

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL CAREER
OF CARL SCHURZ, 1868-1888

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THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas

August, 1963

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PREFACE

To begin a study in the area of political thought of the career of a prominent politician, requires some basic definitions, although the task of choice and clarification of terms may be arbitrary and quarrelsome. Of course in selecting and defining terms the modern student of American political science usually falls afoul of a number of "schools" in the discipline, whose very existence often makes the problem of definition even more difficult. However, without some understanding of terms, regardless of the "professional" vulnerability of some of the choices adopted, this study would appear meaningless and difficult to follow. For these reasons, then, the following definitions and selections of terms are presented.

First, it is necessary to define "political theory;" for this paper is, in part, an attempt to discover whether Carl Schurz was a political theorist or merely a political activist. Perhaps one of the deepest controversies in American political science today is the definition and place, or role, of political theory.¹ In this paper, political theory is taken to mean a body of thought concerned with the development of public policy (action or opinion), possessing predictive quality and

¹Neal Reimer, The Revival of Democratic Theory (New York, 1961), pp. 1-17.

arranged in some sort of logical sequence. This definition makes a distinction between three characteristics of political theory: between ideology and theory, between random thinking and organized contemplation, and between the broad consideration of political science and the study of political theory.

This definition makes the distinction between theory and ideology by using the word "individualistic." In this paper "theory" means the ideas of an individual person as distinguished from "those great configurations which, highly integrated and supporting programs of action, get labelled as ideologies."² Obviously, ideologies are of a broader nature than theories, although ideologies are not always generally accepted. Theories may support programs of action, but they often lack the quality of being "highly integrated" or even generally accepted.

The definition of theory adopted here also allows for a distinction concerning organization. Without some sort of arrangement of random ideas, the statement of political thinking becomes cumbersome and meaningless. An individual may consider an original proposal. He may evaluate an idea in his own mind by balancing the practicability of it. But this type of thinking is individual and isolated, not a part of a greater whole. A theory involves more than one idea or proposal. It is a series of specific or individual ideas combined in a systematic, logical statement of proposed public action.

²Charles S. Hyneman, The Study of Politics (Urbana, Ill., 1959), p. 48.

A partial distinction between political theory and political science can be found in the description of the "construction of a science" which Charles S. Hyneman has proposed. To build a political science, Hyneman wrote:

Items of knowledge arrived at by finding what actually exists or happens under limited observations, are fitted together in statements as to what more generally exists and occurs. These generalized statements (generalizations) which extend to matters not yet investigated are products of the mind, feats of imagination, ideas. They are, for any scientist, hypotheses (giant or limited) until he is of the opinion that they are sufficiently supported by investigation. The investigations that support them, weaken them, or overturn them, are further examination of the evidences as to what actually exists or occurs. The body of belief or knowledge that results from this joining of ideas and evidence is a structure of interrelated generalizations. As the structure of generalizations grows in applicability and acceptance it becomes recognized as a science.³

In short, formulation of an "idea" is the beginning of the theory in politics. Formal organization of these ideas facilitates "investigation," or what is perhaps speculative evaluating in many cases. The result of the formulative, organizational, and evaluative processes becomes a contribution to the literature of political science. Thus, it would seem, that to Hyneman political theory is the basis of the discipline of political science. This idea leads to the adoption of the definition of theory stated above.

The relationship between political theory, political ideology (or philosophy), and political science, for the

³Hyneman, The Study of Politics, pp. 30-31.

purposes of this study, is understood to be one of components as related to the aggregate or totality. Political theory is taken to be the beginning, political philosophy and political ideology are taken to be the justification and acceptance of the theory, and political science is taken to be the application or assimilation of these elements into a complete body of evaluated literature.

Lastly, the relationship of political science, as defined here, to the actual operation of government is considered to be one involving the study of ultimate goals in government and the means of reaching these goals. The political scientist is involved with the preparation of a body of objective literature which has the final purpose of instructing or teaching to enable the general public, or leaders of the general public, to make the actual choices. First, these choices involve the "big" goals of American democratic government; and, second, these choices involve selection of the means by which these goals may be reached. It should be stressed, however, that the political scientist does not actually make the choice--this is a function for the "public" in a democratic system of government.

In addition to the broad definitions and basic concepts of government, brief mention of the meaning of specific historical terms used in this study is essential to a preface for the paper. The term "extremist" is used to indicate the group of Republican leaders ordinarily called "radical." The

term "radical" comes increasingly to be appropriated as a title for the "far left," denoting content more than degree. The choice of the alternate word here is, in part, an effort to offset this blurring through semantic evolution. The men of the Stevens-Wade-Sumner school of the immediate post-Civil War period were both liberal and conservative in their attitudes and program. This group sought extension of the suffrage to the emancipated Negro of the South (but not necessarily in those Northern states in which Negroes were still disenfranchised at the end of the war⁴); but the same group, in May, 1868, endorsed the payment of the national debt in gold,⁵ which was a conservative approach.

This same group--the extremists--took the conservative approach when they opposed the reform of the federal civil service system introduced by Schurz during his first year as senator from Missouri.⁶ "Extremists" was used by Lingley and Foley to describe protective tariff Republicans of 1888.⁷ However, the term seems applicable to Republicans who fostered Congressional reconstruction of the South immediately following the war.

⁴Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of Modern America, 1865-1951 (New York, 1951), p. 9.

⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (December 20, 1869), pp. 236-238.

⁷Charles R. Lingley and Allen R. Foley, Since the Civil War, 3rd edition (New York, 1935), p. 245.

In the early 1870's Schurz was a leader of a group of Republicans who preferred the name "liberal." Their platform of 1870 advocated relaxed treatment of the South, low tariffs to help reduce consumer prices, and the enactment of civil service reform legislation designed to help prevent the graft excesses which characterized the Grant administration.⁸ However, this group attempted to bolt the regular Republican party at one point during the period of this study; and, therefore, it seems appropriate to dub these men "insurgents." Because their platform mainly stressed reform of party ideology and practice, these Republicans have been considered here, collectively, as composing the Reform Movement of 1870-72. The group of Republicans, both in and out of Congress, who opposed the insurgents are termed "regulars" in this study.

Literature available to make a study of Schurz's political career seemed adequate at first glance. However, on closer examination it proved to be lacking to an extent. Reliance was placed mainly on his Autobiography edited by Wayne Andrews and introduced by Allan Nevins. An early edition of The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz which contains a biography of his political career written by Frederic Bancroft and William Dunning was most valuable in making the study. This work was published in 1908; and it proved to be extensive, although the biography by Bancroft and Dunning was overwhelmingly favorable to Schurz. In addition to the Bancroft and Dunning

⁸Schlesinger, The Rise of Modern America, p. 54.

study an early biography by Chester Easum was utilized extensively. Of lesser value was a collection of essays entitled The Forty-Eighters, edited by A. E. Zucker. This is a history of the group of German revolutionaries who came to the United States after the unsuccessful attempt to overthrow William IV of Prussia in 1848-49. The general history in this work was helpful, but the biography of Schurz was extremely slanted in his favor. Another recent study of Schurz has been done by Clara Tutt and published by the University of Wisconsin Press; however, it lacks a bibliography and footnotes, so it was of little use in this study.

Among the works useful in gathering general background for the paper were Wilson's The American Political Mind, Malcolm Moos' new history of the Republican party entitled The Republicans--A History of Their Party, Ranny and Kendall's Democracy and the American Party System, Richard Hofstadter's The American Political Tradition, and the revised edition of American Political Thought by Allan Grimes. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Several specific histories--that is, histories of time periods or specialized subject matter--were helpful.

Works out of print or unavailable included a biography of Schurz written by Claude Moore Fues, which was cited often in some of the works used in this study. Also, Schurz himself wrote an essay on Lincoln, which might have been helpful.

It, too, is out of print. Schurz was a journalist and editor, and it possibly would have been useful to have had access to some of the newspapers to which he contributed.

Naturally, remarks made by Schurz during his term in the Senate, which are recorded in the Congressional Globe and the Congressional Record, aided in filling gaps in available material. However, the lack of an adequate biography of Schurz for use as a secondary source hampered the research to an extent. Lastly, original manuscripts of some of the Schurz correspondence, particularly during the Reform Movement of 1870-72, would probably have been valuable.

CHAPTER I

AMERICA DURING SCHURZ'S CAREER

Carl Schurz, appearing on the American political stage during a period of great change, felt the influence of human events as he formulated his political thinking. He also was affected by his German birth, education, and revolutionary activity before his immigration to the United States. Indeed, it appears that much of his political thought was reaction to existing circumstances or events rather than pure contemplative thinking.

Perhaps this type of thinking was hardly contributive to the literature of political science. However, Schurz was very active in two major reform movements during his political life in the United States; and from this view point alone, he was partially influential in American political history. Despite the fact that Schurz cannot be classified as a political theorist of the Jefferson caliber, for example, he is significant, because he brought German revolutionary liberalism to the political world of the United States.

Schurz, then, was a political activist more than a political theorist. Therefore, the major influences of the period during his career were important in this study. As a result, it is necessary to include this brief survey here,

and to include a brief biography of the man later, as an introduction to the political thinking of Schurz. Both the survey of the period during Schurz's political career and the biography which follows are confined to the major "highlights," omitting detailed descriptions as unnecessary.

Economic Growth

Historically, probably the most influential characteristic of the period from 1868 to 1888 was the development of industry in the United States. Before the Civil War, manufacturing had been confined largely to small plants or to the handcraft system of production centered in private homes. But after Appomattox, and into the last decade of the Nineteenth century, economic growth and development of mass production shot upward at a rate which exceeded any development before the period.¹ As an example of this expansion, between 1859 and 1899 the number of manufacturing establishments in the United States increased by 164.4 per cent.² Railroad construction offered another gauge for this industrial growth. Railroad mileage increased from about 30,000 in 1860 to approximately 166,000 miles in 1890.³

¹Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, Vintage Book edition (New York, 1960), p. 164.

²Harold Underwood Faulkner, American Economic History, 8th edition (New York, 1960), p. 394.

³Charles A. Beard, The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings, compiled and annotated by William Beard (New York, 1957), p. 204.

This industrial development helped cause the beginning of a new relationship between all levels of government and the business community of the nation. In 1868 the businessman was accustomed to currying advantage and favor from the politician; but, by 1888, these positions had been reversed, with the politician, or office-seeker at least, looking to industrialists and businessmen for campaign funds and other types of economic gain. In short, business began a program to control and direct policy at all levels of government with a view toward preserving the traditional rights of private property and laissez faire policies of the less complicated pre-Civil War age.⁴

Several important factors contributed to this economic development, but two stand out as vitally important to the politics of the period. One of these factors was the expanding agricultural community, which traced a great deal of its origins to the demand for farm goods during the Civil War and to the opening of new lands after the war through the Homestead Act.⁵ The other contributing factor to economic development was the increasing need for capital to finance industrial development and railroad construction, which led to the rise of large, oligarchical monopolies to furnish this capital.⁶

⁴Beard, The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings, pp. 207-208.

⁵Faulkner, American Economic History, pp. 365-369.

⁶Ibid., p. 421.

The growth of agriculture found impetus in the demand for food commodities to supply the large armies engaged in the Civil War. After the conflict, demand for agricultural products continued high for a time, causing thousands of Americans to move West and open new land. In 1860 the total amount of land devoted to farming in the United States amounted to approximately 407,000,000 acres; but by 1890, the estimated total land in farms has risen to approximately 623,000,000.⁷ During the same period (1860-1890) the population of the nation increased about 31,543,000, reaching a total of 63,056,000 in 1890.⁸

The sharp increase in acreage under cultivation which occurred during the thirty years following the Civil War takes on even greater significance when considered in the light of shifting labor from farm to industry and the mechanization of American farms which resulted from the labor shift. As an indication of the shift from manual labor to machines in farm production, statistics of the period show that the total national value of farm machinery and equipment in 1860 was \$246,000,000.⁹ By 1890, the total national value in farm implements and machinery had risen to the sum of \$494,000,000.¹⁰

⁷"Land Utilization, by Type: 1850 to 1954," Historical Statistics of the United States, Bureau of the Census (Washington, 1960), p. 239.

⁸Ibid., p. 7.

⁹Ibid., p. 284.

¹⁰Ibid.

