ASSOCIATIVE DEMOCRACY

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Introduction: Associative Strategies of Egalitarian Reform

The ideal of market socialism—as several papers in this volume indicate—is to achieve egalitarian ends by rearranging property rights, in particular by establishing a scheme of public ownership. We share the commitment to equality that guides the market socialist project. But we propose here an alternative strategy for advancing that commitment. Leaving the capitalist assignment of property rights essentially undisturbed, this alternative strategy seeks to realize egalitarian aims by improving the kinds and extent of collective organization available to citizens. Broadly exemplified in the social democratic tradition of modern politics, this organizational or, as we will call it, associative strategy may be viewed as complementary or alternative to the property rights approach. In any case, pursuing it does not require a reassignment of existing property rights, and we assume no such reassignment in our discussion here.

Three considerations recommend attention to such an associative egalitarian strategy, rather than an exclusive focus on property rights.

First, the associative strategy is a genuine strategy of egalitarian reform that has successfully advanced egalitarian aims in the past. The social democratic experience demonstrates that extending the benefits of collective organization can significantly equalize material welfare and political power. At least in theory, organization, or the pooling of resources of social actors, can provide a functional equivalent of more direct property reforms. For this reason, egalitarian-democratic theory should be attentive to organizational matters, as well as to the distribution of property rights.¹

Second, associative strategies have less stringent antecedent political conditions than

¹ This is especially so since property is only a bundle of rights. The exercise of those rights, and their definition, are themselves largely matters of organization.
Equalizing Representation: While groups can exacerbate representational inequalities, they can also help correct them. Most familiarly, by permitting individuals with low per capita resources to pool those resources through organization, groups can remedy unfair inequalities in political power that reflect background material inequalities. Groups can also represent interests not best organized through territorial politics based on majority rule. These include functional interests, associated with a person’s position or activity within a society; categoric interests, the intensity of which is not registered in voting procedures; and, at least in systems without proportional representation, the interests of minorities. In so doing, associations help to perfect an imperfect system of interest representation by making it more fine-grained and so contribute to political equality.

Citizen Education: Associations can function as "schools of democracy." Participation in them can help citizens to develop competence, self-confidence, and a broader set of interests than they would acquire in a more fragmented political society.10 In performing this educative function, associations help foster the civic consciousness on which any egalitarian order depends—a recognition of the norms of democratic process and equity, and a willingness to uphold them and to accept them as fixing the basic framework of political argument and social cooperation, at least on condition that others do so as well.

Alternative Governance: Associations can provide a distinctive form of social governance, alternative to markets or public hierarchies, that permits society to realize the important benefits of cooperation among member citizens.11 Associations facilitate cooperation both by reducing the transaction costs of reaching agreement (an effect produced through their sheer existence and organizational routines) and by engendering the trust that cooperation typically requires. In providing such means of cooperative ordering, associations appear to authoritative political decision-makers more as problem-solvers than as simple representatives of member interests. They help to formulate and execute public policies, and take on quasi-public functions that supplement or supplant the state’s more directly regulatory actions. Often directly beneficial to society, such associative governance can also support public efforts to achieve egalitarian aims. It is particularly useful in areas where public monitoring and enforcement capacities are exceeded by the number and variety of sites of regulation, where (for this reason or others) high degrees of voluntary compliance are particularly important, and where the effectiveness of implementation strategies particularly

10 Tocqueville provides the classic statement of this educative power of associations: "Feelings are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the human mind is developed only by the reciprocal influence of men on one another," and under democratic conditions this influence can "only be accomplished by associations." Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Vintage, 1945), vol. 2, p. 117.

depends on ready adjustment to changed or varied circumstance. When associations perform such a regulatory or administrative role, they can contribute to popular sovereignty and the more general operation of the society for the general welfare.

**Lessons from Comparative Experience**

While examples of all these sorts of group contributions can be found in the U.S., in recent years it has primarily been students of comparative politics, in particular the politics of Western Europe, who have emphasized the positive features of associations. More particularly, they have argued that certain sorts of group organization play a central role in resolving, in egalitarian fashion, practical problems of economic and other governance in mass democracies.

