

# In Defense of the "New Radicals"

Hal Draper

THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS ARTICLES on the "new-radicals" and the "new-left," most of which have this in common: they do not explain whom they are talking about. It is the tale of the blind man and the elephant. The new-left is a much more shapeless phenomenon than an elephant, and the gropers come up with a wider variety of reports than the blind men.

Let's see what we are all talking about.

First: it is generally agreed that these new-radicals are to be found among student elements primarily, either on campus or in movements deriving from the campus. In good part, though not entirely, they have arisen where a line representing student movement (not *the* student movement: just student movement) intersects the line representing civil-rights movement.

Secondly: there are no new-left organizations; there are only organizations or movements in which the new-radicals form an important or even predominant tendency and affect the tone or "style" of what is done. It is misleading to speak of Students for a Democratic Society as a new-left organization; it is more heterogeneous than that; but there is no doubt that the tendency is strong in SDS. It may be that the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee *in the South* is a more nearly new-leftish organization—I don't know—but SNCC should not be automatically equated with the various "Friends of SNCC" groups in other parts of the country. Then there are local groups, of which the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley is the best-known example. The new-radical tendency did indeed constitute the dominant and tone-setting ingredient in the FSM, but it cannot simply be equated with the FSM. Then there are such groups as the Northern Student Movement and the Southern Student Organizing Committee, outgrowths from the impulses given by SNCC-cum-SDS.

But thirdly: this new-radical tendency among student activists does not exist only within organizations; it also precedes organization. This was certainly true of the Berkeley FSM. As for SDS: it was originally set up as an arm of the hoary social-democratic League for Industrial Democracy, which is about as far from the new-radical style as one can get; yet it served as a convenient framework into which poured, or seeped, the new elements which were being produced at the crossroads of the student and civil-rights movements.

The new-radical weaves through these organizations and movements like the chocolate marbling in a pound-cake, intertwined irregularly

with other things, sometimes mixed into shades, and forming a variable proportion of the mixture in different slices.

The rest of the pound-cake usually has two other ingredients of varying prominence. One is the pseudo-radical type I have called (in the book on Berkeley) the disaffiliates—by others called the Hippie Left—who reject society *tout court*, as well as politics. Berkeley was treated to a costumed charade on the meaning of this type in a strange interlude at its Vietnam Day Rally on October 15, when, in the course of serious political attacks on U.S. foreign policy, the novelist Ken Kesey came on, in army garb with helmet, to deride the previous speakers for discussing the Vietnam war politically and to show how it should be done. His contribution consisted essentially of repeating “Fuck it” with great emphasis, in-between playing the harmonica. The force of this prescription is that it applies both to the Vietnam war and its opponents, both to strikebreakers and to strikers, to political reactionaries and political radicals—in fact, to everybody except the disaffiliates. When this clot of *je-m'en-fichisme* organizes, it is as likely to look like Hell's Angels as like the Free Sex and Pot League.

The other ingredient, of course, is “old-leftism.” This is a new-radical term which means “anybody else.” It is characteristic that it lumps together, as if in one political category, such disparate currents as socialists, Communists, six varieties of Stalinists and neo-stalinists, democratic socialists and reformists, revolutionary socialists and leftwingers, even ADA liberals and reform-Democrats. Just as some articles on the new-left have indiscriminately discussed the disaffiliates as if they were new-radicals (some even as *the* new-radicals), so also other articles have, with straight face, discussed (say) the unreconstructed Stalinists of the Progressive Labor group as if they were new-radicals too. Political humor can go no further. Or: a “New Left School” is set up in Los Angeles, and lo, a class on Marxism is given by Dorothy Healy, who has been the Communist Party leader in Southern California so long that sheep were still grazing in flocks on the Baldwin Hills after she had lived through six faction fights.

I do not mean to insist on purely terminological questions. Anyone who wants to use new-radical to refer to these types has a democratic right to do so; but I do not know how sense can be made that way. At any rate, in what follows, I try to define the new-radical in a more usable way.