This replacement of men and horses as farm labor caused a "mild revolution" in the agricultural community of the nation; and this, in turn, deeply affected the nation's industrial complex. The replacement of manual farm labor freed workers for the production of increasing amounts of machinery, thus furnishing the labor to build the vast industrial base of the nation.¹¹ Also, this shift of farm labor to industrial production helped stimulate the population shift which contributed to the transformation of the United States from a rural society into a highly industrialized urban community.¹²

Agrarian Discontent

This mechanization of the farm and urbanization of the nation was not accomplished without difficulty, however. Agrarian elements of the population during the 1870's and 1880's began to feel the pressures of decreasing farm prices, continued high interest payments, and discrimination from the rapidly developing industrial and commercial monopolies-- particularly the railroads.¹³ One of the most vexing problems for the farmers of the nation during this period was the value

¹¹In 1862 approximately one in every five Americans (derived his income from agriculture, but by 1892 only one in every twenty-six American wage-earners was agricultural. See Agricultural Yearbook, 1962, Department of Agriculture (Washington, 1962), p. 2.

¹²Faulkner, American Economic History, p. 383.

¹³Ibid., pp. 366-368.

of money--as indeed it had been, to some extent, for years. Of this question of monetary valuation, one economic historian wrote:

The government's policy of calling in some of the greenbacks and ultimately raising the paper currency to a parity with gold put the farmers at a disadvantage, for the American farmer was predominately a debtor and consequently was injured by a decline in the general price level. Unable to meet his interest payments, which continued at the old rate while prices fell and the value of money increased, he was often forced to see his mortgage foreclosed and the results of years of labor wiped out. He had the option of going into industry, or again moving on to the frontier.¹⁴

By 1890, at least, there was little or no frontier left to which bankrupt farmers could move; but even before 1890, agitation grew strong for economic help from government in the form of regulated railroad rates and issuance of more paper currency, among other things.

Naturally, this "agrarian discontent" took political form. The Grange Movement, which never attempted to take on the nature of a political party, was the protest voice of agricultural America in the first years following the Civil War. During the late 1870's the Grange began to give way to the Greenbackers, who did attempt organized political party activity into the 1880's.¹⁵ By 1890-92, this third party movement favoring the agricultural population of the nation

¹⁴Faulkner, American Economic History, p. 383.

¹⁵V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups, 4th edition (New York, 1961), p. 283.

took the name People's, or Populist, party; and in the 1892 presidential campaign the Populist candidate--General James B. Weaver of Iowa--displayed strong popularity at the polls.¹⁶

Generally, the policy changes advocated by all of the agrarian protest groups, whether the individual group adopted formal party organization or not, concentrated on the free coinage of silver and gold to aid the debtor class; reclamation of most government land grants and opening these lands for settlement; strict control of railroad by government (usually without specifying which level of government); and easy credit.¹⁷

Summing up this period of agricultural history in the United States, Harold Underwood Faulkner wrote:

Speaking broadly, the history of American agriculture until about 1890 was chiefly the story of the westward movement and the continuous opening of new land for speculation and production. In detail this story has been modified by the invention of new machinery, by the necessary adaptation of crops to new soil, and by the gradual shifting of production to new regions whose superiority severely handicapped older communities. The placing of large

¹⁶Key, Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups, p. 283. Of Weaver's success Key wrote in this passage that, "One of every 12 popular votes went to the Populist candidate [in 1892] who won 22 electoral votes. His strength was greatest in the western states."

¹⁷Henry Steel Commager, editor, Documents of American History (New York, 1949), II, 143-146. This Populist platform was typical of demands made by most agrarian groups. This platform actually advocated government ownership of the railroads.

acres of new land under cultivation was in turn attended by a decline in agricultural prices and by the production of a surplus for export.¹⁸

These broad trends and developments, then, caused the emergence of political action in the agricultural community.

Industrial Development

As noted above, the period between 1860 and 1890 was one of industrial development and railroad construction in the United States. Although the story of this development is detailed and long, some elements of it caused a profound political reaction at the state and local levels as well as in Washington. For, as has often been the case in American history, changes of extensive consequence were reflected in the nation's politics during the years between 1868 and 1888. However, not all of these changes need be considered for this study.

Urbanization, one of these components in the economic history of the United States during the twenty-odd years following the Civil War, took its stimulus from the shift of agricultural labor to the newly forming industrial areas of the nation. As the need for labor on the farm decreased with the introduction of farm machinery, this labor, unconsciously following the classical market theory of Adam Smith,¹⁹ sought

¹⁸Faulkner, American Economic History, p. 381.

¹⁹Robert L. Heilbroner, The Worldly Philosophers, rev. ed. (New York, 1961), pp. 39-42.

work in these burgeoning industrial concentrations. The market demand--for labor in this instance--was greater in one area of the economy than in another. Therefore, labor transferred to the point of most demand, following the theory of the Classical Economists.²⁰

Naturally, the political implications of this sudden change in American economic and social life were great, to say the least. This story of change was at least partially discernible even during the period, and many historians since have described this change in great detail. The details of the change were obscured by the results of the population concentration in growing urban areas, a process still continuing and still contributing its share of social and economic problems. This industrialization of American economy and the urbanization of American society has been characterized as the Industrial Revolution in the United States, or as the "increasing proportion of wage workers as contrasted with agriculturalists . . . and with handicraftsmen" ²¹

The results of this process have been summed up as follows:

This industrial development meant the transformation of vast masses of people into a proletariat, with all the term implies: an immense population housed in tenements and rented dwellings, the organization of class into trade-unions,

²⁰Heilbroner, The Worldly Philosophers, pp. 39-42.

²¹Beard, The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings, p. 211.

labor parties, and other groups; poverty and degradation on a large scale; strikes, lock-outs, and social warfare; the employment of large numbers of women and children in factories; the demand for all kinds of legislation mitigating the evils of the capitalist process; and finally attacks upon the very basis of the industrial system itself.²²

These social and economic evils, particularly the exploitation of "wage workers" as well as the remaining agricultural community, precipitated an increasing clamor for something new in American politics--the reform of the economic system by legislative means, which developed into a direct attack on the laissez-faire principle.²³ But as is sometimes the case in the American political system, meeting this demand for reform, at the national level at least, was slow in developing.

Political Chronology

Politics in the United States between 1868 and 1888 was governed by three primary factors--the nearly complete supremacy of the Republican party in national politics; the beginning of close ideological and practical association between the new industrial community and the Republican party; and the growing demand for reform, which later produced the

²² Beard, The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings, pp. 211-212.

²³ Francis G. Wilson, The American Political Mind (New York, 1949), p. 289. For a continuation of this discussion of the attack on the capitalist system of laissez-faire see the concluding portion of the chapter cited here, pp. 309-315.

Populist party movement. This period, then, proved to be one of the most formative and revolutionary in American political chronology, because it was during these years that the nation's entire complexion began to change to face the implications of industrialism. Although these changes were evident before the Civil War, it was that great conflict which helped excite popular reaction and indignation after the deep emotional implications of the war had subsided.

As a national political party, considered in the formal sense of the term, the Republican party in 1868 was young. But its firm position of supremacy in American political life was assured, even before the presidential campaign of 1868, through the emotional association between the Republican party and the Union war effort. The association of political parties and war efforts was nothing new in American politics, even in 1865; but the intensity of this tie between party and armed crusade proved to be unique up to that time. The deep political significance of this association, at least in the general public mind in the North, prompted one recent scholar to write:

The deepening popular commitment [during the war] to the Union war effort had . . . taken on a political meaning; the Republican, or Union, party had accumulated a tremendous fund of moral capital. The war, in a sense that went much beyond ordinary national undertakings and ordinary party projects, was their war; the war principles were their principles; and should those principles once more seem in any way endangered, there was every likelihood that the people's loyalty to them would be linked without question to support of the party.

Never was loyalty to a party more fully and automatically identified with consensus on matters of public morality [and therefore public policy]²⁴

Thus, command of the Republican party after the Civil War meant virtually complete control of the national destiny.

Although the Democratic party was active during the early years of reconstruction, particularly in New York under the leadership of Samuel J. Tilden,²⁵ the Republican party controlled the political scene in the nation. It had been the Republican party, with its martyred leader, Lincoln, which had successfully led the nation through the wilderness of secession and civil conflict and back to the security of the perpetual Union. And in 1868 the Republican party selected Ulysses S. Grant, the most widely-venerated hero of the war, as its presidential candidate. By then, the Republican party had accepted the responsibility of preserving the Union, and it also had assumed the mantle of authority to judge the patriotism of both individuals and states.

To solidify its position further, the Republican party in 1868 resorted to the use of "the bloody shirt of the rebellion" issue, which was an attempt to blame the entire Democratic party for secession and the war.²⁶ Grant won

²⁴Erick L. McKittrick, Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction (Chicago, 1960), pp. 47-48.

²⁵Raymond G. Gettell, History of American Political Thought (New York, 1928), p. 429.

²⁶"Reconstruction, 1865-77," Encyclopedia of American History, rev. ed., Robert B. Morris, editor (New York, 1961), p. 249.

26 of the 34 states, compiling an electoral vote of 214, as opposed to the 80 cast for his Democratic opponent, Horatio Seymour.²⁷ Curiously, however, Grant won a popular majority of only 306,000 votes--a total vote of 5,715,000 was recorded--despite a Negro vote of more than 500,000 cast in the election.²⁸

With the election of Grant, the Republican party began to reflect a basic shift in philosophy and policy from the early years of its formation. In the period of organization preceding the Civil War the Republican party had founded its principles in the anti-slavery doctrines of men such as Abraham Lincoln and William H. Seward, so that by about 1854-55 the "new Republican party stood in effect for the abolition of slavery"²⁹ One modern American scholar of political parties characterized the Republican party of the 1850's as a "loose coalition of dissenting interests that were united only in their desire to keep slavery out of the territories."³⁰

²⁷"Reconstruction, 1865-77," Encyclopedia of American History, rev. ed., Robert B. Morris, editor (New York, 1961), p. 249.

²⁸Ibid. Three southern states did not participate in the election.

²⁹Wilson, The American Political Mind, p. 211.

³⁰Clinton Rossiter, Parties and Politics in America, paperback edition (Ithaca, N. Y., 1960), p. 142.

However, between 1858 and 1868, Republican party leadership began shifting to the hands of men aligned more with the commercial and industrial worlds, which forced even the "progressive-minded politicians who had put the party together in the first place . . . to scramble as best they could to win their share of influence and rewards."³¹ In short, the Grant administration clearly marked the trend toward favoritism for the business interests in the Republican party which Clinton Rossiter contends began as early as 1858.

Grant, in his First Annual Message to Congress, delivered in 1869, argued for a gradual resumption of specie payments on the grounds that fluctuating values of paper money was detrimental to the business world, because the businessman was forced to become an "involuntary gambler."³² Naturally, Grant exerted a strong influence on the general direction of Republican party policy, because he was the most revered man in the nation, at least in the minds of the general public in the North. This policy of business favoritism was to be carried even further in later years by other Republican presidents.

After Grant was re-elected in 1872--an election in which he sent the Insurgent Republican group, led by Carl

³¹Clinton Rossiter, Parties and Politics in America, paperback edition (Ithaca, N. Y., 1960), p. 142.

³²Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (December 6, 1869), p. 11.

Schurz and others, to decisive defeat--he again urged the resumption of specie payments, saying in his Sixth Annual Message to Congress:

It is easy to conceive that the debtor and speculative classes may think it of value to them to make so-called money abundant until they can throw a portion of their burdens upon others. But even these, I believe, would be disappointed in the results if a course should be pursued which will keep in doubt the value of the legal-tender medium of exchange. A revival of productive industry is needed by all classes; by none more than the holders of property, of whatever sort, with debts to liquidate from realization upon its sale.³³

The "debtor" class of which Grant spoke, of course, was comprised mainly of farmers and migrants moving West, while the property owners were the railroad companies and large business corporations, which were beginning to consolidate into the trusts of a later period. In 1874 Grant--by then beginning to lose some control of party policy--so favored industrial and banking interests that he vetoed the "inflation bill" despite the insistent advice of administration Congressional leaders from the West.³⁴

Other men influenced the Republican party during this period, because Grant was a weak president, as has been shown by many scholars. Among the men who spoke with loud

³³Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (December 7, 1874), p. 3.