The rediscovery in the 1970s of liberal "corporatist" systems of interest representation in North European social democracies—in particular the Scandinavian countries and Germany—was key to one such argument. It suggested that the incorporation of organized interests into the formation of economic policy helped produce, simultaneously, better satisfaction of distributive concerns, improved economic performance, and gains in government efficiency. Of particular note was the negotiation and compromise between organized business and organized labor within such systems. Relatively encompassing union and employer federations, both speaking for much if not all of their respective populations of interest, would meet regularly to negotiate the terms of their essentially peaceful coexistence, with the encouraging their cooperation with various policy side-payments. This structure of representation and decision-making appeared to contribute powerfully to the high employment, low inflation, steady profits and productivity advance, and rising social wage long characteristic of such systems.\(^{12}\)

More recent discussions, even as they have dissented from claims made about corporatism, or paused to note its devolution or collapse, have also stressed the importance of associative activity to economic performance. Students of successful alternatives to mass production—those marked, simultaneously, by high wages, skills, productivity, and competitiveness—have argued that this success requires a dense social infrastructure of secondary association and coordination. This organizational infrastructure provides the basis for cooperation between management and labor, among firms, and between firms and the government on issues of work organization, training, technology diffusion, research and

development, and new product ventures. And that cooperation, it is argued, is essential to ensuring economic adjustment that is both rapid and fair.\textsuperscript{13}

The reemerging regional economies of western Europe—Italy’s Emilia-Romagna, Sweden’s Smaland, Germany’s Baden-Wurttemburg, Denmark’s Jutland peninsula—provide particularly rich examples such associative economic governance. They feature complex public-private partnerships on training and technology diffusion, flexible manufacturing networks that crystallize around particular production tasks and then disperse, consortia to realize economies of scale in some functions (e.g. marketing or research and development) among otherwise competing firms, joint training activities among firms, occupational credentialing of labor through industry-wide or regional labor and management associations, and close linkages between regional development policies and regional welfare policies. Indeed, the object of state economic development policy in most of these regions prominently includes efforts to build the private associative framework upon which such efforts rely.\textsuperscript{14}

Outside more narrowly economic investigations, associative forms of governance have also been credited with achieving more effective social regulation and welfare delivery. Occupational safety and health regulation is a case in point. Virtually all continental West European nations rely on workplace health and safety committees, with specified public powers, to supplement the monitoring and enforcement capacities of state inspectorates. While bringing new costs in its train (e.g., the costs of training worker deputies), the general result appears to be a health and safety policy more effective and efficient than an inspectorate-alone approach. It is more effective because the deputization of millions of workers powerfully supplements state regulatory capacities. It is more efficient in that it permits public efforts to be left largely to standard-setting, while enlisting the local knowledge of regulated actors in devising the least costly means, in particular settings, of satisfying such standards.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{14} For examples of state policy, see Stuart A. Rosenfeld, Technology Innovation & Rural Development: Lessons From Italy and Denmark (Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 1990). We emphasize that state policy is in fact needed in all these cases. In Europe, no less than in the U.S., the appropriate institutional infrastructure does not emerge endogenously from the interactions of economic actors.

\textsuperscript{15} For a review of worker participation in safety regulation focusing on Europe, see the contributions to Sebastiano Bagnara, Raffaello Misić, and Helmut Wintersberger, eds., Work and Health in the 1980s: Experiences of Direct Workers’ Participation in Occupational Health (Berlin: Edition Sigma, 1985); for a particularly useful country study, see Bjorn Gustavsen and Gerry Hunnius, New Patterns of Work Reform: The Case of Norway (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1981); for the contrast with the U.S., see Charles Noble, Liberalism at Work: The Rise and Fall of OSHA (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986) and Eugene Bardach and Robert Kagan, Going By The Book (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).
Other examples of such associative regulation, entailing the devolution of public powers to private bodies include the use of industry and labor associations both to design and to implement vocational training curricula; the use of community-based environmental organizations to monitor and negotiate industry compliance with environmental controls; the use of housing activists and other "advocacy planners" in administering local development schemes; and the use of all manner of private associations both to deliver and help determine the content of the welfare services provided in particular communities. In all such cases, the enlistment of private associative energies to public efforts, in part through the controlled devolution of public powers to private bodies, can give public efforts more precision, flexibility, force, and public acceptance.\footnote{The case of vocational training is particularly well-studied. For a close examination of the different public powers enjoyed by the "social partners" in the German case, see Wolfgang Streeck, Joseph Hilbert, Karl-Heinz van Kevelaer, Frederike Maier, and Hajo Weber, *The Role of the Social Partners in Vocational Training and Further Training in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berlin: European Center for the Development of Vocational Training, 1987).}

