder* (provinces). But the eastern emphasis became implausible with the firebombing atrocities in Mölln, Solingen, and other western cities. Bifurcated approaches cannot make sense of the similar rates of violence in both halves of Germany, the greater number of deaths attributable to right-wing attacks in the western states, the weaker electoral success of far-right parties in the east

3. "Linke Lehrer, rechte Schüler," *Der Spiegel* 47, no. 4 (1993): 41-45.

since 1990, or the fact that most far-right propaganda has come from the west.⁴ Undeterred, some West German authors continue to insist that “the new right-wing extremist violence originated in eastern Germany” (Veen, Lepszy, and Mnich 1993, 71) or that the violence was “transferred” from the east to the west (Bergmann and Erb 1994, 9).⁵

The challenge, however, is to come up with a theoretical framework that can account for the similarities in radical right-wing politics in east and west, including the central role played by workers in both movements. One option is to focus on historical continuities with the shared pre-1945 German past. But can forty years of separate history in two radically different political systems really have mattered so little? Did it make any difference that some Germans were socialized into a “liberal-democratic” culture and others into an “antifascist” one? Did East and West German families somehow bequeath Nazi ideologies to their children and grandchildren in ways that went largely unnoticed for decades? Or was there a “convergence” between capitalist and socialist systems with lasting effects on political behavior?

These questions bring us back to the issue of German peculiarity. We need to explain not only the similarities between eastern and western Germany, but also why “racist violence in Germany [has been] more sustained and brutal than in every other West European country” (Rommelspacher 1995, 26). We need to account for the unique *form* of right-wing violence in Germany, especially its choice of targets, which range from disabled people to Holocaust memorials. Why is anti-Semitism so prominent in a country that destroyed most of its Jews? Does the current movement simply represent a resurgence of “incurable Germanness” (Sichrovsky 1993)?

4. During the first half of the 1980s, almost all of the radical right-wing rock bands originated in the western Länder (Giessen 1993). The largest number of right-wing offenses have occurred in the western state of Nordrhein-Westfalen (see *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 January 1995). Comparative assessments depend heavily on how rates of right-wing violence are operationalized. For example, eastern states have shown higher rates of antiforeigner violence *per foreigner*, while western states have had greater *absolute* numbers of attacks. Surveys have often found that antiforeigner attitudes are higher in the east and anti-Semitism higher in the west (see Bergmann and Erb 1995). See Steinmetz 1994 for a discussion of the contending methods of measuring violence and the problems with hate crime statistics in general.

5. Some of these “eastern”-oriented explanations may of course have a partial validity; after all, disparate causes can produce similar results. Indeed, the account I sketch below identifies different western and eastern pathways to a common intermediate outcome (Fordism), which then partially explains similarities in right-wing militancy.

Although non-German observers are quick to connect the current movement to the Nazi past, many German writers dismiss continuity arguments, criticizing a “one-sided orientation toward past forms of right-extremist movements, particularly the Nazi regime” (Kowalsky and Schroeder 1994, 55). This dismissive stance stems as much from an effort to appear “scientific” as from German resentment against being reminded of Nazi crimes. In light of the fact that the far right has arisen simultaneously across Europe, we obviously need to explore the relationship between “uniquely German” factors and more general ones.

The account developed here is historical in three main respects. First, I describe the transition from Fordist to “flexibilized” post-Fordist forms of production, consumption, and culture within a regulation-theoretical framework. Regulation theory is deeply historical in terms of its concepts and its approach to explanation. Second, the present account is historical insofar as it revolves centrally around constructions of memory and identity. Contemporary right-wing violence can be understood as driven in part by a working-class “moral economy” generated by East and West German Fordism and by a nostalgia for an idealized version of this Fordist era. But the specific ideology of the radical right and its array of enemies cannot be explained entirely in terms of a declining, idealized Fordism. A third historical dimension must be introduced, involving the survival and reactivation of even older, pre-Fordist ideological materials. The ideological glue that binds together contemporary far-right ideology is rooted in historical Nazism, but this third aspect of historical causality also includes strands of political culture that predate Nazism.

The account is developed as follows. I begin with a discussion of the concept of right-wing radicalism. The second section summarizes what we know about the far right in contemporary Germany, especially its social class base, and compares this to the social composition of earlier German right-wing movements. The third section sketches a model of West and East German Fordism and their contribution to working-class subjectivity and to the overall salience of social class. The fourth section links these constructions of Fordism to contemporary neofascism, drawing on E. P. Thompson’s concept of the “moral economy.” The fifth section considers the role of earlier ideologies, especially classical Nazism, in the contemporary movement. I conclude with some comments on the implications of contemporary working-class participation in far-right movements for theories of social class.

The Contemporary Radical Right

Right-wing radicalism is constituted in relation to the rest of society, and cannot be defined in a timeless, abstract fashion. *Contemporary* right-wing radicalism—a historical phenomenon—can be defined as a cluster of six linked elements (cf. Heitmeyer 1988, 1992b):

(1) A view of the world as consisting of incompatible groups defined by essential, incommensurable differences rooted in biology and/or culture; this sociological map is typically linked to *racist* and *nationalist* ideologies;

(2) A *social Darwinist* belief in the ubiquity (and positive functions) of the struggle for existence;

(3) Demands for the *exclusion* or elimination of “inferior” groups from the community through policies ranging from apartheid to expulsion to physical destruction;

(4) Support for *nondemocratic*, authoritarian styles of decision making and governance;

(5) Acceptance of private vigilante *violence* against enemies;

(6) Hatred of the “left,” however that is currently defined.

But this definition is only partial, containing ideological codes, or clusters of “ideologemes,” that recur across contemporary geographical settings. Right-wing radicalism in Germany, France, and the United States shares these six items. This definition thus does not refer to contemporary right-wing radicalism in a specific country or region. Two additional specifications must be added for a definition of contemporary German right-wing radicalism:

(7) A positive stance towards the Nazi past, ranging from unequivocal admiration for the Third Reich to a more nuanced sympathy, along the lines of “it was generally a good idea with a few negative sides” or “it was good during the 1930s, bad thereafter.” By contrast, some right-wing movements outside Germany have a more ambivalent view of the Third Reich, and a few are actively hostile to it (cf. Sprinzak 1993).