³⁴William B. Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant--Politician (New York, 1957), pp. 334-335.

voices in party circles throughout the Grant administrations, and beyond for that matter, was Roscoe Conkling, senator from New York and close associate and advisor of Grant.³⁵ Indeed, it has been well established that Conkling, along with the staunch "regular," Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, spoke for the Grant administration in the Senate and exerted strong influence with the president.³⁶ Conkling was a "hard money man" who stood with the commercial and industrial interests of New York and New England.³⁷

During the 1872 campaign Conkling wrote a letter to a group of Grant supporters in New York City which probably showed the true sentiments of the senator, and which also probably was a representative summary of the feelings of most Congressmen supporting Grant. In part Conkling wrote:

I rejoice that . . . the merchants and bankers of New York will speak for President Grant. In hours of supreme peril, now past, the nation received its best and wisest impulses from these same merchants and bankers. Their voice is timely now again to hold the country steady in the course of safe, honest and prosperous administration; and to check the restless spirit which seeks change at the cost of general good³⁸

³⁵Alfred R. Conkling, The Life and Letters of Roscoe Conkling (New York, 1889), p. 326.

³⁶William S. Myers, The Republican Party--A History (New York, 1931), p. 270.

³⁷Conkling, The Life and Letters of Roscoe Conkling, p. 326.

³⁸Ibid., p. 429.

True, Conkling was campaigning for Grant when this letter was written; but apparently this was his personal view, and it probably was the view of other party leaders as well. For Grant gathered around him men "schooled in political warfare" and usually loyal to his policies, following the Grant practice of choosing subordinates willing to cooperate with him.³⁹

With the acceptance of the Compromise of 1877, a result of the Hayes-Tilden presidential contest of 1876, Republican party leadership proved that party philosophy had changed sharply from the anti-slavery days of 1854-55. The circumstances of the compromise arose when the electoral process mired hopelessly in deadlock. The choice between the two candidates would have fallen to the House of Representatives. Constitutional provisions required that a majority vote of all state delegations, voting as states rather than individual Congressmen, was needed for election.⁴⁰

Many Republicans, however, feared that the election of a Democrat might lead to violence or even a renewal of the Civil War. Also, the Democrats held a strong majority in the House after the election of 1876. For these reasons, a secret compromise was proposed by the Republicans.⁴¹ It was

³⁹Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant--Politician, pp. 191-192.

⁴⁰The Constitution of the United States of America, Senate Document No. 170, 82nd Congress, 2nd Session, Edward S. Corwin, editor (Washington, 1953), p. 27.

⁴¹C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, revised Anchor Book edition (Garden City, N. Y., 1960), pp. 5-6.

the terms of the compromise which provided the evidence of a changed Republican party.

The Republican delegation (all partisans of Hayes) agreed that Republican governors holding office in Louisiana and South Carolina would withdraw in favor of Democratic party candidates who claimed election in both states. The Republicans also pledged that federal troops in both states would be withdrawn as soon as possible, either by Grant or by Hayes, if the latter were elected. In return the Southern Democrats agreed to insure the peaceful election of Hayes by defeating a threatened filibuster in the House; to "protect" Negro rights in the South, which in practice meant a return to white supremacy; and to guarantee the safety of political opponents. Therefore, "the Southerners were abandoning the cause of Tilden in exchange for control over two states, and the Republicans were abandoning the cause of the Negro in exchange . . . for the Presidency."⁴² Thus, the Republican party had swung completely about face by giving up protection of the Negro in the South.

Apparently, a number of factors combined to cause the Republican party to change so drastically after the Civil War. A new party president to replace the martyred Lincoln was one factor; and the conditions which "forced" party leadership to accept the Compromise of 1877--whether those conditions were real or imaginary--helped bring on the change.

⁴²C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 27.

Also, the Reform Movement of 1870-72 contributed to the change, at least to the extent that it brought on the defection of previously strong anti-slavery men like Charles Sumner and Lyman Trumbull. Probably another cause of the party change was the death of Thaddeus Stevens. He carried much of the extremist arguments during his later years in Congress; but he died August 11, 1868,⁴³ depriving the extremist Republicans of one of their most vocal leaders during the very period when the party began to change. Finally, the changing economic situation of the United States, along with adopted theories of society which were new to American thought, contributed to the change in the Republican party.

Social Darwinism

One other factor of great influence in American life during the period from 1868 to 1888 proved to be of political and economic significance: the American adoption of social Darwinism. As the nation geared for industrial and territorial expansion after the Civil War, the social adaptation of the biological theory of evolution proposed by Darwin in 1858 took form as a partial justification for the irresponsible accumulation of wealth.⁴⁴ This adaptation of the Darwin theory

⁴³Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961, U. S. Congress, House Document No. 442, 87th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1961), p. 789.

⁴⁴Andrew M. Scott, Political Thought in America (New York, 1959), p. 304.

of continual struggle for survival, and thus the survival of the fittest, was formulated by Herbert Spencer, who was widely published in the United States by the 1870's.⁴⁵ Spencer, and later his chief American exponent, William Graham Sumner,⁴⁶ argued that the social and economic status of an individual was determined by his own ability. Therefore, Spencer and Sumner concluded that those who survived were actually the fittest, just as Darwin had theorized was the process in nature.

This argument led to the conclusion that the wealthy must be the fittest and that accumulation of wealth, by fair means or foul, was logical.⁴⁷ Thus, to Spencer and Sumner, and even ministers as well as industrialists and speculators of the period, the personal acquisition of wealth insured the individual of economic and social survival, making this acquisition both "good" and "inevitable."⁴⁸

With this theory completed, the politicians of the period took the helm--men such as Conkling, James G. Blaine and many others in the Senate and other levels of government. Reverting to the classical economic conceptions of Adam Smith and the "Cobden-Bright school" of the period in England, these men

⁴⁵Alan P. Grimes, American Political Thought, rev. ed. (New York, 1960), p. 305.

⁴⁶Scott, Political Thought in America, p. 304.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 305-308.

⁴⁸Ibid.

began constructing a "system of jurisprudence" (implemented mainly through the senatorial power to review executive appointments) which held that private property was paramount; that government should refrain from interfering except to preserve order and the right to private property (unless, that is, the interference would aid private enterprise); and that public utilities and public resources, such as land, should be in private hands, even if the transfer were accomplished at no cost to the private investor.⁴⁹ As Charles Beard has shown, however, the main argument, both from these senators and from the Darwinists generally, was the constant insistence that government interference with private property--with the accumulation of it as well as with the right to have it--was both unconstitutional and contrary to the inevitable law of survival of the fittest.⁵⁰

Two other points concerning this socio-political theory were important in the development of the judicial concept; the instrument chosen by Conkling et al. to instill this concept was the Fourteenth Amendment; and the inculcation required several years, making the change a gradual one and, therefore, one generally unnoticed by the public. In 1882-86, while arguing the San Mateo County case before the United States Supreme Court, Conkling contended that "the Drafting Committee [of which he was a member in 1868] had intended to include within the scope of the [Fourteenth] Amendment . . .

⁴⁹Beard, The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings, p. 207.

⁵⁰Ibid.. p. 208.

corporations and business interests struggling for emancipation from [state] legislative interference."⁵¹ However, it was not until 1890-98 that the Supreme Court "gave full recognition to substantive due process as a limitation on state legislative power and thus gave a free hand to industry and business."⁵²

Summary

Thornton Anderson, in his revision of the Jacobson work, wrote of this period immediately following the Civil War:

After the Civil War the outstanding problems no longer concerned the relationships of states to the nation but rather the relationships of individuals to each other and to the government, particularly in the realm of economics. The laissez-faire principles of Jefferson and Taylor were reasserted on behalf of the industrialization they had hated; at the same time, their agrarian humanistic attitudes were re-expressed by several schools of critics of "free enterprise" The exigencies of the Civil War and the loss of southern agrarian votes in Congress gave the industrialists a strangle hold upon the national government. They converted it into an instrument of their economic aggrandizement The Republican party, born in the agricultural West, became the guardian angel of capitalism in its conflict with agrarianism.⁵³

⁵¹Charles Warren, The Supreme Court in United States History, rev. ed. (Boston, 1947), II, 541. See also Beard, The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings, p. 210; County of San Mateo (Calif.) v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co., 116 U. S., 138.

⁵²Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution--Its Origins and Development (New York, 1948), p. 512.

⁵³J. Mark Jacobson, Development of American Political Thought, revised by Thornton Anderson (New York, 1960), p. 449.

Here, then, was the period during which Carl Schurz acted out his role in the national political arena. It was a period of vast economic change, of the gradually subsiding passions fired during the Civil War, of new social-political-economic theories, and of increasing political influence of the commercial-industrial community of the nation. Therefore, Schurz stepped before a backdrop of immense social and economic evolution and onto a stage lighted by the glare of fortune-seeking, which somehow obscured the political and judicial activities of the special interests which were taking hold of the American system of government.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF CARL SCHURZ

The life of Carl Schurz is divisible into four periods: his life before immigration to the United States, the period in the United States before and during the Civil War, the years following the war and through about 1880-88, and, lastly, the years following 1888 to his death in 1906. Of these periods, the most important for this study was the third--the years following the Civil War when Schurz was most active on the national political stage. However, the first two periods of his life did affect the thinking of Schurz; therefore, it is necessary to consider these years in outline form in order to help clarify this study.

Before Schurz came to the United States in 1852, he was an active participant in the "liberal" revolt in Germany in 1848 and 1849. Actually, it was his part in the revolt which drove him, finally, to forsake Europe for America.¹ Therefore, his part in the revolt, and his reasons for participating, were of prime importance in forming his thinking. However, the revolt was not the only factor which helped

¹Cyclopedia of Political Science, Political Economy, and of the Political History of the United States, John J. Lalor, editor (Chicago, 1884), III, 648; Cyclopedia of American Government, Andrew C. McLaughlin and Albert Bushnell Hart, editors (New York, 1914), III, 272.

shape the views of Schurz. His father and grandfather contributed to forming the fixed opinions Schurz later held, and the years Schurz spent in the University of Bonn helped develop his later opinions and thinking.

The Years Before 1848-49

Schurz was born in the village of Liblar near Cologne and Bonn in the bustling Rhineland of what was then Prussia.² He was the son of the village schoolmaster (in Liblar and Bruhl). He was also the "grandson, on his mother's side, of a Burghalfen, or tenant-in-chief, of Count Wolf Metternich. Schurz seems to have inherited from his maternal grandfather much of his exceptionally resilient physical vitality, as well as some of the tendency to dominate which later marked him"³ These two ingredients--the intellectual environment supplied Schurz by his father and the aggressiveness furnished by his grandfather--set the foundation for his character and helped determine the course he followed at the University of Bonn and later at Rastatt during the Revolution of 1848-49.

Through several years of formal study at the "Gymnasium" in Cologne and at the University of Bonn, Schurz exhibited

²Bayard Q. Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Fighters, edited by A. E. Zucker (New York, 1950), p. 221.

³Chester V. Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz (Chicago, 1929), p. 6.

superior ability as a student.⁴ As Bayard Q. Morgan pointed out, Schurz "learned to learn" at the preparatory school in Cologne.⁵ When he entered the university at Bonn, he had already developed an intellectual discipline, an appreciation for art and a knowledge and love of music, as well as mastery of Greek and the Greek classics.⁶

These years of formal education for Schurz had begun early. At ten years of age, he was off to Cologne. He remained in school until the abortive revolutionary attempt in 1848-49, which occurred when he was nineteen years of age. Thus, Schurz was not "a home-boy, strictly speaking . . . [a fact which] must have promoted strength of character, self-reliance, and initiative which were to be of supreme importance in his future political career."⁷

At Bonn, Schurz met the famed German revolutionary, poet and teacher, Gottfried Kinkel, who became a lasting influence on the young student. While at Bonn, Schurz adopted the principles of German unification and popular sovereignty for all Germans.⁸ Through Kinkel and the associations Schurz maintained in the revolutionary group,

⁴Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, p. 224.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, pp. 12-14.

⁷Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, p. 222.

⁸Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, p. 16.

named the "Franconia club," Schurz developed the strong capacity for the formation of deep and lasting friendships which he displayed in later years.⁹

Much stress has been placed on these formative years by biographers of Schurz, for these writers agree that he developed most of his ability and political thought before and during the revolution of 1848-49. Typical of these biographical comments, although perhaps somewhat overdrawn, is the following passage from Morgan's account of Schurz's life:

Without doubt /the rise of Schurz in American politics/ was in part due to the peculiar configuration of things in the United States, and to the fact that Schurz's native gifts happened to meet the needs of the situation, while his personal philosophy responded with natural eagerness to the challenges that his new home presented to him. When we consider, however, that of the thousands of German Forty-eighters who sought a home in the American republic no other achieved anything like such eminence as Schurz, we are justified in attributing a major portion of his success to those outstanding qualities of mind and character that his friends and admirers stressed during his life.¹⁰

These qualities of character and abilities were formed, largely, before Schurz came to the United States.