Taken together, these different investigations and examples not only underscore the range of contribution associations can make to the practical satisfaction of basic norms of democratic order. They also help identify the source of that contribution as lying not in the sheer "quantity of associability" in such systems,\footnote{The phrase and the point come from Philippe C. Schmitter, "Interest Intermediation and Regime Governability in Contemporary Western Europe and North America," in Berger, *Organizing Interests*.} but in the care with which their public authorities encourage certain qualitative characteristics of different groups appropriate to the public functions they assume. It is this latter suggestion, in particular, that forms the core of the associative strategy: to use public power to encourage associative contributions to democratic ends without thereby encouraging a more destructive factionalizing of politics.

2. Can It Be Done?

Arguments against an associative strategy take two basic forms. The first holds that an associative reform strategy is impossible because the group environment is relatively fixed, while the second claims that politically motivated changes in the group environment are likely to have the perverse effect of increasing the risks of faction.\footnote{The two criticisms correspond to what Hirschman calls the "futility thesis and the "perversity thesis." See Albert Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).}

**Impossibility**

The argument for impossibility begins with the assumption that groups are a product of nature, or culture, or some other unalterable substrate of a country’s political life. Just as
some countries are blessed with good topsoil, the argument goes, others are blessed with the "right" kind of groups. In them, perhaps, associations contribute to democratic life. But since these blessings lie beyond politics, the observed contributions provide no support at all for an associative strategy for addressing the problems of egalitarianism. In fact, if we conjoin the contention that egalitarian democracy requires a favorable social basis with an appreciation of the relative fixity of associative environments, we can better understand why the ideal of equality does not travel well.

This objection, however, exaggerates the fixity of the associative environment. As already suggested, groups are importantly artifactual. Their incidence, character, and patterns of interaction are not only the result of natural tendencies toward association among citizens with like preferences. They also reflect structural features of the political economy in which they form—from the distribution of wealth and income to the locus of policy-making in different areas—and variations across members in factors favoring collective action. But those features and variations are themselves in no sense natural. They can be changed through public policy. So too can groups themselves. They can be subsidized, regulated, assigned public functions, or all three of these things: with subsidies conditioned on behavior that includes the performance of public functions. All such changes in the environment of group formation, the incentives available to individual groups, and the governing status of groups can manifestly change the group system.

The experience of countries that are now recognized as having the "right" kinds of groups, moreover, bears out the importance of such deliberate efforts to shape the group environment. While, for example, corporatist systems of wage bargaining and peak negotiation may have benefitted from pre-existing religious solidarities, they were commonly built, deliberately, on the wreckage of much more contentious industrial relations. While regional economies may be furthered by the social linkages of independent agrarian communities, today those linkages are fabricated through deliberate efforts to seed joint projects and lower information costs. While apprenticeship vocational training may draw on longstanding traditions of craft production and employer obligation, their organizational base, including the base of craft production itself, is secured through legally required memberships in organizations and protections of small producers. There is nothing "natural" about such efforts to secure appropriate associative ends, and nothing in "nature" that has precluded their success.

Renewed Faction

The simple argument for impossibility has little force, then. But the argument about perverse effects remains. Earlier we noted the pervasive threat of faction posed by the pervasiveness of groups. Now we suggest a higher level of group organization, and even the assignment of public powers to different associations. Is that not guaranteed to make faction worse?
No, we think not. In essence, having a deliberate egalitarian politics of association means taking all effects of groups on democratic norms—pro and con—seriously, and seeking to design around them. At least in principle, we see no particular difficulty in designing around the faction-enhancing effects warned of in the question. A complete answer to the perverse effects objection would need to show the plausibility of such design for all the defining norms of egalitarian democracy—popular sovereignty, political equality, distributive equity, deliberative politics, and the operation of the society for the general welfare. This cannot be done in the space available here. But to get some idea of what we have in mind, consider such design in the case of the basic norm of popular sovereignty. Let’s say that the people are sovereign when the authorization of state action traces to procedures in which citizens are represented as equals, and that within the limits set by fundamental civil and political liberties, such authorization is sufficient for state action. Would the pursuit of our associative strategy further undermine the ultimate authority of the people in the formation of policy?