## 2

THESE ARE BEARERS of an amorphous kind of radicalism, who start from the feeling that there is “something wrong,” basically wrong, with the whole warp and woof of American society, and want to “do something about it.” They reject liberalism as too thoroughly integrated with the

Establishment; there is "something wrong" with it, too. They are primarily activists, who want to concentrate on concrete issues ("issue politics") and who are more certain about what they are "anti" than what they are for. They think of their views as "moral choices"; their emphasis on the "moral" approach has the function of filling the vacuum left by the absence of systematic ideas. They are, above all, non-ideological radicals, that is, uncommitted to any system of ideas about the transformation of society; not only uncommitted but with a more or less strong aversion to committing themselves even when they admit the need.

For another slant on this frame of mind, consider one of the few examples I have seen of an attempt by a non-ideological radical to set down a kind of ideology about non-ideological radicalism. This courageous, if not foolhardy, effort was made by a leading FSM activist, Michael Rossman, in a Berkeley magazine. "The trademark of the new radicals," he writes, "is a primitive, moral ideology. Their activity is aimed at issues, not at political or economic goals. And the issues are moral issues: peace, Civil Rights, capital punishment." The protests do not have an ideological base, he says, "But always, if one listens, one hears the simple, naive, and stubborn cry that distinguishes the new radicals: 'This is *wrong*, it must stop!'" (*Occident*, Fall 1964-65.)

There it is, the words "primitive" and "naive," written not derogatorily but in praise. There is the *cri de coeur*, which performs the same function as stamping the foot vigorously. There is the reduction of peace, etc. to a moral issue *only*.

Behind the cry "This is *wrong*!" is an ideological vacuum; for as soon as you try to examine why it is wrong, or how you know this is wrong but not that, and above all how you choose among the various things to do about making it right, you get into "ideology," that is, more general ideas about social action and program. And then at bottom you have only "old" ideological tracks to follow to the left, because the new-radicals have not developed any new ones and do not want to.

Politics abhors an ideological vacuum. The new-radical knows, just *knows*, that racial discrimination is wrong because he has already absorbed and internalized this consensus-idea from his milieu. Just as people who "don't believe in theories" merely mean that they accept the current theories of the status quo without examination and uncritically, so also the new-radical ideological vacuum is inevitably filled with an unexamined content.

This turning of a blind eye to the need of thinking through one's ideas about social action and program, however, is not simply a defect to be decried, though I am willing to decry it. That is the easiest thing to do about it. The harder thing is to understand why it has neverthe-

less been a necessary link in the road to social activism for a whole stratum of youth.

It has gotten them over the “ideological hang-up.” And what was that? As example, let us take a not uncommon case, that of the boy or girl growing up with parents who were among the two million or more who passed through the Communist movement or its periphery in the last decades. We are talking of those who passed through and out, either disillusioned with Stalinist totalitarian politics in general or disillusioned with its prospects in this country, or indeed merely clubbed into apathy and withdrawal by the anti-Communist witchhunt, but who still retained their self-identification with “progressive” issues. Growing up in this household means absorbing indiscriminately references to Russia and to desegregation, to the Party and the unions, to the “socialist world” and to social justice for the poor—a package-deal of internalized attitudes which demands to be sorted out later.

Now then, does one have to wait to think one’s way clearly through this ideological maze before being able to *act* on anything? Do you have to be clear about Russia, the Party and the “socialist world” (and who is?) before you can “do something” about desegregation or social justice or the poor? This is the “ideological hang-up.” Why can’t you just cut through all the bramble and say: “I don’t know about all that ideology jazz, but *this* [pointing] is wrong, it must stop”?

For this you need especially an issue that can be adequately expounded by pointing, on the basis of a given internalization; and for this generation the civil-rights struggle of the Negro is such an issue. You don’t need much of an ideology to feel deeply about it. “Something can be done about it” immediately, without any long-term program or perspective, and even without organization, by individual action. Its solution can be cut up into innumerable small “solutions,” indefinitely divisible down to getting a job for one Negro. So well fitted is this issue to “a primitive, moral ideology” that the Rossman article even admitted:

Civil Rights forms the main thread of new radical activity. . . . So far new radical activity has had no effect on other issues (perhaps it can’t?), and the new radicals keep turning to the Civil Rights issue for reassurance. Indeed, this is the only issue on which new radical activity has had a measurably positive effect.

This is an exaggeration, to be sure, but it highlights why so much of the new-radical current arises where the civil-rights storm hits student shores.