The Years Between Rastatt and America

A detailed description of the events which led to the German revolt of 1848-49 falls outside the scope of this study. However, the course of action had a profound effect on Schurz; and a brief outline becomes pertinent for that

⁹Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, pp. 14-17.

¹⁰Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, p. 227.

reason. Basically, the attempted revolt arose from popular discontent in the Rhineland with the autocratic Prussian king, Wilhelm IV. The German people had long desired unification and "a democratization of government." When the French overthrew Louis Philippe in 1848, German revolutionaries began demanding that Wilhelm IV step down from the throne of Prussia. These demands developed into a popular demonstration in the Bonn area, and they quickly spread to other sections of Germany. In 1849, Kinkel, with Schurz as his adjutant, led a march on the fortress at Rastatt, which ended in defeat at the hands of seasoned Prussian regulars and the capture of most of the revolutionaries, including Kinkel. Of the leaders only Schurz escaped. This action, of course, broke the revolution.¹¹

After Schurz escaped from Rastatt,¹² in July, 1849, and firmly holding to his belief that the revolution would eventually be successful, Schurz went first to Zurich seeking political asylum.¹³ While in Zurich, Schurz received word that Kinkel

¹¹The account of the revolt in 1848-49 was taken from Morgan's "Carl Schurz," which appeared in The Forty-Eighters, pp. 224-226. Although the account here is brief, it should be stressed that the events described formed the core of the uprising in Germany. With only one exception this description includes all of the actual military engagements of the revolt. The engagement at Rastatt was by far the most important of the revolution.

¹²Schurz himself graphically described the escape from Rastatt through an underground sewer. See Carl Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, Wayne Anderson, editor (New York, 1961), pp. 41-54.

¹³Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, p. 55.

had been tried and convicted on charges of treason in a Prussian military tribunal. Because of the "eloquence" of the defense Kinkel presented, the court sentenced him to life imprisonment rather than to death.¹⁴ In February, 1850, Schurz received a letter from Frau Kinkel, whom he knew as well as the professor, begging him to accomplish Kinkel's escape from prison. Still young enough to try such a scheme, Schurz plotted the escape. Finally, he succeeded in releasing the revolutionary poet from Spandau prison on the night of November 6, 1850.¹⁵

The importance to Schurz of the escape from Rastatt and the Kinkel episode was summed up by Easum in this manner:

The rapid rise of Carl Schurz in American politics would have been impossible without his brilliant intellectual and personal gifts and his solid contribution to American political life; but it was his fame as a German, among Germans, won in German exploits of escape from Rastatt and Kinkel's Befieung, which earned him his first political opportunities in America After the escape Schurz found himself suddenly famous . . . a marked man among Germans He even figured as Wolfgang von Hohenstein . . . in Friedrich Speilhagen's Die von Hohenstein. Ten years later the story was still being retold in American newspapers¹⁶

¹⁴Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, p. 57.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 67-85. The account of the plot and its execution reads like something from a modern television drama or motion picture. The escape was unsuccessful on the first attempt. In the successful try there was difficulty lowering Kinkel to the ground from a prison window. The flight from Spandau was a galloping carriage ride to Warnemude and then on to freedom in Edinburg and later to London.

¹⁶Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, pp. 42-43.

After the escape, Schurz remained in Europe, mostly in England, for nearly two years before he decided to leave for the United States. The years in England were marked by his growing awareness that the revolutionary cause in Germany, at least for the time being, was shattered. He became an active member of a revolutionary exile group in London and Paris, through which he became acquainted with Mazzini, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Bismarck, Louis Blanc, and Kossuth.¹⁷

During the closing months of 1851 and into the summer of 1852, Schurz and the exiled revolutionaries became aware that the efforts of 1848-49 had failed, and that the "liberal movement must necessarily have a new starting-point," as Schurz described it.¹⁸ During this period of gloom Schurz was cheered by his meeting of the woman whom he was to marry in the summer of 1852.¹⁹ After a very short engagement and honeymoon, Schurz and his new bride sailed for the United States in late August, 1852. Schurz recalled several years later that he and his young bride ". . . landed in the harbor of New York on a bright September morning. With the buoyant hopefulness of young hearts, we saluted the new world."²⁰

¹⁷Schurz, *The Autobiography of Carl Schurz*, pp. 99-100.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 103-104.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 104. Schurz's description of his depression is vivid and poignant. He recalled sitting in Hyde Park, feeling that "England was to me a foreign country," and finally deciding to leave for the United States.

²⁰Ibid., p. 105.

From 1852 to 1868

Sketching the career of Schurz after he came to this country, the editors of A Guide to the Study of the United States of America, partly quoting a biography of Schurz written by Claude Moore Fuess, wrote of Schurz's early years in America the following:

Schurz struggled between two ambitions, Dr. Fuess believes, politics and scholarship, but when he had to choose, he turned to practical affairs. His career was marked by contributions to four great victories: the abolition of slavery, preservation of the Union, maintenance of sound money, and establishment of the merit system of the civil service. He was also Lincoln's Minister to Spain²¹

Although Schurz had mastered French before coming to the United States, he spoke no English. Therefore, his "first task was to learn English in the shortest possible time," which he did by reading newspapers and translating, using only a dictionary.²² His study of the English language and the American political system continued through 1853 and 1854, when, at the age of twenty-four, he moved to Philadelphia, and then to Watertown, Wisconsin, where he found "an atmosphere eminently congenial."²³

His reasons for having considered Wisconsin a "congenial" place to live were interesting. He discussed the

²¹Roy P. Basler, Donald H. Mugridge and Blanche P. McCrum, editors, A Guide to the Study of the United States of America, Library of Congress (Washington, 1960), p. 231.

²²Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, p. 108; Basum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, p. 60.

²³Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, pp. 113-125.

main reason for his choice in his Autobiography, noting that Watertown and Milwaukee, some forty-five miles east of Watertown, were populated mainly by newly-arrived immigrants, mostly from Germany and Ireland.²⁴ He wrote further that:

The task of solving certain problems by the operation of unrestrained municipal self-government, and of taking part through the exercise of the suffrage in the government of a State, and even of a great republic, was new to [these immigrants]. In Wisconsin the immigrants became voters after one year's residence, no matter whether he [sic] had acquired his [sic] citizenship . . . or not This seemed to be therefore, an excellent point of observation from which to watch the growth and the behavior of the political community . . . comparatively uninfluenced by the guidance of the experienced native mind²⁵

The desire of Schurz to provide the political "guidance" for Watertown was thinly veiled here. He "chose to join the minority" by refusing to campaign for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate in Wisconsin during the election of 1855,²⁶ thus taking a definite stand in local politics. He considered this his introduction "into the domestic politics."²⁷ Less than two years later he was the unsuccessful Republican party candidate for lieutenant-governor.²⁸

By the fall of 1859, Schurz had so established himself as a Republican and strong abolitionist that he was asked to

²⁴Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, p. 126.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 126-127.

²⁶Ibid., p. 116.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Cyclopedia of American Government, II, 653.

campaign and lecture for the party in the Midwest and New England.²⁹ Then, in 1860, he was elected chairman of the Wisconsin delegation to the Republican National Convention in Chicago.³⁰ Of the feelings in his delegation Schurz wrote, "there was no real antagonism among us to . . . Lincoln He was universally recognized as a true anti-slavery leader who had done our cause great service . . . but we did not favor his nomination, because we were for Seward" ³¹

After Lincoln was nominated, Schurz first returned to Wisconsin to attempt to calm some vocal Seward supporters who were raising cries of convention fraud; then, throughout the campaign he worked for Lincoln, speaking mainly to German-American groups, large and small. He called these speeches to German immigrant gatherings "my specialty."³² Thus, the "ardent young idealist," equipped with a hatred of slavery and deep distrust of Stephen O. Douglas, the Democratic party candidate, "plunged with heart and soul into the campaign for Lincoln."³³ But campaigning for Lincoln was not an easy

²⁹Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, pp. 150-151.

³⁰Ibid., p. 157.

³¹Ibid. This passage (pp. 157-162) includes a fascinating account of the Presidential hopes of Salmon P. Chase.

³²Ibid., p. 164. Schurz recalled that he campaigned in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.

³³Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, pp. 232-233. Morgan contends here that Schurz distrusted Douglas after Douglas refused to take a strong anti-slavery stand in one of the debates during the campaign.

task, even for an accomplished speaker like Schurz. Generally, the German-American community in the Midwest, particularly the older immigrants in Wisconsin, were allied with the Democratic party on the grounds of that party's opposition to Know-Nothingism.³⁴ Yet, both the Democrats and Republicans actively sought this bloc vote in 1860 because of its numerical strength and apparent political discipline.³⁵ Schurz was so successful in this campaign that Lincoln, in 1861, appointed him ambassador to Madrid. In 1862, again on the strength of his campaigning for Lincoln, he was made a brigadier general in the Union Army after he insisted on returning to the United States when war broke out.³⁶

The years of the Civil War were dominated by military service for Schurz. The account of this service, particularly the battles and his evaluation of commanders, comprise a major portion of one volume of his Reminiscences and also a large part of his Autobiography. Although these accounts are colorful, these years were of minor significance to this study, because this period was a temporary interruption in Schurz's political career. Officially, he cut his political career short with his resignation of the ambassadorship to Spain; but he was to rise to prominence again, beginning in 1865.

³⁴Lawrence S. Thompson and Frank X. Braun, "In Politics," in The Forty-Eighters, A. E. Zucker, editor (New York, 1950), pp. 112-113.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 128-129.

³⁶Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson, editors (New York, 1934), XIII, 588.

The Senate, Insurgence, the Cabinet

Only a few months after the war ended and Lincoln was shot, Schurz was asked by the new President, the tragic Andrew Johnson, to tour the South and to make an official report on his findings.³⁷ The report, written by Schurz following his tour, was very critical of white supremists who were attempting, according to Schurz, to use the presidential plan of reconstruction to disenfranchise the Negro and return to a system of labor very close to slavery, if not actually reimpose that system. Schurz, in his report to President Johnson, wrote of this attempt to re-establish slavery:

The emancipation of the slaves is submitted to only in so far as chattel slavery in the old form could not be kept up. But although the freedman is no longer considered the property of the individual master, he is considered the slave of society, and all independent State legislation will share the tendency to make him such³⁸

Schurz also commented on loyalty among Southerners in 1865. He wrote in the report to the President that "the loyalty of the masses and most of the leaders consists in submission to necessity. There . . . is an entire absence of that national spirit which forms the basis of true loyalty and patriotism" ³⁹ Apparently, Schurz was reporting

³⁷Encyclopedia of American History, p. 776.

³⁸Walter L. Fleming, editor, Documentary History of Reconstruction (Cleveland, 1906), p. 56, quoting Senate Executive Doc. No. 2, 39th Congress, 1st Session (1865), p. 4.

³⁹Ibid.

what most extremists in Congress preferred to hear, rather than the milder findings attributed to Grant and Benjamin Truman, two others Johnson sent South in 1865 and 1866.⁴⁰

In light of the later position Schurz took concerning the extremists and Congressional reconstruction, the conclusion of this report is of interest. Schurz encouraged Johnson to pursue a firmer policy in the South by writing:

There are many well-meaning men, but neither their number nor their influence is strong enough to control the manifest tendency of the popular spirit. There are great reasons for hope that a determined policy on the part of the national government will produce innumerable and valuable conversions. This consideration counsels leniency as to persons such as is demanded by humane and enlightened spirit of our times, and vigor and firmness in the carrying out of principles, such as is demanded by the national sense of justice and the exigencies of our situation.⁴¹

Even though some degree of moderation may be found here, Schurz was placing himself on the side of Republican extremists. Only four years after writing this report Schurz was to rise on the Senate floor and advocate a retreat from this "vigor and firmness in the carrying out of principles." This retreat, or variation, was to come in 1869, during his first year as senator from Missouri.

In the campaign of 1868, which won Ulysses S. Grant the White House for his first term, Schurz worked hard for

⁴⁰John H. Franklin, Reconstruction: After the Civil War (Chicago, 1961), p. 55.