(8) A vicious form of anti-Semitism. Because of the Holocaust and Nazism, anti-Semitism plays a unique role in the contemporary German far right. German neo-Nazis regard Jews as their primary enemies (cf.

interview with Ingo Hasselbach, former leader of the neo-Nazi National Alternative Party, in *Die Woche*, 28 July 1994).

Found in isolation, these individual elements do not necessarily constitute right-wing radicalism. Conservative parties may endorse the first two items and support mild versions of the third and seventh while continuing to embrace democracy and the rule of law. Positive memories of the Nazi period are widespread among the older generations, even among Social Democratic workers (Niethammer 1986). It is the *combination* of these eight elements that defines German right-wing radicalism.

The Return of the Repressed

Xenophobic attitudes and violent hate crimes began to increase in West Germany during the early 1980s, and right-wing skinhead attacks soon appeared, somewhat unexpectedly, in the GDR as well.⁶ German unification marked a sharp increase in right-wing offenses. Between January 1990 and early October 1995, there were at least 1,955 right-wing offenses resulting in injury or death, or almost one incident daily in all of Germany (*Berliner Zeitung*, 30 October 1995, 6). Right-wing hate crimes rose from 7,684 in 1992 to 10,561 in 1993 and then fell slightly to 10,000 in 1994 and 8,000 in 1995.⁷ At the same time, the “baseline” level of hate crime between peaks of right-wing violence has crept up steadily (Ohlemacher 1994; Willems et al. 1993, 99–100). The number of specifically anti-Semitic attacks has also increased sharply since unification: from 367 in 1991 to 656 in 1993, to 1,366 in 1994, and to 1,155 in 1995 (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6 July 1995; Verfassungsschutzbericht 1995). Although at the time of this writing the radical right is no longer the German media’s favorite theme, almost every weekend sees a renewed explosion of violence.

Even more startling than the *quantity* of hate crime is the extraordinary range of right-wing targets and enemies. The German right’s victims

6. See “Die Ausländerfeindlichkeit wächst,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 214 (16 September 1982), 6. The first Neo-Nazi murders occurred in 1985 in Hamburg (Seidel-Pielen 1993; Zimmermann and Saalfeld 1993, 63). For an overview of right-wing extremism in the GDR before 1989, see Brück 1991.

7. See *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 7 July 1995; and interview with BKA (Federal Crime Bureau) head Hans-Ludwig Zacher in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 January 1996.

include Jews (or people believed to be Jewish), leftists, Turkish families who have lived in the Federal Republic for several generations, Gypsies (Sinti and Roma), Africans, Poles, Vietnamese, immigrant workers and seekers of political asylum, the homeless, physically disabled people, or anyone else who is deemed an outsider. Other common targets of right-wing wrath are inanimate objects such as Jewish cemeteries, Holocaust memorials, left-wing youth centers, or squat houses. Many incidents are smaller in scale, hovering ambiguously between vandalism or provocation and hate crime but still contributing to an atmosphere of uncertainty.⁸

There are around 50,000 right-wing activists in Germany today, with many more far-right sympathizers and voters (Steinmetz 1994). The Republikaner Party alone has about 20,000 members according to recent estimates (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6 July 1995). Membership in far-right and neo-Nazi parties and groups is extremely difficult to determine, but is thought to have grown from around 19,000 in 1982 to 64,500 in 1993, and then to have fallen back slightly to 56,600 in 1994 (Verfassungsschutzbericht 1995). Far rightists have also made inroads into the German fraternities (*Burschenschaften*), with their 26,000 members.⁹

What is the social background of the right-wing radicals? Recent German electoral surveys indicate that skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers are much more likely than better-educated or better-paid strata to vote for the radical right, as are the unemployed (Falter 1994, 65, 99–100; Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 180). Farmers and the self-employed also give above-average levels of support to German radical right-wing parties (Falter 1994, 38–39, 99–100; Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 170–81). Voting patterns also differ in the eastern and western states. The typical radical right-wing voter in the west is a married male worker over forty-five, living in a small or medium-sized town, and with a below-average level of income and education. In the east, the typical far-right voter is younger, single, and more likely to be a skilled worker (*Facharbeiter*) than an unskilled one (Falter 1994, 99, 106).

8. This unsettling mix is illustrated by a recent incident involving an installation at the Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin, a train station from which prisoners were deported to concentration camps during World War II. Sixteen gaunt, Giacometti-style figures, wearing different-colored triangles, were positioned as if walking toward the station's ruined portal. By late October 1995, half of the sculptures had been seriously damaged, and the installation had to be removed. *Zitty*, no. 22 (1995), 12.

9. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 April 1993. According to Ingo Hasselbach, the *Burschenschaften* have helped "educate" new Neo-Nazis (*Tageszeitung*, 18 April 1993).

The most extensive study of participants in xenophobic hate crimes is based on all police investigations in six western and three eastern Länder between January 1991 and April 1992. The majority of the perpetrators were skilled (63.7 percent) or unskilled (29.9 percent) workers or apprentices. Almost all were male (96 percent) and under twenty-five, with a modest level of education. Most participants in hate crimes are from mainstream social backgrounds, not marginal ones. Almost 76 percent of the perpetrators came from households headed by two married parents. The percentage of participants who were unemployed at the time of arrest was high (18 percent), but not dramatically higher than the average jobless rate for young men in Germany in this period (Willems et al. 1993, 122, 116, 124). As in other studies, only a minority of hate crime participants (25.2 percent) were formally connected to far-right organizations, even if many were exposed indirectly to neo-Nazism through right-wing rock bands. Indeed, only 12 percent of the identified perpetrators of anti-Semitic offenses during the first half of 1994 belonged to right-extremist groups, according to the German Federal Crime Bureau (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 October 1994).

There is no a priori reason to expect workers to be less racist or xenophobic than people from any other social class. But the disproportionately working-class base of contemporary right-wing extremism is historically unique, at least in Germany.¹⁰ The German working class proved relatively immune to right-wing radicalism and anti-Semitism from the late nineteenth century through 1933. Workers continued to be underrepresented within the radical right throughout the Nazi period and during the first two decades after the war in West Germany.

