

Naval War College Review

Volume 28
Number 2 *March-April*

Article 12

1975

The Revolutionary Party: Essays in the Sociology of Politics

Jeffrey P. Bacher

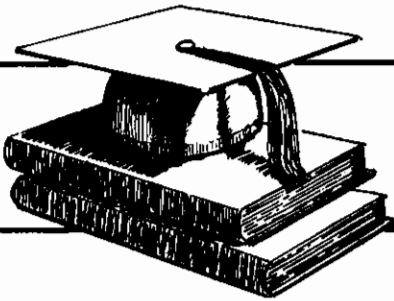
Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Bacher, Jeffrey P. (1975) "The Revolutionary Party: Essays in the Sociology of Politics," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 28 : No. 2 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol28/iss2/12>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.



PROFESSIONAL READING

Gross, Feliks. *The Revolutionary Party: Essays in the Sociology of Politics*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. 280p.

Were I to seek insight into the complex world of radical politics, Feliks Gross' collection of essays, *The Revolutionary Party*, would appear perfectly suited. Here, one might guess from the title and a brief look at the table of contents, is a study of the structural patterns, loyalties, values, and goals which almost daily fill front pages with terrorist violence or the fall of an unpopular government.

Unfortunately, such is not the case. *The Revolutionary Party* is written along historical lines, focusing first on the development of the political party (revolutionary and otherwise) from Rome to 18th century France to the underground forces of the Second World War. This approach makes for interesting reading but, at the same time, leaves something to be desired if one's primary interest lies with current events. The Palestine Liberation Organization, for example, receives mention on but one page, and the IRA, subject of two paragraphs, is discussed only in terms of the earning power of its average member! In contrast, the Polish underground of World War II is the focal point of several of Dr. Gross' essays.

The fact that *The Revolutionary Party* does not address the subject matter in a way one would expect does not, however, entirely condemn it. Dr. Gross has used his examples to take a broad

look at the problem, discussing in turn the origins, dynamics, ideologies, and tactics of various party types without delving into the specifics of individual movements. Perhaps he has made use of the historical rationale: by avoiding specific and currently volatile subjects, one can also avoid much of the prejudice in discussing the issues involved. His intent notwithstanding, Dr. Gross' wealth of structural diagrams and models could have been of much greater value to both the political sociologist and general reader if he had made a greater effort to identify them with modern, currently active parties.

While each of the essays appearing in *The Revolutionary Party* are competent works in themselves, together they present a less than satisfying whole. Many of the essays deal with similar topics and tend to be a bit redundant. Further, the separate units do not always add to the total topic of the book. The section devoted to political assassination is certainly informative as to the goals and methods of mass genocide, selected political targets, et cetera, but never satisfactorily links the assassination type to a type of party or party goal. Neither does it comment on why a party would resort to such tactics. The last three essays or chapters are particularly guilty and almost seem to be in the wrong book.

With his book's title, Dr. Gross has capitalized on the recent fascination of the American public with political radicals, underground movements, and revolution, but in *The Revolutionary Party*

PROFESSIONAL READING 79

the accent is firmly on "party" and on the sociology of political organization. He has, I think, written an interesting book, failing largely in that it is directed at too narrow an audience, an audience where the general reader, still seeking insight into the world of radical politics, feels left out.

JEFFREY P. BACHER
Ensign, U.S. Naval Reserve

— ψ —

Hollick, Ann L. and Osgood, Robert E. *New Era of Ocean Politics*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. 131p.

Borgese, Elisabeth Mann. *Pacem in Mari-bus*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972. 382p.

The concepts of seapower and command of the sea are enshrined as indispensable fundamentals in the orthodoxy of naval thought. Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett provided their historical and philosophical justifications. These rest on three assumptions about the characteristics of the sea: (1) the sea cannot be reduced to possession; (2) own or enemy forces cannot subsist upon the sea; and (3) the sole positive value of the sea is that of a medium of communication.

In the last 30 years technological and political developments have severely challenged each of these three assumptions. Offshore oil rigs and deep sea mining prove that today the sea can very well be reduced to possession. The development of nuclear power and other technological advances permits naval forces to remain at sea for indefinite periods. The sea still remains a valuable medium of communication, but man's ability to use the sea in a variety of ways has made it intrinsically valuable for the first time in history.

Since the characteristics of the sea have changed significantly in the last 30 years, it behooves naval officers to become aware of the implications of

these changes. But implications are only conclusions drawn from a complicated mass of evidence embracing both technical and nontechnical or political factors. These political factors fall into what is now known as the area of ocean politics, a most pervasive and complex field which is literally as broad as the ocean itself.

With consummate skill, Ann Hollick in *New Era of Ocean Politics* explains the basic issues of ocean politics in terms of competing interests, each with valid arguments and positions, which are frequently in conflict with each other. She discusses the issues in terms of exploitation of the seabed, the breadth of the territorial sea, transit rights through straits, conservation and allocation of fisheries, and, finally, pollution. A common factor to all of these issues is the allocation of ocean space.

In reviewing competing national and transnational interests, she describes what she perceives as the sometimes Byzantine politics of the U.S. Government and its competing bureaucratic baronies. Her review of the processes of international negotiations and national policymaking is illuminating as well as succinct.

Robert E. Osgood completes this Johns Hopkins Study in International Affairs by reviewing United States' security interests in the use of the four major zones of ocean space: the seabed, the subsurface, the surface, and the superjacent air. He concludes his review of "U.S. Security Interests in Ocean Law" with a discussion of the possible advantages of a comprehensive law of the sea treaty: (1) uniformity—there would be no need to make *ad hoc* arrangements with the various littoral states; (2) bargaining position—the United States can make concessions in some areas in order to ensure transit rights; and (3) the political advantage of a resolution of conflicting interests in one treaty applicable to all states.

An entirely different approach is