⁴¹Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, p. 57.

the Republican party candidate, even though "General Grant's election was a foregone conclusion."⁴² It was in this campaign that Schurz went on record as a "hard money man."⁴³ His arguments for this position were not unique or new. They were a part of his general political thought. His defense of his views during the 1868 campaign was unique, and perhaps characteristic, because he openly advocated hard money in eastern Indiana in the face of strong opposition of which he had foreknowledge.⁴⁴

After the campaign, Schurz returned to Missouri, where he had made his home after the Civil War, and where the election of a junior senator was taking place. This was the period during which state legislatures actually elected senators, but the contests were usually state-wide. The details of this election and Schurz's success in a Lincoln-Douglas type of debate with his opponent formed something of a picture of the man, because he struck out in this contest against the senior senator, Charles D. Drake, whom Schurz charged with an attempting to become "Republican 'boss' of the State"⁴⁵

⁴²Carl Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz (New York, 1908), III, 292.

⁴³Ibid., III, 287-288.

⁴⁴Ibid., III, 288-290.

⁴⁵Ibid., III, 293.

Drake openly campaigned against Schurz in the latter's successful attempt to attain the Senate, and they debated publicly--Schurz winning the verbal encounter. Recalling the election, Schurz wrote:

I was nominated [by the Republican caucus of the Missouri legislature] for the Senatorship on the first ballot, and on motion the nomination was made unanimous. My election by the Legislature followed in due course. No political victory was ever more cleanly won. My whole election expenses amounted only to my board bill at the hotel [at the state capital], and, absolutely unencumbered by any promise of patronage or other favor, I took my seat in the Senate of the United States on the 4th of March, 1869. My colleague, Mr. Drake, courteously escorted me to the chair of the president of the Senate, where I took the oath of office.⁴⁶

Two days before Schurz took the oath of office in the Senate he passed his fortieth birthday.⁴⁷

As noted above, Schurz was an established "hard money man" when he came to the Senate. He also had adopted a position favoring civil service reform, which shortly put him in the company of senators like Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, and George F. Edmunds of Vermont.⁴⁸ The Grant policy of appointments and the flood of men seeking jobs from Schurz soon stunned him into a position of opposition to the Grant demand for repeal of the Tenure of Office Act.⁴⁹ Grant's active insistence on the

⁴⁶Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 301.

⁴⁷Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, p. 204.

⁴⁸Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils--A History of the Civil Service Reform Movement, 1865-1883 (Urbana, 1961), pp. 59-60.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 60-61.

acquisition of Santo Domingo soon brought Schurz to his feet in the Senate in public defiance of the President.⁵⁰ Opposition to the Ku Klux Klan Act further antagonized Schurz against the administration, and a verbal duel with Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York solidified Schurz as a member of the opposition, or reform, group of the Republicans in the Senate.⁵¹

These events naturally put Schurz in the vanguard of the Insurgent Republican Movement of 1870-72.⁵² There were other factors which contributed to his bolt from the regular party, but it was opposition to Grant policies and the spoils system which figured most prominently for Schurz. This opposition to Grant was to carry through 1875, but Schurz was to feel the whip of formal party discipline in Congress because of his opposition to the regular party organization. In his first term in the Senate Schurz served on the Military Affairs, Pensions, and Territories committees.⁵³ By 1875, he had been reduced to membership on the Foreign Relations Committee and to a select committee "On the Levees of the

⁵⁰Frederic Bancroft and William A. Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz's Political Career, 1869-1906," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 327.

⁵¹Ibid., III, 331, 333-336.

⁵²Ibid., III, 338.

⁵³Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 1st Session, Part 1 (March 8, 1869), p. 27.

Mississippi River."⁵⁴ Schurz chose not to seek his Senate seat a second time when his term expired in 1875.

When Rutherford B. Hayes won the White House through the Compromise of 1877, one of his cabinet appointments was that of Carl Schurz to the post of Secretary of the Interior. This appointment helped Hayes to resist some of the power over appointments held by Congress. The appointment also put Schurz in a position to further civil service reform, because Hayes favored reform.⁵⁵ Schurz remained in the Hayes cabinet until 1881. When Garfield replaced Hayes, Schurz retired from public office.⁵⁶

After the Cabinet

Schurz resumed his journalistic activities after his term in the Hayes cabinet. With the financial assistance of Henry Villard, Schurz became editor-in-chief of the New York Evening Post. E. L. Godkin and Horace White acted as editors; and Godkin's periodical, The Nation, became a "weekly edition of the Evening Post."⁵⁷ The results of this association were described by Bancroft and Dunning in this passage:

The extraordinary ability and experience represented by this trio of editors attracted much attention and

⁵⁴Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (January 6, 1875), p. 28.

⁵⁵Clinton Rossiter, The American Presidency, Mentor Book edition (New York, 1960), p. 78.

⁵⁶Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 397.

⁵⁷Ibid., III, 400.

brought much prestige to this journal. But skeptical voices were not wanting, with suggestions that such a combination of "all the talents" might be unfeasible The skeptics were justified by the events On the proper solution of great problems of social and political progress [Schurz and Godkin] were in substantial agreement; but their methods of promoting the proper solution tended to diverge. Schurz's practice was to reason with his adversaries; Godkin's was both to reason and to lash them. There was also a basic difference in the temperaments of the two men.⁵⁸

On Washington's Birthday, 1884, in Brooklyn, Schurz started another Republican party insurrection which led finally to the famous Mugwump movement of the presidential campaign that year.⁵⁹ As Bancroft and Dunning described it, Schurz was a sworn enemy of James G. Blaine, the Republican candidate in 1884, because Schurz felt Blaine was a demagogic, politically immoral man who looked on politics as a game "in which success means the triumph of a person rather than the promotion of social truth and justice."⁶⁰ Schurz also fought Blaine in this campaign because of a foreign policy feud between the two which developed over Blaine's aggressive South American actions when he was Secretary of State.⁶¹

Schurz worked long and hard to defeat Blaine during the 1884 campaign; and apparently his successful organization and

⁵⁸Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 400-401.

⁵⁹Ibid., III, 403-404.

⁶⁰Ibid., III, 404.

⁶¹Ibid.

leadership of the Mugwump revolt put the Democratic candidate, Grover Cleveland, in the White House. Of this campaign Bancroft and Dunning wrote:

The contest proved a particularly desperate one. Blaine had a wonderful hold on the rank and file of his party, especially in the West. The moral issue was befogged in the popular thought by serious charges of private immorality in earlier years on the part of Cleveland Blaine was defeated by only the narrowest possible margin. The closeness of the result really emphasized the triumph of the Independents, for it left no room to doubt that they determined the outcome. And the victors and the vanquished agreed, however reluctantly, that the chief laurels belonged to Mr. Schurz.⁶²

It appeared, then, that Schurz allowed his personal enmity of Blaine to outweigh the charges of personal immorality levelled against Cleveland.

Schurz was active in politics after the 1884 campaign, both at the national and local levels. He advocated Cleveland's re-election in 1888, although he was traveling in Europe during the actual campaigning. He served for a period as president of the National Civil Service Reform League; he entered the business world as representative of the Hamburg-American Steamboat Company; he helped elect William McKinley in 1896, advocating the sound money policy at the time; he fought hard against United States imperialism, supporting William Jennings Bryan on this issue; he worked for Philippine independence after the Spanish-American War; and he renewed his interest in the welfare of the Negro in the South.⁶³ Only a few months

⁶²Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 407.

⁶³Ibid., III, 417-452.

after his seventy-fifth birthday the career of Carl Schurz ended with his death in New York City on May 14, 1906.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Encyclopedia of American History, p. 776.

CHAPTER III

SCHURZ'S POLITICAL THINKING

Carl Schurz was not an original political thinker. In Germany, during his revolutionary days, he took his opinions from his university associates and Kinkel. He described the objectives of the revolutionary "club" of which he was a member in a collective tone when he wrote that "a constitutional monarchy with universal suffrage and well-secured civil rights would have been quite satisfactory to us."¹ Schurz described the influence which Kinkel, his teacher, had on the formulation of his ideas at Bonn University in terms which indicated that Kinkel was the most important influence in the establishment of his basic beliefs although Schurz never made such a statement directly.² Despite the absence of a formal declaration from Schurz, the ideas of constitutional government, universal suffrage, and "well-secured civil rights"--apparently secured through constitutional and legal means--developed into the basic elements of his thinking.

Besides the revolutionary influence, there was another factor which shaped his thinking. Schurz was, in popular

¹Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, p. 19.

²Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, I, 98-100.

terminology, a "maverick." Shortly after Schurz moved to Wisconsin, he found that most of his newly-made friends were Democrats, which in the late 1850's generally meant political association with the southern "slaveocracy." To Schurz, this type of association was impossible; for, even that soon after he had arrived in the United States, Schurz "saw slavery as the source of the secession movement, and in the end of slavery the only means of stopping it."³ Despite the fact that most of the Schurz neighbors in Watertown were Democrats before the Civil War, he chose the opposition party, because the "Republican platform sounded . . . like a bugle-call to liberty" ⁴ Therefore, Schurz put himself on the anti-slavery side of the political spectrum very early after his settlement in this country, and in doing so he continued his 1848-49 revolutionary tradition of opposition.

His Basic Concepts

Easum classified Schurz as a Jeffersonian.⁵ In the fall or early winter of 1852 Schurz wrote to a friend in Germany, a Malwida von Meysenburg, some of his impressions of the United States. This letter provided something of a key to the basic thinking of Schurz. It read, in part:

³Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, p. 347.

⁴Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, pp. 133-134.

⁵Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, p. 62.

Here in America . . . you can see daily how little a people needs to be governed. There are governments, but no masters; there are governors, but they are only commissioners, agents. What there is here of great institutions of learning, of churches, of great commercial institutions, lines of communication, etc. [sic], almost always owes its existence, not to official authority, but to the spontaneous co-operation of private citizens. Here you witness the productiveness of freedom We learn here how superfluous is the action of governments concerning a multitude of things in which in Europe it is deemed absolutely indispensable, and how the freedom to do something awakens the desire to do it.⁶

One of the foundations of Jeffersonian thinking was limited government. From the above letter, then, Schurz accepted views akin to a Jeffersonian philosophy. Also, this position was taken shortly after Schurz arrived in the United States and at a time when the influences and experiences of Europe were still fresh in his mind. Shortly, however, he was to take up the abolition cause, which necessitated strong action by government. Although Schurz justified his abolition sentiments by pointing to the moral evil of the institution, thus accepting strong governmental action to correct it, his position was, to an extent, slightly inconsistent with his Jeffersonian tendency.

The arguments Schurz used to oppose slavery offered other examples of his basic reasoning and thinking. First, Schurz fought slavery on the ground that it was a violation of the "natural rights of man in general." He went further in his argument to contend that slavery bred a privileged or

⁶Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, II, 17.

aristocratic class in the society. This was obviously in contradiction of the concepts he accepted in Germany before the revolution of 1848-49.

Continuing, Schurz said the creation of this aristocracy built on slavery led to the practice of restricting individual freedom in order to prevent criticism of the institution and, thereby, insure its continuation and extension. This, Schurz felt, was a severe violation of freedom of expression, one of the civil rights he had advocated for the German people during the revolution. Further, Schurz held that this violation of freedom of expression would lead to continued agitation in the national government, because the southern slave-holders would insist on politically sanctioned suppression for the maintenance of the system, which was "incompatible with a free expression of public opinion" ⁷

The arguments Schurz used in speeches opposing slavery also furnished an indication of his thinking concerning the ultimate or basic nature of democracy in the United States. In the autumn of 1858, in a speech before a Republican party convention in Wisconsin, Schurz said:

A democratic system of government, although it may overcome local and temporary inconveniences, cannot bear a direct contradiction and must bring forth questions and conflicts involving the very foundations of popular liberty. They may appear in different shapes; but when once they have taken possession of the political area they will overshadow all other issues. ⁸

⁷Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, pp. 216-217.

⁸Ibid., p. 215.

Schurz stressed "popular liberty" in this speech, which was his fundamental idea of democracy. Combining this idea with his acceptance of universal suffrage, it was only logical that Schurz would have expected government to use force, if necessary, to correct such a contradiction as slavery. He felt the public will would abrogate slavery, provided the public were allowed to express its will freely.