Most historians have concluded that the working class “remained almost untouched” (Jochmann 1988, 161) by anti-Semitic agitation during the Kaiserreich (1870–1918).¹¹ The court chaplain-turned-politician Adolf Stoecker tried unsuccessfully in the late 1870s to lure workers away from the Social Democrats to his anti-Semitic movement, but soon shifted his focus to the middle classes, university students, and committed Protestants (Brakelmann, Greschat, and Jochmann 1982). Workers’ relative immunity to anti-Semitism during this period is trace-

10. The same holds for Italy: the Italian Fascist Party “had an even lower percentage of workers in it than the NSDAP”—only about 17 percent in 1921 (Poulantzas 1979, 219).

11. An important exception to this was the increasing use after 1890 of anti-Semitic stereotypes in cartoons and jokes in the Social Democratic popular press. See Leuschen-Seppel 1978, esp. 252ff.; also Massing 1949, 151–69.

able partly to Social Democratic agitation.¹² Discrimination against Polish-speaking workers in the industrial Ruhr came from the general population as well as state officials, but there was little violence against immigrants of the sort seen in France during the same period.¹³ German workers also showed little support for the other ideologies and policies during this period that generated some of the “raw materials” for twentieth-century Nazism, such as colonial racism, racial eugenics, and the *jus sanguinis* that governed German citizenship.¹⁴

Workers were also underrepresented within the ranks of the Nazi Party (NSDAP) relative to their percentage in the labor force.¹⁵ Certainly, recent historical research has refuted the long-standing view of the NSDAP as a party of the petty bourgeoisie, indicating that the Nazis drew support from all social classes and strata, including the proletariat (Falter 1991, Kater 1983). But voting statistics show that the Nazis received less support in districts with larger percentages of industrial, service-sector, and white-collar workers (Falter 1991, 224). There was an especially strong negative relation between Nazi voting and the unemployment rate in a given electoral district (Falter 1991, 292–314). Once in control of the state, the Nazis were able to gain the compliance of many workers through economic recovery, social and leisure programs, and massive political repression (Lüdtke 1994, 190; Zimmermann 1986). Membership among wage earners increased (Mason 1995, 246), and Hitler himself was just as popular among workers as in the general German population (Kershaw 1989). Many older West German workers later looked back on the 1930s as a sort of golden age (Herbert 1987). Yet workers were never *overrepresented* among the strong supporters of Nazism, and “there is very little evidence that German workers became enthusiastic anti-Semites” (Mason 1995, 243–44, 258).¹⁶

12. Brakelmann, Greschat, and Jochmann 1982, 161. Protestant workers’ growing alienation from the church also played a role.

13. Klessmann 1978. Of course, most “Polish” workers in the Ruhr came from Prussian, not Russian, Poland, and were therefore officially German citizens. On popular anti-immigrant violence in pre-World War I France, see Néré (1959).

14. Indeed, before 1914 the SPD was the only major opponent in the Reichstag of overseas colonialism and the racializing *jus sanguinis*; see Kautsky 1907; Schröder 1979; Hyrkanen 1986; Brubaker 1992, 120. Some SPD thinkers embraced eugenics (cf. Steinmetz 1993, 202).

15. See Kater 1983, 243–63; Falter 1991, 227. According to official party statistics, workers constituted 28–33 percent of Nazi Party membership between September 1930 and March 1933.

16. See the evidence on Nazi Party joiners between 1933 and 1945 in Kater 1983, 252–53. Mason also shows that militant workers engaged in “countless acts of workplace indiscipline and insubordination” (Mason 1995, 23), but it is unclear whether this should be read as resistance to the regime.

Nazism thus does not seem to have rearranged the relations between class and politics to such an extent that German workers were in the forefront of the right wing after 1945. Indeed, the Social Democrats typically attracted over 50 percent of the working-class vote in West German national elections from 1953 through the end of the 1980s, especially in the economically decisive Ruhr valley region (cf. Ballerstedt and Glatzer 1979, 451; Cerny 1990, 284). And until the end of the 1960s, most “neo”-Nazis were actually former Nazis (Lewis 1991, chap. 2). The first signs of change appeared during the economic recession of the late 1960s, when the far-right NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) experienced a sudden burst of electoral success. In contrast to the Nazi voter of the 1920s, the typical NPD voter was now a manual worker with low educational attainment (Falter 1994, 61; Scheuch and Klingemann 1967).¹⁷ The radical right’s strongly proletarian base is thus a relatively recent phenomenon; the theoretical challenge is to explain this change.

The influential “victims of modernization” perspective cannot explain why the contemporary movement receives stronger support from skilled and employed workers than from workers whose “losses” are more immediate, especially the unskilled and unemployed. Nor can this approach make sense of the rise of right-wing radicalism in the still socialist GDR during the 1980s or explain why rates of hate crimes have been roughly the same in both parts of postunification Germany, despite the worse economic conditions in the east. Nor can current versions of “modernization theory” illuminate the historically specific form and contents of radical right ideology.

To understand the forms of subjectivity generating the current right-wing rebellion, it is necessary to make a detour through West and East German society during the 1960s and 1970s. Specifically, we need to examine the constitution of working-class identities and expectations—the cultural process of working-class formation—during the period of Fordism in West and East Germany.

17. It is much more difficult to assess right-wing tendencies in the GDR before 1989, since they were officially nonexistent. Workers in East Germany were at least superficially resocialized into antifascism, and many East German workers went through the motions. Yet there is also growing evidence of anti-Semitism within the SED, especially in the 1950s. See Hell forthcoming; Herf 1994; Wolffsohn 1995.

The Golden Age of Fordism in East and West Germany

The concept of Fordism (defined below) is based in regulation theory.¹⁸ As we will see, regulation theory is especially useful in the present context because it permits a nonreductionist understanding of the effects of economic change on working-class interests and subjectivities. Regulation theory is a quasi-Marxist approach to explaining macrosocial change which attempts to overcome many of the shortcomings (e.g., teleology and functionalism) of older versions of Marxism without abandoning the Marxian emphasis on the dynamics of capital accumulation. Regulation theory exchanges the figure of historical necessity for the figure of contingency and accident in politico-economic change. Its only general assumption is that profit rates eventually decline when the social arrangements underpinning capitalist accumulation begin to fall apart (Lipietz 1990, 153). A "regulatory crisis" typically provokes a diverse array of social actors to begin searching for specific and general solutions. General structural features of capitalism virtually assure that a solution will be pursued but not that one will be found. The outcome of a regulatory crisis is the product of multiple actors and institutions intersecting in unpredictable ways.