To begin with, and framing all that follows, we assume that associations (including those that exercise quasi-public powers) continue to operate in a system with encompassing political organizations that organize representation along traditional territorial lines. That is, we assume throughout the possibility of "exit" from the associative system of representation to the more traditionally organized system. Moreover, we assume the group system is itself regulated by the traditional, territorial system. With these assumptions in hand, then, we ask: What does the balance between democracy-enhancing and democracy-infirming associative effects look like in the case of popular sovereignty, and how might it be improved?

On the plus side, as already suggested by our inventory of potential group contributions, associations can contribute to popular sovereignty—can promote a positive sum relationship between associations and democracy—in several ways. First, information provided by groups can permit a better definition of problems, and greater precision in the selection of means for addressing them. By thus sharpening policy instruments, and applying them more surgically, groups promote the capacity of the people to achieve its aims. Second, groups provide additional enforcement power, thus increasing the likelihood that decisions made by the people will be implemented. Third, in mitigating enforcement problems, groups remove one important constraint on political debate. Instead of proposals being short-circuited with the claim that they are unenforceable, a wider range of proposals can be discussed. Fourth, a more open politics of associations would make explicit a condition which is already a standing feature of even the most liberal of societies, viz. that secondary associations do in fact perform a variety of functions that affect the conditions of political order. By bringing the role of associations into the open—clarifying the "group basis of politics"—it would make the exercise of power by associations more accountable.\(^\text{19}\)

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On the negative side, there are three sources of concern. First, there are problems of disjunction of interest between the leadership of groups and their members—the problem of the "iron law of oligarchy." A dense world of association may make the government more informed about, and more responsive to, the interests of group "oligarchs" but not members. Second, there is the problem of independent powers—what might be called the "Frankenstein" issue. Endowed with quasi-public status, and commonly subsidized by the state, groups that at one point in time contribute to decent policy may continue to exercise power after outgrowing their usefulness, use that power to freeze their position and to distort future debate and choice. Third, increasing the extent of policy making outside of formal legislative arenas increases the threats of improper delegation of powers—problems familiar from the context of legislative delegations to administrative agencies.

How, then, might an associative strategy limit these threats of faction? On the threat of disjunction, the beginning of wisdom lies in recognizing that internal responsiveness need not come at the expense of external capacity. Moreover, internal responsiveness can be designed into large organizations, through their internal procedures. A natural response to the problem of disjunction, then, is simply to require greater use of internal democratic procedures among groups that are granted quasi-public status. Operationally, the requirement should be that groups accorded this status provide evidence that they in fact represent their members by showing that they actually use some mechanism of responsiveness.

The Frankenstein problem of independent powers also carries a natural response, namely some variant of "sunset legislation." Support for groups—e.g., grants of quasi-public status—should be reviewed on a regular basis, with a rebuttable presumption that support will be withdrawn. For such review to be meaningful, of course, the system dispensing powers in the first place must be robust. Systems relying heavily on group-based representation should always be systems of dual, and juridically unequal, powers. Final authority should reside in encompassing territorial organizations, and both they and the electoral system that generates them should be sufficiently strong to permit withdrawal from group representation.

Finally, outcome performance standards should be used to minimize the problems attending vague delegations of power. Where groups are recruited primarily as regulatory enforcers, the goal of regulation, if not the means, should be clearly specified. In the area of workplace health, for example, while decisions about the means for implementing exposure limits to hazardous chemicals might fall to health and safety committees, those limits themselves must be clear and set by public authority. When associations are involved in the formation of policy, problems of discretion are probably best dealt with by conditioning

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20 For a recent statement of these general points, along with examples, see David Knotts, Organizing for Collective Action (Hawthorne: Walter de Gruyter, 1990). For a revealing examination of the absence of any systematic relation between internal democracy and external capacity in the case of unions, see Peter Lange, Union Democracy and Liberal Corporatism: Exit, Voice, and Wage Regulation in Postwar Europe, Cornell Studies in International Affairs, Occasional Paper No. 16.
grants of quasi-public status, and a fortiori subsidy, on group satisfaction of outcome standards. In vocational training programs administered by private groups, for example, outcome standards might be specified, exactingly, in terms of the employment and earnings of program trainees. Again, the means taken to achieve goals can be more substantially left to groups; insistence on actual achievement, however, along with the statement of goals, need not be sacrificed by the state.