### 3

IF THESE “PRIMITIVE” AND “NAIVE” non-ideological radicals were really as devoid of ideas (ideology) as they often think they are, they would not be a distinct current, even an amorphous one. They like to call their differentness a matter of “style”—a word which is Very New-Left because

it suggests without denoting: a literary style more often associated with poetry than politics. But as the attack on the new-radicals from the liberal/social-democratic right has intensified, the ideological crux of this new-leftism has been further illuminated. The new-radicals may refuse to concern themselves with ideology, but ideology does not fail to concern itself with them.

In the last two pages of my book *Berkeley: The New Student Revolt*, I argued that

The central core of the working ideology of the typical radical activists is not defined by any one issue, but consists of a choice between two alternative modes of operation: *permeation* or *left opposition*. The former seeks to adapt to the ruling powers and infiltrate their centers of influence with the aim of (some day) getting to the very levers of decision-making—becoming a part of the Establishment in order to manipulate the reins to the left. The latter wish to stand outside the Establishment as an open opposition, achieving even short-term changes by the pressure of a bold alternative, while seeking roads to fundamental transformations.

The new-radicals choose between these two “styles,” and what is characteristic is that they choose the path of anti-Establishmentarian left opposition. This is the thread that runs through the tendency as a whole. Its defenders and attackers range themselves in battle lines drawn by this pattern, whatever else they prefer to talk about.

The clash between these two political approaches has come to a head most sharply in SDS, for two reasons. First, SDS had from the beginning its own permeationist wing, led by Steve Max, Doug Ireland and Jim Williams. In the 1964 elections this wing was given its head as leaders of the SDS's Political Education Project (PEP), on the basis of a statement, “SDS and the 1964 Elections,” which was clearly “coalitionist.” (In current jargon, coalitionism—or “realignment”—means the orientation toward subordinating the independent action of civil-rights or other movements to the interest of strengthening the “liberal-labor coalition” which is supporting the Johnson Consensus, and therefore orienting toward the Democratic Party as the decisive political channel for reform or progress.)

The statement, in a final section headed “Realignment,” took position as follows, with a prediction which it is cruel to quote today:

A much heralded political realignment is now taking place. We welcome it, for it means that the Democratic Party will no longer bargain with racism to elect the President, and racists will be removed from their leadership of the Congress. . . . This new politics . . . will make the Democratic Party more consistently the liberal party of the nation.

The statement looked to the credentials challenge which the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was going to present at the Atlantic City party convention, and definitely chose the “realignment school” as against “the third-party school.” During the elections, SDS sold buttons

labeled "Part of the Way with LBJ," symptomatic of its halfway-house hunting.

Secondly, SDS's parent League for Industrial Democracy, long intellectually moribund and organizationally stagnant, has been taken over lately by a new team of relatively youthful ideologists of coalitionism and permeation, imported from the right wing of the Socialist Party, led by Michael Harrington with Tom Kahn as first lieutenant. This new LID leadership has been engaged in a gradual squeeze on the SDS.

It was not only the student arm that was at stake for the Harrington operation, which has a broader objective. It is the latest in a series of attempts over the decades to create a social-democratic wing of Establishment liberalism with a "Fabian" perspective, inoffensively socialistic in tendency and impeccably respectable in style—the "court socialist" in the palace of power. Such is the vision: so far all these attempts have come to nothing. Perhaps the last serious effort was Norman Thomas's Union for Democratic Socialism, which came into existence after the pro-Stevensonites in the Socialist Party failed to get the party to go madly for Adlai. The present effort spearheaded by Harrington also stems from the coalitionist wing of the SP but its strategy is to use the existing shell of the LID rather than set up a new name and structure. (Interestingly enough, the strategy requires these "old-leftists" to assume a non-ideological façade of their own.)

For these two reasons—the pressure of its coalitionist wing inside and the pressure of the LID—the SDS has not been able to escape a confrontation with the problem of permeationism in general and coalitionism in particular. (I am viewing coalitionism as a particular aspect of permeationism, its manifestation in the field of domestic political action.) SDS therefore had to go through what, in a radical sect, would have been frankly posed as a faction fight; but taking place in a non-ideological framework it was nothing as clear as that.

At the SDS founding convention in June 1962, the programmatic statement ("Port Huron Statement") was clearly coalitionist in tendency, though the tendency was not flaunted. Its permeationist assumptions showed up most clearly in the section on the peace movement, as here:

As long as the debates of the peace movement form *only a protest*, rather than an oppositionist viewpoint *within the centers of serious decision-making*, then it is neither a movement of democratic relevance, nor is it likely to have any effectiveness except in educating more outsiders to the issue. [Emphasis added.]