The most abstract concept within regulation theory is the notion of *regulation* itself, which refers to institutions and norms that permit the reproduction of conflictual or contradictory social relations. Although the concept of regulation has no specific historical content, most regulation theorists are concerned with capitalist societies. A *regime of accumulation* is a set of rules determining the distribution and allocation of the social product between investment/accumulation and consumption. A *mode of regulation* is a set of rules and procedures, norms, institutions, and modes of calculation through which the accumulation regime is secured (cf. Jessop 1989, 262). In addition to predominantly economic institutions (such as banks or money), a mode of regulation typically encompasses institutions such as social policy, political parties, cultural and family forms, schools, and systems of interest intermediation.

At an intermediate level of abstraction are *specific* modes of regulation such as Fordism and post-Fordism. Fordism is based on a regime of accumulation involving a systematic relation between mass produc-

18. Key works of regulation theory include Aglietta 1987, Boyer 1990, Lipietz 1986 and 1990, and Jessop 1989; its different schools are discussed in Jessop 1990a.

tion and mass consumption. Economically Fordism involves, inter alia, the centrality of the wage as the main mechanism for securing the reproduction of labor power; monopolistic price regulation; and the predominance of mass consumption of standardized commodities and the collective consumption of goods and services supplied by the state (Jessop 1989, 1990a). The prevailing cultural forms under Fordism are productivism and consumerism (Hirsch and Roth 1986). Culture is institutionally centered around the mass media. An ideology of individualization is combined in a potentially contradictory way with a narrow range of "normal" lifestyle orientations. Fordism's central political forms are neocorporatism and the Keynesian welfare state. According to Hirsch and Roth (1986, 37), Fordist politics are based on "social-democratic, bureaucratic societalization, strong unions, reformist parties of mass integration, corporatist institutionalization of class contradictions, and Keynesian state interventionism." The economic rudiments of Fordism took shape in the United States during the interwar period (Gramsci 1971, Aglietta 1987), but Fordism was only consolidated as a full-blown mode of regulation after the Second World War. Fordism then began to unravel during the 1970s. The advanced capitalist world today is in the midst of a transition to a still vaguely defined "post-Fordist" mode of regulation centered around "flexible accumulation" (Harvey 1989; Bonefeld and Holloway 1991).

At the most concrete level, regulation theory describes geohistorically specific variants of modes of regulation such as Fordism. Fordism is thus a description of the *general* features of the advanced capitalist world during a certain period, and not some sort of model that was installed in a complete and unvarying form in every country. The specific kind of Fordism that developed in a given country was shaped by local historical legacies, such as antecedent patterns of industrialization and the level of state strength. The timing of the rise and decline of Fordism also depends upon nationally specific conditions (Lipietz 1984; Jessop 1989). Fordism is argued to have emerged relatively late in West Germany, due to postwar reconstruction, but Germany eventually came to exhibit a more "complete" form of Fordism than Britain or the United States (cf. Jessop et al. 1991, 137-42). Although Henry Ford pioneered several of the key economic components of Fordism—the high wage, the assembly line, the idea that workers should be consumers as well as producers—American Fordism remained "incomplete" due to the weakness of institutions like

collective bargaining and the welfare state (Lipietz 1986, 19). The decline of Fordism also set in later in Germany, taking hold in the 1980s.

The importance of regulation theory in the present context is that it allows us to understand why class became a crucial determinant of consciousness in “Fordist” West and East Germany, without insisting that class always has this effect. As a form of societalization, Fordism was organized around various institutions that continually ratified the existence of the working class and produced substantial homogeneity in its conditions of existence. Regulation theory also sheds light on the contents of right-wing workers’ grievances, many of which are based on the implicit social contract of Fordism.

The contemporary German context raises specific difficulties, however, because regulation theory has only rarely been applied to “socialist” or Soviet style societies (see Lipietz 1991 and Murray 1990). Events in the GDR during the 1980s make it clear that “socialist” societies were perfectly capable of generating right-wing radicalism, as does the speed with which many former East Germans shifted to the right after 1989. The question is whether regulation-theoretical concepts can be of any help here. The relative neglect of state-socialist societies by regulation theorists is due partly to a traditional Marxist belief that social classes only exist where the means of production are in private hands.¹⁹ Many Marxists also believe that the law of value imparts a distinctive historical dynamic to capitalist societal development. Yet regulation theory immediately begins to look more applicable to socialist societies once we conceptualize the latter within the context of a capitalist world system (Wallerstein 1986; see also Hobsbawm 1994). It has become impossible since 1989 to ignore the extent to which socialism’s “internal” dynamics were intertwined with global economic, political, and cultural forces. This suggests that we need to rethink the ways in which socialist societies were shaped by the capitalist West even during periods in which they seemed internally stable. This does not imply a return to earlier “convergence” approaches. Indeed, it would be impossible to explain the collapse of “eastern” socialism without reference to a whole range of social-structural *differences* from western capitalism. But the official ideology of the Cold War should not prevent us from exploring the penetration of socialist societies by local “translations” of Western-capitalist military, economic, cultural, and political institutions.

19. Erik Wright (1985) elaborated a system of neo-Marxist class analysis that applies with equal force to socialist societies.

Regulation theory seems ideally suited for such an analysis. Governing elites in socialist societies, like those in the west, had an interest in raising levels of production and productivity, in stabilizing the long-term allocation of the net product between production and consumption, and in warding off social conflict. To attain these goals, they too tried to forge a *dispositif* of appropriate institutions, norms, and habits. As in the west, these institutions and norms operated fairly smoothly for some time before entering into crisis. There is ample evidence that the GDR achieved a certain degree of stability in production, consumption, and everyday life during the 1970s (Bude 1993, 272; Niethammer 1994, 110). We can also trace the adoption of various Fordist practices by the GDR, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, just as we can plot the resonance of the crisis of western Fordism during the 1980s.

East Germany borrowed both from Soviet "iron Fordism" (Lipietz 1991, 88–89; Murray 1990) and from Western Fordism to come up with its own unique regulatory form. Ulrich Voskamp and Volker Wittke find that "socialist planning elites in the GDR during the 1950s and 1960s were enamored of the Fordist production principles that dominated Western industrial production and organization," resulting in the "continuous extension of the division of labor, the creation of ever more specialized production tasks, the centralization of resources, and vertical integration" (Voskamp and Wittke 1991, 344; see also Schneider and Troder 1985). The East German economy came to resemble West German Fordism in other respects. Exports were a central component of both economies and constituted a similar percentage of the national product, even if they were directed at different markets. Both countries even emphasized similar economic sectors, such as mechanical engineering and chemicals (Dennis 1988, 136–39). Another significant feature of "pan-German" Fordism was what might be called its economic nationalism. Citizens in both countries were proud of their economies' leading position within their respective economic regions.