Taken together, such measures would, we think, considerably limit the threat of faction raised by greater reliance on groups. Admittedly, all such measures require political judgment. But in this they are not distinct from any other exercise of public authority. And again, the potential gains to popular sovereignty are considerable.

3. The American Case

Suppose it is accepted that associative forms of governance and representation are potentially attractive ways of advancing democratic ideals, and that the added threat of faction that might be thought to come from increased reliance on them can be tamed by the same strategy of constructive artifice that enlists group contributions. Still, the prospects for associative reform might be thought daunting, particularly in the United States. A weak state, a anti-collectivist political culture, and a civil society overwhelmingly dominated by relatively disorganized business interests seem to offer uniquely infertile ground for constructive associative action. Is constructive reform at all plausible under such conditions? To conclude our argument, we outline an affirmative answer for one important, and bitterly contested, policy area: worker representation and industrial relations. Holding questions of immediate political practicality aside, we indicate the sorts of things that might be done, in an associative vein, to improve that system.

The general goal of associative reform is to make social organization more congruent with democratic ideals. In the case of U.S. industrial relations, that implies attention to two related problems.

First, the benefits of representation are very narrowly distributed in the U.S., which has one of the lowest rates of unionization in the developed world. This "representation gap," moreover, is closely associated with a welfare gap. The U.S. has a low social wage, with few substantive benefits are provided workers simply as citizens. With the provision of worker benefits disproportionately determined by the balance of power between workers and owners within firms, the fact that most workers do not enjoy the benefits of organization means that substantive protections are weakly and unevenly provided.

Second, the present system does not encourage cooperation between owners and workers in the pursuit of joint gains; system- wide, the effects are felt in relatively low rates of diffusion of more productive forms of work organization and advanced application of technology, as society generally loses from missed opportunities for cooperation. Part of the
reason for the absence of meaningful cooperation is the weakness of worker organization just noted. Based on mutual respect, genuine cooperation typically depends on mutual power, and in most settings workers have little or none. They have not achieved the institutionalized respect for their interests (e.g., a serious commitment to job security, or consultation in advance of work reorganization) that are a necessary condition of genuine cooperation.

The other part of the reason, however, is the deep fragmentation of existing forms of worker representation. Mimicking the decentralized benefit system, this tends to enforce segmentation in benefits and wages, creates incentives to free-riding on those without representation, and retards a more general concertation of worker interests. Within the firm, it has historically been reflected in union focus on "job-control" (or control over the immediate conditions of employment in particular settings), rather than skills upgrading and broad social insurance, as the key to protecting worker security. Given the increased insecurity of firm-specific employment, however, exacerbated by the general decline in unionization, the former strategy brings diminishing returns even as the latter seems out of reach.21

An associative reform of this system might take four related steps: (1) lower the barriers to unionization; (2) encourage alternative forms of self-directed worker organization, particularly those focused on joint productivity improvement and worker upgrading; (3) raise the social wage; and (4) promote more centralization in wage bargaining, while permitting high levels of decentralization in bargaining over specific work conditions. We consider these in turn.

Even within the current framework of current U.S. labor law—which centers on collective bargaining between elected and exclusive worker representatives (unions) and employers—strategies for reducing barriers to worker representation are clear enough. Elections of representatives could be simplified and expedited, bargaining obligations could attach early and survive the arrival of successor employers, the right to use economic force could be enhanced, and, throughout, violations of labor regulation could be remedied with compensatory damages rather than toothless "make whole" remedies. More ambitiously, representation might be accorded a simple showing of majority support; the individual rights of workplace members of unions without majority status might be enhanced; restraints on the coordination of unions in using economic force could be relaxed; and greater attention could be given to the practical requirements of unions "security" in maintaining a workplace

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presence.22

Even with such reforms in place, however, most of the economy will remain non-union, and thus most workers will be without representation. We would suggest, then, that forms of workplace representation alternative to, though not in direct competition with, unions also be encouraged. A mandate of workplace committees with responsibilities in particular areas of policy concern exclusive of wages—for example, occupational health and safety or training—could do this directly. Alternatively, or as supplement, government purchasing contracts might be used to promote enhanced worker voice. Eligibility for such contracts could be conditioned on successful employer demonstration of the existence of an acceptable form of autonomous employee representation—for example, some form of works council—with real powers in the administration of the internal labor market.

