neutral context than western women often do, they speculate: "having women serve in assemblies [through the reserved-seats system]... might have served a function analogous to the one performed by the women's movement in the West of legitimizing and stimulating women's assumption of new social and political roles" (pp. 189-90). That we have had some important questions raised, explored, and answered, but have been left wanting to carry the argument further, makes this an excellent study not only for the professional, but for students of political science, women's studies, and social science methods.

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HILL GATES

University of California Press, 1988 (paperback, 1990), pp. 237, $10.95 (paper).

Ralf Dahrendorf is Warden of St. Anthony's College in Oxford. Born in 1929, he studied philosophy and classics at the University of Hamburg and did postgraduate work at the LSE where he became Director. As is indicated by the subtitle of this book, he is a determined and concerned—but critical—liberal. His concern and criticism are not, however, directed against modernity, for which he has great hopes. Rather, the subject of his analysis is the contemporary world situation, especially in Europe.

The book mainly treats three themes. Firstly, Dahrendorf tries to analyze modernity in the light of what he terms "the modern social conflict." Secondly, he offers a critique of the present. Finally, he outlines a liberal agenda for the future. Above all, the modern social conflict is about the realization of that ideal of freedom and equality which was a driving force in the French Revolution. Namely, the struggle to provide freedom and equality in terms of citizenship as well as wealth, or—in the author's more technical terms, the conflict arising from the "core antagonism" between entitlements and provisions. Thus, the concept of provisions is a quantitative one "describing on the one hand the amount or quantity and on the other the variety or diversity [of] all the material and immaterial choices" a society offers. The concept of entitlements, on the other hand, is qualitative and normative, and covers the legitimate civil, political and social rights of the individual. In Dahrendorf's words, the antagonism lies in "the distinction between people's access to things [entitlements] and the things actually there for them to desire [provisions]."

The two concepts are combined in the notion of life chances, making the struggle for life chances between social groups in society into the most significant feature of modern history, i.e., the modern social conflict. At first glimpse it may seem that the struggle for life chances is a part of every known society, not only the modern, but Dahrendorf points out that modern society is fundamentally different because of the qualitative shift in entitlement structures it represents, characterized by a development from ascriptive status to social contract. In more specific terms, the diffusion of the principle of citizenship is defined as "a social contract describing rights and obligations associated with membership in a social unit, and notably with nationality." Hereby, social barriers lose their absolute character and become negotiable.

The historical content of the modern social conflict has been—and still is—to "establish the entitlements which make up a rich and full status of citizenship" for
every individual, a status containing civil rights (the rule of law, equality before the law, and due process) and political rights (suffrage, freedom of association, freedom of speech, etc.) as well as social rights (guaranteed real wages, access to free education, and health care, etc.). The idea is that inequality in provisions is acceptable as long as it does not stem from inequality in entitlements. Thus Dahrendorf concludes that “the modern social conflict has transformed inequalities of entitlements into inequalities of provisions.” In other words the history of the past 200 years has been a history of inclusion, a growing proportion of society having gained status of citizenship and thereby basically equal rights.

Because of this, Dahrendorf is concerned that exclusion has become more prominent during the past decades. In an interesting and precise analysis of the post-war period, he derives a picture of a social democratic society in crisis. Especially two trends are striking: persistent unemployment and bureaucracy. While not being directly related, they are both threats to a free society. In western societies, work is the prime basis of the identity and social status of the individual, and persistent unemployment thus results in an exclusion from core elements of social life. As it has been evident up through the 80s, unemployment is continually high without affecting the general economic situation, leaving the prosperous majority without any incentive to alleviate the problem. On the contrary, Dahrendorf states that the “majority class” in view of harder international economic conditions, “draws boundaries where not boundaries should be drawn.”

Dahrendorf’s second main theme is bureaucracy as it can be found in corporatism, meaning the institutionalized/organized class where “arrangement replaces debate and consensus is substituted for conflict.” Another of the faces of bureaucracy is “big government” as one knows it from the almost all-encompassing welfare state of the 70s, the “social” or “nanny” state. He sees bureaucracy as a Weberian “iron cage of bondage,” stifling motivation and blocking innovation, but worst of all, “it tends to rob liberty of its essence by a curious denial of democracy as well as leadership.”

The social democratic movement “has lost its momentum. After a century of struggle it has at last largely arrived. Great social forces die at the moment of victory.” Change is thus not only necessary but is approaching, as exemplified in two movements of the 80s: Thatcherisms (Reaganomics) and the Greens. While not leaving any future for the latter—the environment is a concern of all—he is pleased to see the impetus of Thatcherism in its aim to dismantle bureaucracy. However, Thatcherism does not seek to include the minority but draws even more boundaries where none should be drawn.

Dahrendorf’s conception of the future seems to lack continuity; his vision of the future doesn’t seem to flow from his description of the present majority society. He ends up being stuck with a society dominated by a majority class having only a moral interest in attempting to include the divided and mutually isolated minorities, which cannot be expected to organize in order to take part in the political process. Furthermore, it is a society marked by structures which serve the interest of the majority and leave little room for change, least of all the dissolving of the majority class. Thus, Dahrendorf does not succeed in suggesting how the new society he deems necessary may actually come to be.

The Modern Social Conflict argues that the present opponents of social democracy “will continue to be puzzled by their inability to think of a truly new programme,” but in suggesting a radical liberal alternative, e.g., redistribution of work, basic income