Probably one reason Easum classified Schurz as a Jeffersonian was the position Schurz took concerning the nature of American government. Schurz believed strongly in a Jeffersonian type of federalism. In a speech on the Senate floor in 1875 Schurz made the following statement:

One of the things which especially the American people hold sacred as the life element of their republican freedom: It is the right to govern and administer their local affairs independently through the exercise of that self-government which lives . . . in the organism of the States; and therefore we find in the Constitution of the Republic the power of the National Government to interfere in State affairs most scrupulously limited to certain well-defined cases and the observance of certain strictly - prescribed forms; and if these limitations be arbitrarily disregarded by the national authority, and if such violations be permitted . . . we shall surely have reason to say that our system of republican government is in danger⁹

Schurz was arguing for a relaxation of Congressional reconstruction in Louisiana when he made this statement.

However, there was little doubt after the speech as to where he stood concerning federalism. And, because this exact type

⁹Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (January 11, 1875), p. 336.

of federalism was Jeffersonian thinking, at least originally, Easum probably felt safe in calling Schurz a Jeffersonian.

For Schurz the origin of this concept--the idea of decentralized, strongly federalized American government--was not experience founded on observations made of government in the United States. This idea found its beginning for Schurz in Europe. The revolutionary movement of 1848-49 was fought against "Prussian despotism," as Schurz called it. This despotism he defined in the following manner:

. . . autocratic centralization of power, a constantly self-asserting and directing central authority with a tremendous organization of force behind it. This rigid central despotism cannot fail to create oppressive abuses in the government of the various territories and diverse population composing the empire. When this burden of oppression becomes too galling, effort, raw, crude, more or less inarticulate and confused, will be made to overthrow the existing government Discontent with the inexorable autocracy will spread and seize upon the superior intelligence of the country, which will be inspired with a restless ambition to have a share in government.¹⁰

This apparently was the one deep, abiding fear of Schurz. To him, strongly centralized government meant despotism, or abuse of power. This led, so Schurz believed, to discontent, which resulted in armed revolt. Were Schurz, then, to have adopted any other position but that of ardent states' rights, he would have been inconsistent with what his experience had taught him. Schurz had seen strongly centralized

¹⁰Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, pp. 130-131.

government--in Prussia, in Russia, in France. He was keenly aware of what sort of government he felt resulted from such a system.

Besides this basic opposition to "over-abundant" government, or what he termed "Prussian absolutism" during his days in Germany,¹¹ Schurz also fought rigid ecclesiastical establishments which interfere with civil government. In Germany, of course, this meant the Roman Catholic Church to the revolutionaries of 1848-49. Years later Schurz was to recall the elation which the Kinkel revolutionary "club" felt when German Catholics staged a minor uprising against church authority in 1848 in the Trier. This revolt, according to Schurz, was caused by strict controls imposed from the Papacy on those Germans living in that disputed section of Europe, and Schurz maintained that these controls were exercised in the civil realm as well as the religious world.¹²

Combining this aversion to church control with his hatred of monarchies and strong central government, Easum classified these two--"kingcraft and priestcraft"--as the "twin demons" for Schurz through his political career.¹³ Obviously, these two elements were well established in Schurz's

¹¹Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, I, 73.

¹²Ibid., I, 102-104.

¹³Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, p. 346.

mind before he came to the United States. His thinking in this country was to a great extent an adaptation of these principles to the American political scene.

Spoils and the Party

Moving from the broad considerations basic to Schurz's political thinking to the specific policies he strongly advocated or recommended, two principal positions stand out clearly: the insistence of Schurz on spoils reform and his tendency to belt party lines. These positions, however, were basically reactions to circumstances rather than manifestations of theories which were original with Schurz. His position on currency was important in the structure of his political thought. His ideas concerning treatment of the South following the Civil War were also important to his political thought. Again, however, these were reactions instead of original or speculative thinking. Lastly, Schurz strongly opposed the Grant administration; but his opposition was centered about his distaste of the spoils system, an element of his thought which must be considered in some detail because of its lasting importance throughout his public career in the United States.

In the early spring of 1854 Schurz made his first visit to Washington. He had been in the United States only about two years, but he had mastered the language and studied American government. This trip to Washington, the first of many for him, had a number of purposes; but generally he

sought to meet men prominent in politics and to study the operation of government, particularly in Congress, as closely as he could from a first-hand vantage point.¹⁴ It was on this visit to Washington that he got his "formal" introduction to the spoils system by a "veteran journalist" named Francis Grund. In his own words Schurz "was astonished" at the disclosure that some "United States senators . . . consider that their principal business . . . [is] the distribution of patronage"¹⁵ In describing his reaction in detail Schurz wrote:

This was a shocking revelation to me. It was my first look into the depths of that great "American institution of government" which I subsequently learned to call by the name of "the spoils system." That the Americans changed all the postmasters . . . with every change of party . . . I had already heard of . . . and it had struck me as something remarkably absurd. But that very nearly all the offices under the present government should be treated as "public plunder," and that statesmen who had been sent to Congress to make laws in the interest of the whole country, should spend all their time and working strength in procuring and distributing that public plunder, and that a free and intelligent people should permit this, fairly confounded my comprehension.¹⁶

Of course, this was the reaction which eventually sparked his activities for reform of the civil service by destruction of the spoils system and substitution of the merit system as the means of determining qualifications of federal employees.

¹⁴Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, pp. 110-114.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

The next major milestone in the career of Carl Schurz as a civil service reformer came in 1869 after his election to the Senate. That year Schurz introduced in the Senate approximately the same bill Representative Thomas A. Jenckes of Rhode Island had introduced in the House of Representatives in December, 1865.¹⁷ The Senate was debating the fate of the famous Tenure of Office Act passed during the administration of Andrew Johnson when Schurz proposed his civil service reform bill.

The Schurz measure called for the establishment of a five-member civil service board appointed by the President for the purpose of examining people of all ranks who sought employment by the federal government. The bill also provided for a one-year probationary period during which any appointee could be removed without cause. After an employee had completed the probation, the board would have had the responsibility of reviewing the work of the individual and accepting or rejecting the employee for permanent appointment on the recommendation of "his superiors" and evaluation of the test which was to be completed during the one-year probationary period.¹⁸

Schurz also included a provision in the bill to allow the civil service board to make character investigations for

¹⁷Congressional Globe, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part 1 (December 20, 1865), p. 98.

¹⁸Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session Part 1 (December 20, 1869), pp. 236-237.

"certain" applicants, such as postmasters, reasoning that it would be impossible to determine qualifications for some positions solely on the basis of training and experience. Lastly, Schurz would have allowed the civil service board to draw up a list of persons qualified for "presidential appointment," obviously including cabinet officers and ambassadors, for the President's consideration. From this list the President was to make his choice. However, to prevent the possibility that the board would actually exercise the presidential appointive power, the chief executive could submit names to the board which would examine the applicants. In cases in which the Senate had advice and consent authority the Schurz measure would have required the board to submit the results of its examinations and investigations to the Senate.¹⁹

Schurz opened the speech in which he introduced the measure with his reasons for urging reform. He pointed out that the spoils system, in operation at the time, allowed for appointments "on the recommendations of politicians of high and low grade," which, he said, led to corruption. He also pointed out that the President and executive department heads have insufficient time to consider applicants and recommendations for appointments and that the flood of appointments "usually occurs just at that period . . . of an Administration when the President and the heads of Departments

¹⁹Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (December 20, 1869), pp. 236-237.

have just entered upon . . . duties comparatively new to them; when they have had no time yet to study the exigencies of the service"20 Schurz also argued the spoils system discouraged honest men, which hurt the efficiency of the civil service and encouraged "men of inferior moral and intellectual qualifications to aspire to public station"21

Did he even dream such a bill would pass the Senate, or be voted by the House of Representatives and be signed by Grant? At the end of the speech, Schurz commented that the "obstacles which such a reform will have to encounter and overcome are not unknown to me."22 Here, then, was the practical side of the Schurz political career and thinking. He realized the President would be hesitant to sign away part of his authority to appoint the cabinet officers of his own choice. But Schurz the reformer overcame Schurz the realist when he closed the speech with the promise that he and "the friends of this reform are resolved to try in good earnest, and we shall ask . . . of the Senate a fair hearing"23

²⁰Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (December 20, 1869), p. 236.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 238.

²³Ibid.

This, of course, was only the beginning of the fight Schurz waged for reform of the civil service. He was to continue the argument for this bill, unsuccessfully, during his six years in the Senate. Then, during his four years as Secretary of the Interior, he was to supervise the establishment of such a system within the Interior Department. Finally, he served as president of the Civil Service Reform League for five years, and he also fought for reform of civil service appointments in New York City and New York state government.²⁴ In short, Schurz was in the vanguard of the general civil service reform movement and remained there until his death.

Schurz the Maverick

Besides being a civil service reformer, Schurz was a maverick, politically, when considered as a "party politician." As shown above, Schurz allied himself with the Republican party in the 1850's and 1860's because of his strong anti-slavery feeling and his respect for Lincoln. However, after 1869, he shifted his position within the party: first opposing Grant in the Insurgent Republican Movement of 1870-72 and second opposing James G. Blaine, the Republican presidential nominee, during the Mugwump

²⁴Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 377-383, 407-414, 425-429.

Movement of 1884.²⁵ Apparently, Schurz participated in the Mugwump Movement merely as a protest against Blaine. However, his part in the Insurgent Republican Movement of 1870-72 was more significant, because it was his first break with the Republican party, and because the motives and reasoning of the movement pictured something of the Schurz political philosophy.

Although it may have appeared inconsistent for Schurz to have participated in the Insurgent Republican Movement of 1870-72, it was entirely logical. First, Schurz himself made several statements concerning party loyalty after he had the opportunity of seeing the American political party system. By 1858, during the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates in the contest for the Illinois senate seat, Schurz observed "many men" who would forget the slavery issue rather than break party affiliations.²⁶ To Schurz this extreme party loyalty "seemed . . . monstrous—aye, almost criminal."²⁷

That same year, 1858, Schurz addressed a "Republican mass meeting" in Milwaukee, saying in part:

It must be our principal object not only to catch the people's votes . . . but to enlist in our

²⁵The Mugwump Movement is generally beyond the purposes of this paper. Schurz's part in the movement was nothing more than a protest against Blaine whom Schurz considered to be a corrupt machine politician. The role Schurz played in the movement has been pointed out in Chapter II. See Chapter IV for an evaluation of Schurz's actions.

²⁶Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, II, 99-100.

²⁷Ibid., II, 100.

[anti-slavery] cause the people's conscience. We must encourage moral independence in politics; we must admonish every man to think and reason for himself, to form his own convictions and to stand by them; we must entreat him never to accept, unseen and uninvestigated, the principles of others, even if they be our own²⁸

After recounting the speech in his Reminiscences, Schurz wrote that "subsequent experience . . . [has proved] that the despotism of party organization constitutes one of the greatest and most insidious of the dangers threatening the vitality of free institutions of government—all the more, the freer those institutions are" ²⁹ These words were written after the turn of the century and after Schurz had ended his public life.

This was the background, then, for the Schurz "defection," if it can be called that, in 1870-72. But what of the movement itself? Schurz played a major role in the movement, which began with the Missouri state convention of 1870 and spread to a national movement in 1872. The question in 1870 in Missouri involved the alleged disenfranchisement of former Confederates in the state as a result of Congressional reconstruction policies. On this question Schurz took his stand early.

In January, 1870, months before the Missouri convention, Schurz spoke to the Senate concerning his views of reconstruction. He contended "that the real aim and end of

²⁸Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, II, 103.

²⁹Ibid., II, 104.

reconstruction was and is to put the rebel States in such a condition that they can exercise that constitutional measure of self-government which belongs to the other States without serious danger to . . . our civil war" ³⁰ He then went on to specify that this end could be attained by the establishment of "equal rights, universal liberty," and good will between the sections. ³¹ Thus, Schurz showed a definite discontent with the issue of Negro suffrage and the Republican party politicians who attempted to use it to sustain and to enforce party supremacy. ³²

When the Missouri Republican party met in 1870 to nominate candidates, Schurz attended. He allied himself with former Senator B. Gratz Brown, and they led a movement demanding that regular Republican party leaders remove the voting disability of former Confederates then living in the state. Regular party leadership refused, and so Schurz and Brown organized a separate convention, wrote a platform calling for removal of voting restriction, and nominated Brown, a former Democrat, for governor. ³³ This was a direct slap at Grant, who gave the regular party leadership in Missouri his unqualified support and unlimited use of the patronage. ³⁴

³⁰Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (January 14, 1870), p. 474.

³¹Ibid.