There are also parallel developments between West and East German Fordism in the areas of work and labor relations, resulting from postwar rivalry, explicit modeling, and the two countries' shared history. Perhaps the most important similarity lies in the overall ideological importance of work, workers, and the economy in the self-understanding of both the Federal Republic and the GDR. The official communist heroizing of the working class in East German political culture (Hübner 1994) had its less blatant West German counterparts in the

widespread pride in the “economic miracle” and in older German ideologies of “quality work” (Lüdtke 1994).²⁰ Job security became nearly absolute in the east, while workers in the west benefited from low levels of joblessness, generous unemployment benefits, and extensive job retraining programs. East German workers’ “right to work” gave them a considerable degree of structural veto power over managerial decisions in the form of work slowdowns and absenteeism (Hübner 1993; Bahro 1981); West German practices of industrial codetermination granted workers a certain measure of influence over production decisions. Workers’ wages were lower in the east than in the west, but they were partly compensated by the GDR’s minimal degree of overall wage stratification (Lötsch 1993, 117). East German workers’ wages also rose more rapidly than productivity during the Honecker era. One effect of these ongoing wage increases was to stimulate workers’ disillusionment with the system, given the paucity of consumer goods. Seen from a different perspective, however, many East German workers came to view rising wages and relative income equality as normal, and carried these beliefs into the united post-Fordist Germany.

There are also surprising parallels in the use of immigrant labor on both sides of the Wall. West Germany began importing workers in 1955, first drawing on southern Europe and then reaching into North Africa and Turkey. By 1980, a third of the nearly four million foreign residents in West Germany were Turkish (Bade 1992). The GDR began to import migrant laborers from other East European countries during the 1960s, followed in the 1970s and 1980s by immigrant laborers from Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique, Angola, China, etc. The number of foreigners in the GDR remained much smaller than in the west, reaching only 166, 419 at the beginning of 1989 (Jasper 1991, 171; Broszinsky-Schwabe 1990). Foreign workers performed similar functions in the two societies. Just as immigrant laborers in the GDR were expected to return home within a fixed number of years, immigrant workers in West Germany were referred to as “guests” (*Gastarbeiter*) to underscore their temporary status, and faced numerous restrictions in the areas of civil rights, citizenship, and social policy. The revelation in 1973 that thousands of Turks were working in the GDR underscored a pragmatism that was not fundamentally different from West German policy (Jasper 1991, 163–64).

20. The GDR partially replaced the ideology of “quality work” with a focus on quantity during the Stakhanovite “Hennecke” movement in the late 1940s (Lüdtke 1994, 192–93), but started emphasizing “quality” again in the mid-1950s (Hübner 1994, 179).

Strong parallels can also be found in the field of social policy. From the 1960s onwards, the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED) tried to emulate West Germany by making rising living standards the key component of legitimation (Weber 1993, 198). Honecker opened his nineteen-year reign (1971–89) with an emphasis on social policy, which in practice entailed a rise in social consumption spending (McAdams 1985, 137). East Germans came to expect an all-embracing system of “social security”; *Geborgenheit* (security) became the key term of Honecker’s social-political discourse (cf. Weber 1988, 97; Spittmann 1990, 48). As the economy slowed down during the second half of the 1970s, the regime began insisting on “the growth of productivity as the precondition for social policy” (Spittmann 1990, 45, 70; Meuschel 1993, 12; Weber 1988, 77), but social security programs continued to expand. The social programs of the Honecker period included maternity leave, youth centers, free contraception and abortion, day care, universal health care, and the subsidization of essentials such as housing and food at very low prices (Dennis 1988, 42–78; Scharf 1989). Especially significant in the context of the present analysis is the fact that workers remained the central addressee of the state’s social policies (Hübner 1990, 260).

Mass culture was a final sphere in which unexpected similarities emerged between east and west. Postwar SED cultural policy was rooted in the earlier socialist tradition of rejecting mass culture and bringing “bourgeois” culture to the working class. Workers were given privileged access to higher education; books and theater tickets were subsidized. By the early 1960s, however, the SED was torn between opposing Western mass culture as decadent and using it to pacify discontent (Rauhut 1991). Under Honecker the state became more tolerant of light entertainment, jazz and rock music, and films from the capitalist west (Dennis 1988, 176). East Germans experienced a “discount version of western consumerism” (Hübner 1994, 181), but it was consumerism nonetheless. The most extensive oral history project in the GDR found that East Germans recalled the 1970s—the golden age of German Fordism—as the “good old days” (Niethammer 1994, 110). Although consumer goods in the east were typically in short supply and of lower quality (though not as uniformly bad as many in the west assumed), there was also a form of vicarious consumerism that should not be underestimated. Against challenging odds, many East Germans tried to emulate Western consumerism (see Bornemann 1991, 71–79). Private viewing of West German television became

the most common leisure-time activity in the last two decades of the GDR and was undoubtedly the most significant source of convergence with Western consumerist expectations.

East and West Germany also differed in many important respects, but it is not clear that these would affect the forms of popular subjectivity under investigation here. One major area of differences has to do with women and the family. The extreme labor shortage in the GDR led to a much more extensive integration of women into the labor force, such that 85 percent of adult East German women were working by 1985, as opposed to only 51 percent in West Germany (Hübner 1994, 177). This means that the nuclear family centered on the male breadwinner was always an even less realistic ideal for East German workers than for their western counterparts. Secondly, the GDR was not able to respond to the crisis of Fordism with comparable moves away from gigantism and inflexibility. Only the SED had a real structural incentive to find a stable model for economic growth, yet that same elite depended on an extreme degree of centralization in order to stay in power.²¹ As Charles Maier notes, “the superiority of Western economies lay not in their immunity to these systemic challenges, but in their capacity to overcome them” (1991, 39).