Of a piece is the remark that among the reasons for the peace movement's ineffectiveness is this: "that the 'peace movement' has operated almost exclusively through peripheral institutions—almost never through mainstream institutions."

In contrast are the conclusions of the speech on "The University and

the Cold War" given at the SDS conference in December 1962 by president Paul Potter. Grappling with the same question, he points tentatively in the opposite direction:

. . . we must forsake the current adjustment model and begin to search for a revolutionary model which is dynamic enough to extricate us from the continually narrowing concentric circles which define the limits of change within the established political power structure. . . . The Southern Student Movement in employing non-violent direct action which works outside and frequently against established channels is working on a revolutionary model.

. . . throughout the country students are, in small groups to be sure, beginning to look to their own resources in attempts to redefine the issues of our time. . . . These are an interesting strain of rebels. . . . they have chosen at least for the time being, in an important way to stand outside the organized system. They have chosen to be effective but they have shown the courage to define for themselves what is effective. But there is a grim analogue here. For in daring to be effective, in attempting to develop our own priorities independent of established priorities, in pressing to build our own institutions independent of existing institutions, we dare also to be ineffective. We risk our small influence on the existing structure in order to stand apart from it and build a new one, recognizing full well that basic changes may be impossible. It is on this point that American liberals and radicals have historically foundered—the only difference today is that civilization promises to founder with us.

A year later the SDS convention adopted a new programmatic statement, "America and the New Era," which specifically repudiated the "politics of adjustment" and dropped all "realignment" talk; in several places it even hinted at the desirability of third-party political action as against support of the New Frontier and the Democratic Party. It also included a clear statement of rejection of the permeationist approach:

. . . it is becoming evident that the hope for real reform lies not in alliances with established power, but with re-creation of a popular left opposition—an opposition that expresses anger when it is called for, not mild disagreement.

Over a year later, an SDS leader, in the course of *deploring* the intensity of the debate, summarized the "current infighting" between the majority and minority wings of the organization in this way:

The biggest concern appears to be the SDS relationship to the so-called Liberal Establishment—at least it is over this that the most emotional heat and moral fervor is being generated. At one extreme are those who argue that liberalism now serves as an appendage of the corporate system, attempting to co-opt potentially radical and democratic constituencies through token programs and manipulation and stifle political conflict and real social change. This position advocates organization independent of the Establishment and primarily hostile to it, or at least engaging people in confrontation with institutions and agencies of liberalism. At the other extreme are those who seem to believe that expansion of liberalism's political base would be a positive value, that this would hasten the passage of needed social reforms, and expand the power of objectively progressive forces such as labor, Negroes, urban workers and middle-class; consequently the job of radicals is to help defeat the enemies of liberalism (mainly on the right but also on the left) and to help enrich and radicalize its program by working within liberal coalitions. . . . the



anti-establishment people are primarily motivated by a profound identification with the needs of the disenfranchised and by a vision of democratic community as concretely as possible; the establishment-oriented people seem primarily moved by repugnance of the rabid right and by the possibility that radicals can win positions of respect and voice rather than vilification in this society. [Dick Flacks, in *SDS Discussion Bulletin* dated Spring 1964.]

To try "to capture the positions of power within existing political structures without either openly challenging their precepts or honestly involving their participants," wrote President Potter in the October 1964 *Bulletin*, is "both cynical and manipulative." ("President's Report: Which Way SDS?")

Undoubtedly the experience of the civil-rights movement was of the greatest importance in pointing SDS thinking in this direction; and the tendency was hardened by Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam war. The expectation of a "realigned" Democratic Party with a liberal "new politics" by this time made embarrassing reading for all but the most doctrinaire coalitionists. The widening of the SDS's break with the Johnson Consensus and its coalition came particularly with two events: the April March on Washington against the "dirty war" in Vietnam; and the capitulation of the coalitionists on the Mississippi Free Democratic Party challenge to the Democratic Party convention in Atlantic City.

THE LATTER ISSUE IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST in our context because it brought to a head, in concrete form, the meaning of the general formulations about left-oppositionism versus permeationism. Nat Hentoff is quite right in asserting that the MFDP's rejection of the proposed compromise (a compromise which quashed MFDP's claims and gave it instead some token consolation prizes) "will be seen in retrospect to have been one of the watersheds of the new radicalism." It was a watershed in the ideological clarification of the "new radicals" because it forced them to make a basic choice which ideological considerations alone would never have pushed them into.