³²Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 320-321.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

Describing the results of the Missouri campaign, Malcolm Moos wrote, in part:

Grant bore down hard on the coalitionists, quickly dispatching the disreputable general, John McDonald, into the state ostensibly as Supervisor of Internal Revenue. But his official trouble shooter couldn't turn the tide and the Liberal ticket was elected by over 40,000 votes, gaining control of the state legislature and the congressional delegation.³⁵

Thus, the Schurz-Brown organization became the only "official" voice of the Insurgent Movement. A difference of opinion developed, however, between Schurz and Brown. The Insurgent convention nominated Frank Blair for senator, and he was elected with the remaining Insurgents. However, Schurz had opposed Blair, while Brown had favored the new senator. This difference of opinion was to broaden later.

Through 1871 and into 1872 the Insurgent Movement gained momentum. Schurz, collaborating with the editor of The Nation, Edwin L. Godkin, drew to the movement such names as Horace Greeley, George Julian, Charles Sumner, David Davis, Charles Francis Adams, Jacob D. Cox, and Lyman Trumbull. Also, by early 1872, strong support for the movement was coming from such newspapers as the New York Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, the Springfield Republican, and the Cincinnati Commercial.³⁶

³⁵Malcolm Moos, The Republicans--A History of Their Party (New York, 1959), p. 137.

³⁶Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900, Vintage Book edition (New York, 1961), p. 96.

After more organization, the Insurgents called a convention for May 1, 1872, in Cincinnati. By this time, Charles Francis Adams was being mentioned as a candidate for the Insurgent presidential nomination; and Schurz went to Cincinnati favoring him. Brown himself was nominated for the presidential bid of the convention, despite the fact that he was not there until the first ballot was taken. Greeley, widely-known reformer and strong anti-Grant editor, was on the ballot for the convention's presidential nomination, as was Adams. When Brown heard of the backing Schurz was giving Adams, he hurried to Cincinnati, accompanied by the Missouri senator-elect, Blair, to attempt to stop the Adams nomination. On the first ballot Adams received 203 votes and Greeley 95. Then, Brown withdrew in favor of Greeley, as a means of blocking the Adams candidacy; and on the sixth ballot Greeley won the nomination with Brown as the vice presidential candidate. This development was a distinct blow to Schurz.³⁷

The Greeley candidacy was doomed, apparently, from the beginning. The cloak of the venerated war hero still hung about the shoulders of Grant, at least in the minds of the "average" voter in 1872.³⁸ However, there were other reasons for the Greeley failure, which have been summed up by Richard Hofstadter in this manner:

³⁷Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 345.

³⁸Schlesinger, The Rise of Modern America, pp. 54-55.

Since most of the flagrant corruption of the Grant administrations took place after 1872, and general discontent did not grow keen until after the panic of 1873, the reform movement was premature. In any case, it was not attractive to workers and farmers, and was hardly meant to be. Its candidate, the eccentric Greeley, was unable to throw even the vulnerable Grant on the defensive³⁹

As a result, the Insurgent Movement of 1870-72 died in a presidential campaign which marked the first appearance of organized labor in the national political arena and also the first time the regular Republican party adopted tariff protection as official party doctrine.⁴⁰

The original basis for the Insurgent Movement--that is, at least to Schurz--became obscured in the 1872 campaign. But to Schurz, the entire issue of extremist policies of reconstruction retained its importance after the abortive Greeley candidacy. In 1875, when Schurz introduced a resolution calling for a Senate investigation into the use of force by Grant-backed Republicans in their attempt to unseat some members of the Louisiana legislature, he argued that the Negro population of the South should not have the protection of federal troops, either to insure fair economic treatment from southern whites or to secure civil rights for the Negro.⁴¹

³⁹Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, p. 178.

⁴⁰Schlesinger, The Rise of Modern America, p. 55.

⁴¹Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1 (January 11, 1875), pp. 369-370. The reasons Schurz proposed these arguments are discussed in Chapter IV. The complete story of the 1875 movement is not relevant to this study. The portion outlined here was that which affected Schurz directly. The Mugwump bolt of the party is generally beyond the scope of this paper.

To Schurz, his leadership of the party bolt was essentially a reaction to conditions which were opposed to an element of his basic thought rather than the consequence of any new or original thought. Here, as in so much of his career, he concentrated on the spoils question in opposing Grant, on reform of party action when it opposed his basic concepts, and on relaxed treatment of the South. Consequently, Schurz fought Grant and the party in 1872 on ideological grounds rather than theoretical grounds. The failure of the Insurgent Movement was a deep disappointment to Schurz. He felt Greeley was doomed to defeat, and so he fought against his nomination, but lost. Therefore, he was unable to carry through his plan to force a reform of party doctrine by creating a strong, vocal opposition in the party.

Schurz never intended the movement to develop into a third party, as is illustrated in the following letter he wrote after the convention to Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield Republican, noted political reformer and long-time friend of Schurz. The letter read in part:

I cannot yet think of the result of Cincinnati . . . without a pang. I have worked for the cause of reform in the largest sense of the word in good faith. I was frequently told at Cincinnati that I might exercise a decisive influence upon the selection of the candidates, and probably it was so. I did not do it because I considered it a paltry ambition to play the part of a President-maker, and because I desired that the nomination should appear as a spontaneous outgrowth of an elevated popular feeling, which would have made it stronger and more valuable Then to see a movement which had apparently been so successful . . . at the decisive moment taken

possession of by a combination of politicians striking and executing a bargain in the open light of day . . . and the whole movement stripped of its moral character . . . this, let me confess it, was a hard blow⁴²

Apparently, Schurz thought of this defeat as the greatest of his career. In 1857, when Schurz was defeated in his bid for lieutenant governor of Wisconsin, he had taken the defeat with "relief"⁴³ and some chagrin, which, according to his own account, quickly dissolved.⁴⁴ But defeat of the Insurgent Movement of 1870-72 left Schurz a different man.

Currency and Big Business and the Indian Problem

Three other controversies raged during the public career of Carl Schurz. One of these--the currency, or money problem--he entered. And Schurz spoke out strongly on the Indian problem during his years as Secretary of the Interior. Concerning the growth of "big business," he remained silent. Schurz made two speeches concerning the currency question while he was in the Senate. When the problem of a retracted currency became prominent, Schurz, who had only recently been elected from the agricultural West, placed himself on the "hard money" side of the question. He advocated a return to

⁴²Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 346.

⁴³Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, II, 81-82.

⁴⁴Ibid., II, 130-131.

specie payments, which meant a demand that the Treasury Department withdraw the paper currency issued during the Civil War.⁴⁵

Why Schurz remained silent on the monopoly issue apparently was never known. Certainly by 1890-95, the issue of "big business" had become a burning one in American politics; and Schurz was still active politically during these years. Perhaps, had he lived to complete his Reminiscences, he would have outlined his reasons. Louis M. Hacker, writing in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, made this observation concerning the views of Schurz on currency and monopolies:

Although Schurz always was the foe of political corruption, he was silent, however, on the question of social and economic exploitation. He . . . displayed no interest in the cause of labor and never attacked the monopolist policies of organized industry; the unrest of the western and southern farmers he viewed as merely a misguided agitation for soft money.⁴⁶

On the stand Schurz took on money, he again proved himself contrary to the generally accepted position of the group to which he usually belonged; for most reformers of the period, particularly from the West, strongly held to the soft money argument.

⁴⁵Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, Part 1 (January 14, 1874), pp. 635-645; Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, Part 2 (February 24, 1874), pp. 1717-1728; Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 356-257.

⁴⁶Louis M. Hacker, "Carl Schurz," in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, XIII, 585.

The years during the Hayes administration saw Schurz in the office of Secretary of the Interior. And it was in this position that Schurz developed his thinking concerning the Indian problem. Generally, the Indian had been badly mistreated during the years preceding Schurz's assumption of the secretaryship; and during the Grant administration corruption had developed in the Bureau of Indian Affairs supply function. The basic problem was the displacement of the Indian by the westward advances of the United States—a problem which had worried most presidents before Hayes. Many outspoken men in public life, especially Union military heroes like William T. Sherman and Philip H. Sheridan, advocated confinement of the Indians to reservations until the entire race was extinct.⁴⁷

Describing the position Schurz took on the Indian problem, Bancroft and Dunning wrote:

Such a general view [confinement to reservations] of the matter Mr. Schurz confessed he himself held when he entered the Interior Department. But additional study changed his opinion. From the good and wise men of various religious denominations whom Grant's policy had brought into co-operation with the Indian Bureau, notably William Welsh of Philadelphia, Schurz soon learned how much of hope and of achievement was bound up in the peace policy. He became the supporter and . . . leader of those who wished to maintain [the policy of Indian education and rehabilitation].⁴⁸

⁴⁷Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 383-385.

⁴⁸Ibid., III, 385.

Of course, this "soft" policy toward the Indians did not originate during this period. Thomas Jefferson followed a similar plan, and Sam Houston took actions which were sympathetic to the Indians during his terms as president of the Texas Republic.

Summary

The political mind of Carl Schurz, then, seemed anchored in the basic principles of opposition to corruption, strong repugnance to "despotic" government and slavery, and a firm belief in popular sovereignty. He was never a "party man;" therefore, he became an insurgent when the Republican party became too corrupt for him and too far from his basic beliefs. He aligned himself early with the opposition to the spoils system and became a prominent leader in the fight to kill the system by reform of the civil service. Lastly, he adopted the cause of Indian education and "civilization" during his term as Secretary of the Interior, thus becoming a leading "champion of the underdog" in this case. The reason for his refusal to take the same position in regard to "oppressed" wage earners of his day remained an unanswered question.

True, Schurz was a reformer--in some respects of the word. And his basic concepts seemed to be the guide for his actions. But these concepts were taken from other thinkers. Besides, Schurz was contradictory in some elements of his thinking. He found it necessary to shift his position, politically, from

time to time. Consequently, Schurz's thoughts and actions appear confusing at several points.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Carl Schurz cannot, within the definition set forth for this study, be classified as a political theorist. As has been shown, his political thought was not consolidated enough, nor original enough, nor complete enough to be called theory. Nevertheless, Schurz was important in his period as a political activist; and he was one of the strongest German-American leaders of his time. He did make an important--albeit not original--contribution to political thinking in this country in bringing German revolutionary thought to the United States and translating it into American terms. His strong opposition to the social system of slavery can be traced, to an extent, to the revolutionary principles of popular sovereignty and constitutionally guaranteed civil rights. Further, there can be little doubt that Schurz patterned his conception of federalism in the United States after the structure of states in Germany. Yet, even as a political activist, Schurz was more than just a politician who commented on slavery and federalism.

First of all, Schurz was a reformer. He adopted social reform when he strongly opposed slavery. He advocated party reform when he helped lead the Insurgent Movement of 1870-72.

He continually insisted that the civil service system should be placed on a merit basis in order to prevent the abuses of the spoils system, and in this connection he served as president of the Civil Service Reform League in his later years. He also instituted reform of the Indian policy during his term as Secretary of the Interior.

Studies of Recent Scholars

To evaluate Schurz's total thinking, this chapter will look first at scholars who have studied his career. Then, some of the findings of this research will be combined with the views of writers who have examined Schurz in an effort to make an objective conclusion concerning the man and his thinking.

Allan Nevins wrote of Schurz in the introduction to the recent edition of the Autobiography of Carl Schurz the following:

If Carl Schurz's autobiography . . . were merely the story of his richly adventurous career, we might term it an enthralling but not a great book. Yet that it is a great autobiography none can deny, for it is the reflection of a leader who united to high abilities the loftiest qualities of character, and who dedicated them to justice and freedom with a kindling ardor. An important figure in both German and American life, Schurz was revolutionist, patriot, orator, and journalist; he was general, statesman, and reformer. Early in his life he thought out a set of noble political and social concepts, and through stormy years he clung to them with unshakable purpose. We have here both a fascinating person, and . . . a fighting idealist.¹

¹Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, p. v.

Perhaps part of this assessment is somewhat overdrawn. But it cannot be denied that on the questions of slavery and reform of the civil service system Schurz was a "fighting idealist."

In the passage above, Nevins implied that Schurz did his own thinking; and it has been shown that this was not the case. Schurz did not originate the theory of the German revolutionary group in 1848-49, nor did he originate any new theories in the American political system. Of course, Nevins is correct when he calls Schurz a patriot and revolutionary; but it might be difficult to maintain that Schurz was a statesman. True, he was the United States ambassador to Spain for a time. But it seems unlikely that this would qualify Schurz for the status of statesman.