The Fordist “Moral Economy”

My argument, then, is that there was enough convergence between East and West German Fordism to have endowed workers on both sides of the wall with similar expectations, especially in the areas of work, wages, social policy, foreigners, and consumerism. At a more basic level of social ontology, both cultures emphasized the very existence of the working class. These similarities account for the strong class-based reaction by some German workers to the present processes of post-Fordist restructuring. They also explain why some of these workers are attracted to radical right-wing “solutions.” (It hardly needs mentioning that the majority of German workers do *not* support or participate in the radical right; we are concerned here with an extremely visible minority.) Right-wing opposition to present conditions is based on an idealized recollection of a time in which

21. The question whether socialism’s lack of regulatory problem-solving capacity was rooted in the weakness of private property and the profit motive, in political repression, or in functional “dedifferentiation” (Luhmann 1989) is tangential to the present paper.

- there were abundant jobs corresponding to workers' skills;
- manual workers' wages were comparatively high and rising;
- social policy provided a comforting buffer during periods of impaired work ability and raised working-class consumption levels;
- foreigners were barely visible "guests" doing the work that Germans shunned, rather than competitors for scarce jobs and resources;
- the economy was defined in national rather than global terms;
- leisure time was spent consuming homogenized mass-cultural goods and not struggling for distinction in a stratified market of symbolic goods;²²
- the gender ideal revolved around a male-headed nuclear family with women taking care of domestic tasks.

As noted above, these Fordist conditions were often ideals rather than realities, especially in the east, and since the 1980s they have become increasingly elusive. German unification provided an opportunity to accelerate the ongoing erosion of wages and job security and the "flexibilization" of labor markets and industrial organization. The opening up of international borders and the disruptions throughout eastern and southeastern Europe led to a rapid rise in the number of people seeking work or political asylum in Germany—an influx that was slowed but not halted by the drastic curtailment of the right to asylum in 1993. European integration and economic globalization threatened an already tenuous mainstream German national identity whose only solid base was a nationally defined economy. For most workers, the ideal of a male-headed nuclear family has become even more chimerical than during the 1960s or 1970s (Chopra and Scheller 1992). Coherent, ascriptive class-based cultures have been replaced by ephemeral "scenes" populated by self-selected participants. The processes described by British studies of youth subculture (e.g., Hebdige 1979), in which identities are "taken" rather than "given," increasingly characterize identity formation in general. Although some workers may welcome the increased opportunities for reflexive self-construction (Lash and Urry 1994), others simply feel less secure.

22. The Fordist consumer game of "keeping up with the Joneses" was one-dimensional and quantitative, differing sharply from the post-Fordist game of qualitative struggle for distinction *tous azimuts*. While many Fordist subjects tried to escape from cultural homogenization, they did so *against* the system's imperatives; post-Fordism virtually requires such "inventiveness" of its flexible consumers (contrast Lüscher n.d. with Lash and Urry 1994). Even in the GDR, the stratification of cultural consumption proceeded apace during the 1980s; cf. Bisky and Wiedemann 1985, 147ff.

We can now refine our earlier critique of arguments that depict the radical right as “losers in the process of modernization.” We cannot make sense of the right-wing revolt simply by attending to current economic depression. E. P. Thompson long ago criticized the “abbreviated and ‘economistic’ picture of the food riot as a direct, spasmodic, irrational response to hunger,” noting that “*of course* food rioters were hungry. . . . But this does not tell us how their behavior is ‘modified by custom, culture and reason’” (1993, 258, 262). By the same token, to understand contemporary workers’ responses to decline, we need to reconstruct their preexisting views of society, economy, and justice.

Thompson’s notion of the “moral economy of the crowd” refers to an informal set of customary rights and usages embedded within popular consciousness and culture, the “expectations, traditions, and, indeed, superstitions of the working population” (1993, 260). In hierarchical nonmarket societies, the moral economy is a popular translation of official discourse, from which it draws its legitimacy (208). These customs and usages are made conscious only when they are threatened by monetary rationalizations, giving rise to indignation and collective efforts to enforce justice (340). To make sense of the logic underlying inarticulate crowd actions, one therefore needs to reconstruct the moral economy, sometimes looking back “several hundreds of years” (224). In the case of German rightists, we also need to look back for an origin, but first to the 1960s and 1970s.

There are obvious differences between the threats of dearth and starvation discussed by Thompson and the dangers facing workers in the present-day transition to post-Fordism. Yet there are important structural similarities as well. In both periods, the familiar life conditions of the laboring classes are undermined by massive socioeconomic transformations. Thompson’s analysis focuses on the encroachments of the monetary economy on peasant and early industrial communities in which “many ‘economic’ relations are regulated according to nonmonetary norms” (1993, 340). Analogously, the present-day transition is one in which hypercompetitive market logics replace institutions that weakened the disciplinary iron grip of the market. Under Fordism, reproduction was partially *decommodified* and market transactions were subjected to extensive regulatory controls; post-Fordism, by contrast, involves massive *recommodification* and deregulation. Once again, a “tissue of customs and usages” is “threatened by monetary rationalizations.”

The dynamic interaction between German state officials and the current right-wing movement also recalls Thompson’s analysis. The moral

economy involves not just a plebeian culture but also a web of informal mutual relationships with rulers. In Thompson's account, there are no *formal* institutions regulating the relationship, such that the poor have no choice but to communicate with their rulers through riot. Again, the contemporary situation reveals unexpected parallels. Nowadays, of course, nonextremist parties can organize for electoral competition and adult citizens can vote. But there is also an uncanny sense of a return to early-modern politics, as the extraparliamentary right wing appears to communicate with the country's political rulers through rioting. The best illustration of this dynamic process can be seen in the Bundestag's decision to curtail foreigners' access to political asylum in 1993, following two years of antiforeigner pogroms.²³

Like other objects of nostalgia, imagined Fordism is not so much directly recalled as it is reconstructed, mentally and emotionally. This point is underscored by the fact that most radical right-wing activists are too young to have personally experienced the golden age of Fordism. But they are still able to construct a picture of what they missed. Like all effective ideologies, however, the moral economy of Fordism has a partial basis in present-day reality. Since the social transition is not abrupt, there are still many vestiges of the older system. These include regions, industrial branches, and individual firms where Fordist practices survive; and in Germany, many aspects of the Fordist welfare state still exist. Also important are the older Fordist "veterans" who can convincingly evoke the advantages of the past and provide encouragement to the young right-wing thugs from the sidelines.²⁴ We can make sense of the German right-wing activists' "immoral" social movement in terms of the reproduction and ongoing violation of this moral economy.