The increased levels of worker organization that could be expected to follow on these two changes would mitigate one barrier to cooperation, namely the weakness of labor organization. With labor stronger, it is possible finally to imagine implementing a new social contract in the internal labor market, one that would promote cooperation. The terms of the contract are simple enough: labor exchanges flexibility and effort in exchange for management’s exchange of consultation and commitment to existing workers.

To be substantive and fair, however, a system of multiple worker organizational forms would need our third initiative—an increase in the social wage. For workers, an increased social wage would provide some assurances of fair treatment and security external to the firm. This would make more flexible, productivity-enhancing strategies of work organization within the firm more appealing, and relieve pressures for the internal rigidities associated with "job-control." For employers, reciprocally, the mitigation of job-control consciousness (and the likely reduction of labor costs) among organized workers would remove one powerful incentive to resist worker association in their firm.

Finally, greater coordination of wage contracts would be needed to reap the full benefits for economic performance. As noted earlier, the American system of contract negotiation is highly decentralized. It is unreasonable to expect the U.S. to approximate the corporatist peak bargaining of the late 1970s. This is partly because of the sheer size and diversity of the American economy, and partly because it experiences the same competitive pressures that have long-since eroded centralized wage setting even in more corporatist systems. Still, some measures aimed at creating an environment featuring more encompassing associations than now exist could be undertaken, with the aim of generating an environment better suited to some greater centralization and coordination of wage negotiations (at least on a regional basis) than presently exists.

22 There are many such statements of possible labor law reform. A good guide to the issues involved, containing many more and less ambitious recommendations for reform, is provided by Paul Weiler, Governing the Workplace: The Future of Labor and Employment Law (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).
One step would be an amendment of the law governing multi-employer bargaining, shifting the presumption away from the voluntariness and instability of such arrangements toward their requirement. In addition, pressures within the union movement for consolidation could be strengthened by selective incentives (e.g., in the form of funds for (re)training conditioned on inter-union cooperation). Government support for business cooperation (e.g., consortia pursuing joint research and development strategies) could be conditioned on efforts to consolidate wage policies. Or, following common practice in most systems, "extension laws" on bargaining contracts could be enacted, generalizing their results to non-union settings. A useable floor on wages, supportive of such a more centralized system, might be built by indexing the minimum wage explicitly to some fraction of the average wage, with the latter tied more explicitly (again, potentially through government contracting) to productivity improvements.

The effect of this second pair of reforms—increasing the social wage, and promoting more generalization of wage patterns across firms—would be to discriminate more sharply between the focus of bargaining within the firm and the focus of bargaining outside it. Within the firm, unions would come to look more like employee participation schemes, and employee participation schemes would look more like unions. Worker representation would be secured, but with a particular focus on regulating the internal labor market, and increasing productivity within it, through innovation on issues of job design, work organization, access to training on new firm technology, and the like. Outside the firm, more encompassing organizations, suitable to handling matters affecting workers in general, rather than workers in a particular firm, would be more empowered to pursue that object. They would focus more on securing generalizable wage agreements and the content of the social wage.

Again, we do not here consider the immediate political plausibility of any of these reforms. The point of the example is only to show what sort of things might be done if political attention were more focused on associative strategies of reform. Without threatening existing public authority, the system just outlined would make U.S. industrial relations substantially more workable and more congruent with democratic ideals. In extending and deepening the benefits of organized representation to those who are unorganized or under-organized, it would advance the goal of political equality. It would also have a fair chance of improving distributive equity, and of improving economic performance in the U.S.. That should be enough to recommend it, however distant its realization might be.

Conclusion

Our discussion of labor reform is only one example of the sorts of reforms that might pursued through the associative strategy. But it suggests the broad concerns of that strategy and the considerations relevant to its execution. The basic idea is straightforward enough. To advance, egalitarian politics must once again be shown to work. To work, it requires, both in representation and administration, associative supports. To exist, those supports must be
developed. And to develop them does not require a naive view of associations as free from the threat of faction, or a dangerous view on the surrender of encompassing public authority. Faction can be mitigated through the same artifice that enlists associative contributions. And the strength and competence of public authorities can be enhanced, not diminished, by the enlistment of associative energies in the execution of democratic programs. At a time when egalitarian politics are stymied, and statist reform strategies increasingly implausible, associative strategies of reform deserve more attention in egalitarian theory as well as practice.