The nature of the choice can be examined via the uncharacteristically obtuse rejoinder made by Harrington to Hentoff (*Partisan Review*, Summer 1965). If the MFDP had flatly stayed away from the Democratic Party convention and even called on people to leave that party and join "in independent political action against *both* major parties," says Harrington, then this "would have been a defensible tactic" though mistaken. But: "When the Mississippi militants decided to go inside the convention, their strategy was no longer one of protest; it became political . . . once the decision was made to organize as a *Democratic* party which would support the convention's candidate, if only to get a hearing the Movement had to ally with labor, liberal and



reform forces. Thus the basic question was: how far would the Movement be able to move its meliorist allies."

For Harrington there was an irrevocable and irreversible decision to work inside the walls of the Democratic Party. But such decisions are not irreversible. It is quite possible that "the Mississippi militants" set out to "go inside the convention" without examining in advance the full meaning of all possible outcomes, in the fashion which Harrington's political training had happily accustomed him. They may even have set out bravely to reform the Democratic Party, as have so many others. But the reality which confronted them shoved them brutally against the following realization: to continue to pursue this inner-party course effectively meant in practice to *subordinate* their independent militancy to the party's power structure, as mediated through the labor-liberal-reform coalition which functioned as the antechamber to the Hearing Room. Harrington is apparently arguing that the "Mississippi militants" should have thought it all through to the bitter end, in advance, and then chosen one path or the other from the beginning. This is an extraordinarily ultimatic approach to the self-clarification of a real movement. It is on the contrary characteristic of a grass-roots movement that it *learns* its political theses not by writing them but by acting them out, sometimes with costly experiences.

The basic question was not "how far would the Movement be able to move its meliorist allies" from *within* a coalition with these allies—a coalition in which the Movement as a minority, was a tamed captive—but rather, how best to move these "allies" and the whole Establishment political apparatus from a position of leverage *outside* the whole structure—as a left opposition to it; as a constant threat to it, rather than a prisoner of it. I am not now arguing this point but only pointing to the nature of the alternative, which does not clearly exist for Harrington.

What the MFDP compromise issue did for the "new radicals," then, was to illuminate the nature of the big choice in political approach, permeationism versus left opposition. This is what makes the question of "for or against the MFDP compromise" a litmus-paper test of radical types. The "new radical" type can effectively be defined as one which, *on a non-ideological basis*, rejects the permeationist approach to the power structure, and moves in the direction of *left opposition to it from below*.

4

IN SPITE OF THE QUOTATIONS I have given from SDS literature, which show a consciousness of the Great Divide in politics, I do not claim that what I have described is the *conscious* special ideology of the non-ideological radicals. I should be glad to discover that it is so more rather than less; but I am presently arguing only that it is the underlying

content of the new-radicals' tendency, and also the crux of the attacks that have been made upon it by its social-democratic critics.

The two most virulent attacks have come from emplacements close to the LID leadership, both notable for two things; their open display of ill temper, and their explicit exhibition of coalitionism as their essential political objection to the new-radicals. In their own way, therefore, they confirm the picture.

One was by Tom Kahn, the new administrative secretary of the LID and, at 26, the "youth movement" of the Harrington team. His article, "Pop Journalism and Myths of the 'New' Left," was carried by *New America*, formally the organ of the Socialist Party but in practice edited as the faction bulletin of its coalitionist right wing. It is an explicit broadside against the SDS, in a tone of bitterness which, from the pen of an official of the parent organization writing in a presumably "outside" journal, would have been mystifying except as prefiguring the break between the two organizations which actually came a few months later. In the article Kahn forthrightly states the coalitionist credo. The supporters of the "coalition strategy," he writes, see this strategy

in the context of hastening the tendency toward fundamental political realignment in America. In this process, they believe, the Democratic Party can be transformed from an amalgam of New Dealers and Slave Dealers into the political instrument of the labor, civil rights and peace movements—and of the poor.

Surely, a Democratic Party which actually became the "political instrument" (no less) of the peace movement and the "poor" as well as of labor and the civil rights militants would put even the European socialists in the shade; and Kahn lambastes the new-radicals in the name of this dream, which has an excellent chance of coming true if Mary Poppins joins the LID.