The Other Far Right

In what might first appear to be an act of intellectual contortionism, one author has made out the neofascist thugs to be part of a "post-Fordist class

23. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer of an earlier version of this chapter for calling attention to this aspect of Thompson's analysis, although my extension to the present case is one this reviewer would probably not accept.

24. The best example of this was provided by the applauding crowds during the Rostock pogrom; see also the interview with "Willi D." in Sichrovsky 1993, 123-38.

bloc" (Roth 1992). How can eighteen-year-old workers with only a basic education be called "post-Fordist"? But the argument is not so much wrong as incomplete. Roth suggests that "the formation of a wider social basis [for German neofascism] is still in its beginning stages" (9), because the collapse of Fordism is still an ongoing process. The "post-Fordist bloc" consists of small- and medium-sized employers, highly skilled workers, and young academics in the new postindustrial sectors. Not surprisingly, in most European countries one segment of this bloc has embraced a variant of neofascism. As Roth notes, neofascist modernizers want to "cast aside the bothersome ballast with dictatorial methods" (8). The Italian Northern Lega is the most obvious example of the move to embrace hypercompetitive post-Fordism by expelling obsolete populations (Betz 1995, 7-10; Schmidtke and Ruzza 1993).

Such tendencies exist in Germany, but they have not yet been able to assume control of entire right-wing organizations.²⁵ Electoral support for the Republikaner is strongest in states like Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, where many self-employed and blue-collar workers have recently "risen to middle-class status" (Veen, Lepszy, and Mnich 1993, 39).²⁶ Within most of these organizations, the boundaries between the reactionary and the modernizing branches of neofascism are blurry, and backward-looking ideology is still dominant.²⁷ The differences between the post-Fordist winners and the "reactionary radicals" within the Republican Party are partially overshadowed by shared opposition to "multiculturalism" and immigration. We should expect a division of political labor to emerge among radical right-wing parties, with the Fordist stream eventually disappearing altogether.

25. The most likely carriers of a modern neofascist project in Germany are the university-educated ideologues around periodicals like *Junge Freiheit* (cf. Pfahl-Traughber 1993; Lange 1993) and successful small employers and middle employees in the emerging high-tech sectors. Again, I am not suggesting that radical right-wing politics will be the dominant political stance among post-Fordist winners. For some in Germany (and in the United States), communitarianism has become an attractive strategy for managing the social disasters produced by the end of Fordism.

26. According to the Verfassungsschutz (the German Office for the Protection of the Constitution) the majority of the Republican Party's members are in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, and not in the declining industrial regions. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20 April 1995.

27. Interestingly, the electoral base of the French Front National has become *less* petty bourgeois and more proletarian in recent years. In the 1995 French presidential elections, 30 percent of French workers (and 35 percent of the unemployed) voted for Le Pen, more than for any other candidate. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 January 1995.

In Hitler's Shadow

Let me clarify both the extension and the limits of the explanation presented so far. Because regulation theory was not originally developed as a theory of social movements, it is ill suited to account for individuals' microlevel decisions to participate, or to explain the fluctuating "opportunity structures" for extraparliamentary mobilization. Nor am I claiming that right-wing extremism is the only, or even the predominant working-class response to current social changes. Other reactions include resignation, psychological disorders, progressive collective resistance, and successful individual adaptation to the demands of post-Fordism. What the regulation-theoretical account does illuminate (when supplemented by the notion of the moral economy) is the construction of a specific form of class subjectivity and a specific view of society. This Fordist "moral economy" explains the apparent viability of right-wing radicalism for many workers and accounts for some of the neofascist movement's goals.

But even at this general level, regulation theory cannot explain the specific contours of the German far-right political movement. For many of the far right's victims have no relationship at all to post-Fordist restructuring. Regulation theory cannot make sense of the German movement's peculiar catalogue of enemies. Nor can the general regulation-theoretical model account for the greater brutality of right-wing violence in Germany, as compared to other societies undergoing similar transitions, or for its "repertoire" of collective action (Tilly 1978).

In order to construct a more complete explanation of the contemporary radical right, we need to thematize the relationship between layers of ideology rooted in different historical epochs. We need to understand how these ideologies have been reproduced over decades and how they are being woven together with Fordist ideologies originating in more recent periods. This entails paying particular attention to the conservation of ideological material from the period of "classical" Nazism, but there is a role for even older ideologies as well.

Despite the differences in the social composition of the current radical right and the NSDAP, there are some striking continuities at the level of ideology. Key elements of classical Nazi discourse included the biologically grounded national *Volk*; hatred of Gypsies, homosexuals, Communists, blacks, and especially Jews; biological racism, eugenics, and social Darwinism; the need for *Lebensraum*, or "living space," for the Germans;

a disdain for democracy and liberalism; worship of war and violence; and a reversal of the roles of victim and perpetrator. A sizable minority of Germans, especially among the younger generations, seem to be embracing these ideas with enthusiasm (cf. Zimmermann 1986). The only way to understand the peculiar constellation of neofascist enemies in Germany is in terms of ideological continuity with classical Nazism.

Nazi ideology is reproduced selectively, of course. Certain elements of classical Nazism are less salient today or, like anti-Bolshevism, have lost their referents. The Holocaust makes a huge difference for contemporary German right-wing radicalism, but its effects are far from uniform. Some right-wing extremists distance themselves from Hitler and the Holocaust for strategic reasons (Kowalsky 1993, 18), while others focus on Holocaust denial propaganda.²⁸ The individual elements of Nazi ideology are also recombined and given different weights. For example, there is greater stress within contemporary neo-Nazism on the "socialist" ideas of the Nazi "national revolutionary" wing represented by Ernst Röhm and Gregor Strasser (Stöss 1991, 169).