Another writer and scholar, Louis M. Hacker, noted of Schurz that:

In an age when American political morality was at its lowest, Schurz' devotion to the cause of reform was all the more striking; and for more than a generation, using as his media the popular lyceum platform of the day and columns of the various journals which he edited, he was always the first to sally forth against every oppressive force and evil in American public life. Schurz was the inspirer and leader of the movement for the establishment of the merit system in the civil service; he was the first public protector of the Indians; he could justly lay claim to being the father of the conservation movement; he fought the pension glamor of the Grant Army of the Republic; and he was a champion of oppressed nationalities in the American oversea possessions.²

²Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, XIII, 588.

Schurz was by no means the only civil service reformer in the nation during his career in public life. Thomas A. Jenckes and Hugh Burgess preceded Schurz by approximately ten years in this fight.³

Hacker probably was lavish in the above passage concerning Schurz's willingness to "sally forth against every oppressive force" in the United States, because Schurz failed to show any concern for the abuses and mistreatment of women and children in American industry during the period of business consolidation. He also failed to "sally forth" against the oligarchical corporations when they began discriminatory practices after consolidation was an accomplished fact. In addition to these questionable features of Hacker's assessment of Schurz, it should be pointed out that Schurz merely opposed Grant's policy of acquiring Santo Domingo rather than attempting to organize a meaningful opposition to the policy.⁴

Another recent writer, Malcolm Moos, noted that Schurz was associated closely with the Hayes administration, and with the Cleveland campaign of 1884.⁵ For Schurz, association with the Hayes administration meant ties with a President who advocated a return to white supremacy in the South through relaxed treatment of former Confederates and restored civil

³Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, pp. 13-14.

⁴Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 104-105.

⁵Malcolm Moos, The Republicans--A History of Their Party, p. 152 and p. 169.

rights for former rebels. Regardless of the reasons Hayes may have had for adopting these policies--relaxed treatment of the South was a condition in the Compromise of 1877, which may account for the course Hayes followed--Schurz had preached relaxation of Congressional reconstruction policies as early as 1869. As a result, it seems logical that Schurz would have aligned himself with Hayes.

Schurz probably supported Cleveland over Blaine in 1884 as the lesser of two evils. The charges against Cleveland's character were never proved, but there was question.⁶ Consequently, when Schurz campaigned for Cleveland, it may have appeared that he had reversed his position as a political moralist. Yet, Schurz probably reasoned--indeed, this seems to have been the case--that Cleveland was less obnoxious than Blaine on the grounds that Blaine was a machine politician. It would have been inconsistent for Schurz to have campaigned for a machine politician in the face of his strong opposition to the spoils system.

Although Meos, as a biographer of the Republican party, might have been concerned with making an assessment of Schurz, he, along with most recent writers in American political science and political history, refrained from such an assessment. Exceptions to this lack of evaluative comment are in the works by Ari Hoogenboom and C. Vann Woodward, who classified

⁶Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland--A Study in Courage (New York, 1933), p. 299.

Schurz as a reform leader of the Hayes administration.⁷ The remarks of these writers are based on obvious evidence, and they are basically acceptable. It should be noted, however, that this evaluation is as far as Hoogenboom and Vann Woodward chose to go.

Without doubt the most questionable modern evaluation of Schurz came from Bayard Q. Morgan. In the essay Morgan wrote for the collection contained in The Forty-Eighters, this writer painted the following picture of Schurz:

There can scarcely be any doubt that if a single person were chosen to represent, in the minds of the American public, the peculiar essence of the German immigration of '48, its idealism and its ideals, its vigor and independence, its youthful buoyancy and optimism, the name of Carl Schurz would head any list of nominees for that position To this day, the name of Carl Schurz commands a respect which transcends his person.⁸

Morgan continued to describe Schurz in this manner throughout the entire essay.

Schurz was, admittedly, a leader of German-American immigrants in the United States; and he was among the most prominent survivors of the 1848-49 revolution who migrated to this country. However, to say that he heads the list of this immigration is at least partly untrue; because Franz Sigel, one of the Forty-eighters, commanded the First Corps in the Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War, in

⁷Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, p. 59; C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 233.

⁸Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, p. 221.

which Schurz was a division commander for a time. By Schurz's own account Sigel attained extensive military prominence for a time during his command of the First Corps.⁹ In the passage quoted above Morgan apparently was attempting to revive popularity for the study of Schurz.¹⁰

Early Schurz Biographers

Bancroft and Dunning, writing in 1908, were the first biographers of Schurz. Their evaluation of Schurz was perhaps in keeping with historical writing of that period in that he was pictured in glowing terms and in a favorable light. Typical of the Bancroft-Dunning comments is the following:

[Schurz] had no taste for political controversy that turned mainly on the rivalry of ambitious leaders, or for the creation of efficient vote-getting machinery without reference to the principles and the vital issues that the votes should sustain From his first appearance in the debates [in the Senate], the lofty tone of his speeches, emphasized by graceful diction and impressive delivery, at once commanded the close attention of his colleagues on the floor and of large audiences in the galleries . . . and his arguments always appealed to minds capable of grasping the larger aspects of history and philosophy Consequently Schurz early won from serious opponents a degree of

⁹Schurz, The Autobiography of Carl Schurz, pp. 201-202.

¹⁰Among recent American political party and political thought scholars who omit any mention of Schurz are V. O. Key, Jr., Alan P. Grimes, and Richard Hofstadter. Francis G. Wilson, in his 1949 text entitled The American Political Mind, only mentioned Schurz along with other civil service reformers of the post-Civil War period. It should be noted that modern historians tend to refrain from overstatements.

respectful consideration that Sumner, popularly regarded as the leader of the Senate, had never been able to secure.¹¹

This description of the success Schurz enjoyed in the Senate is perhaps more generous than the facts may warrant. Sumner had been a member of the Senate several years before Schurz was elected, and Schurz served only one term. Therefore, it is apparent that Sumner was at least a more experienced senator than Schurz, making Sumner a more formidable foe than Schurz probably could have been. Also, Sumner must have had better committee assignments than Schurz merely because of the seniority system. As a result, Sumner logically must have exercised more influence in the Senate.

Another early biographer of Schurz, Chester Easum, described the subject of his work in these terms:

In social adaptability and attractiveness, in intellect, and in linguistic ability he surpassed most As an accurate observer and a philosophical student of American institutions, and as an orator he excelled them all With his independence of judgement, his price of intellect, and his consciousness of the care and honesty with which his opinions were formed, there went a tendency to regard as insufferable stupidity or deliberate dishonesty.¹²

If Schurz were an "accurate observer," why did he fail to see the needs of wage earners in urban areas following the Civil War, particularly since he spent his last years in New York City, where these conditions were most obvious?

¹¹Bancroft and Dunning, "A Sketch of Carl Schurz," in The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, III, 318.

¹²Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz, p. 137.

If Schurz were such an "accurate observer," why did he fail to understand the insistence of western and southern farmers for soft money when he was an elected representative from a western state?

Claude M. Fuess was another older biographer of Schurz. His work is quoted by Morgan in the following passage:

"For forty years or more," say Claude M. Fuess . . . [Schurz] was the self-constituted, but exceedingly useful, incarnation of our national conscience Historians have been forced to admit that he was right on most issues; and even when he was wrong, he was sincere Naturally he did not make himself popular, but he did, without being at all sanctimonious, become a mighty spiritual force."¹³

Fuess seems to have made this evaluation on the basis of the morality involved in Schurz's strong opposition to slavery, but it seems unlikely that Schurz was the embodiment of the national morality. Many other prominent men of the day took the same stand on slavery which Schurz took, and they fought slavery for the same reasons that Schurz did.

Conclusions

As is perhaps obvious, there is little to lead the modern student in making an objective evaluation of the political thinking and career of Carl Schurz. The record

¹³Morgan, "Carl Schurz," in The Forty-Eighters, p. 270. The Fuess work quoted in the Morgan essay is out of print. However, it can be placed in approximately the same period as the works by Bancroft and Dunning and of Easum.

of his activities is limited to the basic elements of a career which failed to attract as much attention from historians as have others of the period. Further, Schurz presented something of a contradiction in his thinking, which creates special problems for the modern student. Schurz championed civil service reform, humane Indian treatment, and anti-imperialism, all on moral grounds. At the same time, Schurz was blind to the greater needs of a society which was changing from an agrarian basis to an industrial community.

John H. Franklin has pointed out another contradiction in the political life of Schurz. Franklin contends that Schurz reversed himself in his opinions concerning treatment of the South following the Civil War. Pointing out that Schurz recommended "heavy" treatment of the rebellious states in the report he made to President Johnson in 1865, Franklin then shows that Schurz recommended universal suffrage for former Confederates only four years later. This return of the franchise was one vehicle used by southern whites to restore Negro suppression. In short, Franklin holds that Schurz changed position on this issue.¹⁴

However, it is possible that the proposals Schurz made in his report in 1865 were the reversal, rather than those of 1869. Schurz believed strongly in universal suffrage long before he adopted any attitude contrary to that position

¹⁴Franklin, Reconstruction--After the Civil War, p. 198.

as reflected in his report to Johnson after his tour of the South in 1865. In addition to this it must be pointed out that in 1865 Schurz was, as most other people in the North, still under the influence of the high-pitched emotionalism of the war to end slavery. As did most of the nation's, Schurz's feelings subsided somewhat in the years following the war. Therefore, it would seem logical to conclude that his position might have changed. But the change came in 1865, under the influence of strong emotionalism, and not in 1869. When Schurz urged universal suffrage for all residents of southern states, including the Negro, he was holding to his revolutionary influences dating to 1848-49; for the proposition of universal suffrage was a cornerstone of the revolutionaries in Germany.

Another factor to be considered in the evaluation of the position Schurz took concerning reconstruction is the observation that in 1865 Schurz anticipated an active political career. Being something of a practical politician, he probably realized that his report would meet with favor in the eyes of a majority of Congress if it recommended strong treatment of former Confederates. The harsh recommendations Schurz made in 1865 probably coincided with the general sentiment in Missouri and Schurz was even then looking forward to candidacy for office in that state. The conclusion that Schurz was only being a practical politician in his report

in 1865 can be supported to an extent, and this would appear to be one logical explanation for his recommendations.

Schurz could not have been a major force for general reform in American politics, despite his leadership in the spoils reform movement. His refusal to espouse the cause of indebted farmers of his home state during the controversy over the resumption of specie payments detracted greatly from his career. Schurz's blindness to the economic and social evils and injustices of his time could not be justified, even by his most favorable biographers. To the modern student, this question keeps recurring: Why did Schurz feel Indians were more important than starving children in New York City? Were he to have spoken out, at least, against the pressing evils of his day, Schurz could be classified as more than a civil service reformer. But he made no such effort.

Apparently, this espousal of reform on one hand and the inability to see a need for reform on the other was the greatest contradiction of Schurz's career. As he was a political maverick, it would have been logical for Schurz to have adopted social as well as governmental and political party reform. He did not seek re-election to the Senate after 1876; therefore, there could have been no political consideration in his failure to fight for social and economic reforms.

As an influential member of the Hayes cabinet, Schurz unquestionably contributed heavily to the return of white

supremacy in the South. This portion of the political career of Schurz cannot be considered a major accomplishment, even though his opinions and actions may have been in keeping with his views of limited government and strict interpretation of federalism. Modern scholarship tends to indicate that the legal re-establishment of white supremacy in the South retarded southern development far more than Congressional reconstruction did. Although the proposition that white supremacy has restricted the South may be controversial, it cannot be denied that white supremacy returned the southern Negro to a position of subservience after the Civil War, which has created difficult problems retarding development.

In summary it can be said that Schurz so hated slavery before and during the Civil War that his belief in limited government and strict federalism was overpowered. Logically, then, after the war, Schurz returned to the views he held before the war. This return to basic beliefs, gained mostly from his experiences as a German revolutionary, placed Schurz generally out of step with the flow of human events. He forgot the Negro after the war. He concentrated on civil service reform, ignoring social and economic reform. He was a political maverick, not a political genius. He fought to destroy slavery, but he did not fight to insure equal rights for the emancipated slaves. Although Schurz was influential in the civil service reform movement, he was a follower. Others carried most of the fight to kill the spoils system before

Schurz took up the cause. Because the political thinking of Schurz became muddled during the civil service reform movement, he was unable to adjust to a changing political structure. Generally, then, Schurz was only nominally successful in his political career; and it would be impossible to contend that he was a political theorist.

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