The other article was a long blast in *Dissent* (Summer 1965) by its editor, Irving Howe. (This magazine is discussing with the LID the possibility of becoming its organ; outcome uncertain at this writing.)

Howe straightforwardly takes his stand against the new-radicals on the side of "those who look forward to creating a loose coalition of Negro, labor, liberal and church groups in order to stretch the limits of the welfare state." The other side is described as "those who, in effect, want to 'go it alone,' refusing to have anything to do with 'the Establishment,' . . . a strategy of lonely assault, which must necessarily lead to shock tactics and desperation," and which "inexorably" leaves no alternative but "the separatism of the Muslims."

There is no intelligible reason given for this theory of "inexorable-ness." The alternative of "independent political action against *both* major parties," which had seemed even to Harrington as "defensible" if mistaken, does not exist in Howe's inexorable world. This cartoon-

version of the debate does not require discussion but it leaves no question about what Howe is exercised over.

Some other items in Howe's dossier against the new-radicals add to the effect. They are too hostile toward liberalism: for them "liberalism means Clark Kerr, not John Dewey; Max Lerner, not John Stuart Mill; Pat Brown, not George Norris." Since the one quality which his three Good Liberals have in common is that they are dead, Howe is letting Kerr, Lerner and Brown stand for *contemporary* liberalism . . . and what more has to be proved?\*

Is he really deploring overhostility to liberalism purely as a matter of historical justice? It is hard to believe so, since the coalition which he advocates to save America today is with living liberals (not one of whom he sees fit to name for the edification of the new-radicals), not with the ones that are Good and Dead.

The new-radicals, Howe complains, have "an unconsidered enmity toward something vaguely called the Establishment." He heavily derides the use of this term, and finds no definite meaning in it. But ironically, "Establishment" is one of the few political terms which has been *formally* defined in new-left literature—specifically in the SDS's "America and the New Era." The definition begins: "By the 'Establishment' we mean those men who have direct influence over the formulation of national domestic and foreign policies," and continues with considerable specificity. Others, including myself, would broaden or tighten up the description; but essentially it is a term pointing in the direction of whatever one thinks is the center or centers of socio-political power in this system plus the necessary agents, mouthpieces and hangers-on. Aversion to this term stems from the same source as the standard objections to the term capitalism: *it marks tenderness about the thing, not distaste for the terminology.* The crux of Howe's concern is given away in his first phrase: the *enmity* of the new-radicals to this Establishment. This is their sin.

The new-radicals, Howe writes, have "an equally unreflective belief in 'the decline of the West,'" unaware that this belief is "frequently" held by reactionaries. Again he finds little meaning in the term. Spengler aside, it is curious that he does not remind himself that some people, of all persuasions, commonly use "the West" to mean the capitalist West, in a societal sense rather than geographical. I would not undertake to say whether "the decline of capitalism" has a meaning to Howe, but it is worth considering.

This does not end Howe's dossier, but it is enough to illustrate the tendency of the most considerable effort made to give a sophisticated

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\* Besides, two out of three of Howe's good and dead liberals became pro-socialist in the end. But two out of three of the living ones started by being pro-socialist and ended up as—well, examples for Howe. See?

form to the liberal/social-democratic assault on the new-radicals. What enrages Howe is the new-radicals' far-from-vague enmity against the Establishment, including the Establishment liberals (the living ones), including the lib-lab coalition leaders who are today truckling to the Establishment. From this side too it is confirmed that this is the crux of the new-radical tendency.

THE "ANTI-ESTABLISHMENTARIANISM" of the new radicals leads them to a dilemma. It is an implicitly, often explicitly, revolutionary stance, and any movement which set out to implement it consistently and thoroughly would inescapably find itself acting as an extreme-left revolutionary group. At the same time, the new radicals conceive of themselves as being very "broad," quite different from the "narrow," sectarian old-leftists who failed, and as aiming at a mass membership.

This dilemma is one of the most important motors in the train of events besetting the SDS internally and externally. The contradiction is, I imagine, much less severe for SNCC, which is operating in a sort of revolutionary situation, that of the Negroes in the South. The contradiction did not have to be faced by the Berkeley FSM simply because it went out of existence; it is indeed behind the fact that the successor organization at Berkeley, called the Free Student Union, has never gotten off the ground. The contradiction does not have to be faced by individual new radicals active here and there, since individual activists do not have to be "broad." Hence the dilemma has been acted out visibly mainly in SDS, the only dominantly new-radical organization which assumed general tasks analogous to those of a revolutionary party.