Fragments of classical Nazi ideology continue to circulate far beyond the ranks of the neo-Nazis. There has been a consistent solid core of West Germans with extreme right-wing views throughout the postwar period.²⁹ Public opinion polls during the postwar period showed that a rising proportion of Germans condemned Hitler and the Holocaust and rejected other specific Nazi policies, yet there was also widespread continuing approval of certain aspects of Nazism, especially among the older generations. The assumptions of Nazi culture were reproduced intact in some sectors of postwar German society. Lutz Niethammer and his col-

28. Many German neo-Nazis privately acknowledge the reality of the Holocaust but publicly propagate denial propaganda. Holocaust denial is often seen as tactically necessary for lowering peoples' inhibitions toward the far right (Schmidt 1993). Other German right-wingers are attempting to develop a "respectable" new rightist movement that accepts the reality of the Holocaust; see the interviews with "a student" in Sichrovsky 1993, 149-65, and with a young writer for *Junge Freiheit* in Tenner 1994, 217-37. An even more typical approach, not restricted to the extreme right, is to avoid the topic of Nazi genocide altogether in favor of the more "benign" features of the Third Reich, or to skip over the Nazi period in the narration of personal or national history (cf. Fisher 1995). Still another position is taken by historians who shift responsibility for the Holocaust to the "Asiatic" USSR or relativize the Holocaust through comparisons with other atrocities (see the interview with a history teacher in Sichrovsky 1993, 19-40). In light of these ideological contortions, therefore, it is not implausible to suggest that the actual Nazi past is not just a boon to the German radical right but also a liability.

29. On the right-wing mainstream, see Assheuer and Sarkowicz 1992; Noelle-Neumann and Ring 1985; SINUS-Institut 1981.

leagues found evidence of such continuity among workers in both the West German Ruhr valley (Niethammer 1986) and in three regions of the GDR (Niethammer 1991).

The availability of historical Nazism as an indigenous ideological system provides the far-right movement with several advantages. Even if Nazi ideologemes are rejected, they are at least familiar to most Germans. Thus while many members of the immediate postwar generations explicitly rejected their own Nazi-educated parents, right-wing radicals today often emphasize the importance of their *grandfathers* in the formation of their right-wing views and identities. This differentiates Germany from a country like the United States, where Nazi ideology is typically regarded as foreign or is not even “understood.” Indigenous Nazi ideology gives the German movement a degree of coherence, even when its formal organization is weak. Another of the German neofascists’ advantages, perversely, is the “realism” of their program, since it was actually put into practice during the Nazi era. Historical Nazism is thus a cultural resource for the contemporary right-wing social movement in Germany.

The German far right is also shaped by strands of national political culture that predate the Nazi era. For example, most Germans believe that their country is harboring more “foreigners” than other OECD countries. This is formally true, but only as a result of Germany’s ethnically based citizenship laws and restrictive understanding of national identity, both of which date from before the Nazi regime. If France (or the United States) had applied these rules they would currently be harboring more “foreigners” than Germany (Terkessidis 1995; see also Renault 1991; Brubaker 1992). Older ideologies concerning the state and its relation to its subjects also influence the German radical right. Unlike their American counterparts, for example, German far-rightists typically want to strengthen, not eliminate, the central government.

Traditional political sociology, which analyzed fascism as the extremist politics of the middle class (Lipset 1963; Trow 1966), has been at a loss to understand the reemergence of the far right.³⁰ Many leftists have also been hesitant to acknowledge the extent to which the radical right wing has become one of the few sites of vigorous working-class politics. This chapter has attempted to apply some of the more interesting recent devel-

30. For an exception from the 1960s, see Scheuch and Klingemann 1967.

opments in neo-Marxist theory to these political developments. At the same time, theoretical discussions within Marxism during the past two decades have systematically eroded the concept of social class.

Some theorists have responded to the critique of class by inverting the proletarian messianism of traditional Marxism, viewing the working class as a symptom of all that is wrong with capitalism, as a “replica of capital” (Gorz 1982) rather than its negation. This position seemed to ignore the numerous instances in which working-class struggle has played a crucial role in the expansion of political and economic democracy (see Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992 on political democracy and Steinmetz 1993 on the expansion of social protection). Other Marxists followed Manuel Castells (1978) in arguing that the new urban movements were rooted in social cleavages that cut across class boundaries, even if they were explicable in terms of the dynamics of capital accumulation. Although this approach seemed appropriate for many of the new social movements, it was unable to explain why some social movements continued to present themselves as class based. Another alternative involved various “pluralist” critical perspectives that simply gave class equal explanatory billing with social cleavages like race and gender (e.g. Albert and Hahnel 1978). While these approaches seemed descriptively plausible, they could not explain why class mattered in some contexts and not in others, or why workers were on the left in some settings and on the right in others. Finally, post-Marxists like Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) argued that class has no socially consequential extradiscursive reality at all, and that one can speak of a “working class” only where hegemonic articulations bring it into existence culturally.

The regulation-theoretical explanation elaborated in this chapter might seem to agree that one cannot speak of class as a universal feature of capitalist societies; one finds it only in societies where regulatory hegemony underscores class identities. Against this reading, I would agree with Erik Wright (1985) that social class is more than just a contextually variable cultural category. Class is also a *real* mechanism producing systematic effects, regardless of whether people are aware of it, regardless of whether regulatory institutions exist to channel practices and consciousness along class-based tracks. As an analytic category, class refers to positions within a matrix of asset distribution (or “ownership of the means of production”) and is therefore intrinsically related to outcomes like income. The extent to which class determines beliefs or political prac-

tices, however, is a function of contingent hegemonic articulations. Certainly class structure makes some hegemonic articulations more likely to be successful than others. Yet "while the probability of assembling a set of agents . . . rises when they are closer in social space . . . alliance between those most distant from each other is never *impossible*" (Bourdieu 1985, 726, 741).

Regulation theory can accept Wright's "critical realist" understanding of class, just as it posits certain features of capitalist accumulation as common to all capitalist societies. But regulation theory also seems to offer a more systematic way of explaining the geohistorical variability in the cultural importance of social class and in workers' political proclivities. Put simply, regulation theory helps explain why working-class identities are more systematically generated in some sociohistorical contexts than others. Regulation theory can explain why Fordist class formation was salient enough to continue to shape workers' subjectivities even after the disappearance of Fordism. Regulation theory does not claim to account for the entirety of social life, however, but only those aspects that are brought under the sway of a regulatory mode. In explaining social movements, one will usually have to bring in causal mechanisms foreign to regulation theory, mechanisms that are not even partially articulated with a mode of regulation.³¹ Two such concepts which may be important in accounting for contemporary right-wing radicalism, in Germany and elsewhere, are the moral economy and historical political culture.

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31. Bob Jessop (1990b, 12) has proposed the term "contingent necessity" to describe this epistemological and explanatory stance. It is also discussed in Steinmetz 1993.

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