There is a financial side to this contradiction which I can only mention in passing, even though it is traditionally true that, with revolutionary groups, finances are usually a thoroughly *political* question. It can be put this way: how long can one finance a sort-of-revolutionary movement out of the purses of the very lib-labs whom one is opposing? A year after the MFDP watershed, the SDS was clearly heading for a break from its foster-parent; and in October a joint announcement formalized the severance of relations with the LID. The official reason given was financial: "the desire of the SDS to engage in action programs which transcend the limits imposed by law on tax-exempt organizations" such as the LID, and the divorce was represented as "amicable." The separation, however, will have financial consequences apart from tax-exemption (and apart from the fact that, before October was up, the Department of Justice had announced an investigation of "Communists" in SDS).

The contradiction, however, is essentially political. In effect, the SDS has been trying to reconcile revolutionism and broadness by being non-ideological about its revolutionism. This may help to blur what you

say, but there is still the problem of what you do. Do you head for a collision with the social powers of the Establishment? The significance of the MFDP fight and of the April March on Washington was that these did in fact finally entail collisions, and therefore they were milestones on the road that has led the SDS to its present situation. But until then the SDS leadership was trying to follow a different course, a collisionless course, in an interesting experiment, which we have room to discuss here only as it bears on our main subject. In effect, the SDS's attempted solution to the dilemma was not to move into head-on conflict with the basic power structure of the system, and not to move back in retreat, but to strike out at right angles.

This is an important meaning of the activity program which absorbed the best energies of the SDS for the last couple of years: the organization of "community unions" in a number of selected urban areas among the poor. The conception behind it was that the new-radicals would bypass the Establishment instead of bearding it, go directly to the "grassroots constituencies" and organize them, and thus create a countervailing power from below which could be the beginning of new social possibilities. In practice, this meant that a task force of SDS organizers and volunteer workers would go into a poor neighborhood, set up a community center, learn the problems of the "native" population, work out local demands and action programs with the constituents, and hopefully organize them to fight for these goals themselves. The constituents were to be "the poor," "the dispossessed," the "slum-dwellers." These categories were conceived to be the human material out of which the new-left revolution would be forged.

It is no part of this article's agenda to attempt a rounded evaluation of this program and its conceptions; the subject deserves a more serious post-mortem than is possible here. I am interested at this point in the light the experiment throws on the anti-Establishmentarian revolutionism of the new-radicals. I think the outcome has confirmed that "the poor" are not organizable *as the poor* in any stable fashion.

As Negroes, as peasants or sharecroppers, as workers, even as unemployed workers, particular groups of poor people have a positive social relationship in common. As the "poor," they have only a lack in common—lack of money—and no social movement can be held together by a no-thing. The organization of workers *qua* workers already implies an elementary social program which imposes itself on the organization even if its leaders have never heard of Marxism, socialism or even trade-unionism; it has its own social logic. But the organization of the poor *qua* poor implies no social program that can hold a movement together; what is implied is being acted out by the Poverty Program. The community in which the slum-dwellers live—the slum—does not provide

a framework for socializing resentments and aspirations such as is provided by the integrating life of the factory; it atomizes. The theory was that a social force was going to be forged outside the Establishment, but the reality was that SDS organizers found themselves engaged in "sewer-socialism," Salvation Army-type uplift, missionary work to the benighted, etc.

The ideology of "community unions" is often associated with conscious rejection of another type of grassroots constituency: organized workers. Many of the new-radicals have been thoroughly imbued with the image, fostered by both the academy and Madison Avenue, of the labor movement as one monolithic, undifferentiated Fat-Cat Establishment, of no interest to radicals. They think of organized workers solely in terms of their leadership—i.e., they find themselves thinking just as bureaucratically as the leaders they reject. The concept of grassroots work which exists in the revolutionary socialist tradition—of entering the factories, organized or unorganized, as rank-and-file workers, and organizing and educating inside and outside of the union on a shop basis—is a concept which is entirely alien to the new-radicals.

Moreover, there is a disturbing relationship between two class attitudes which crop up frequently in SDS discussions. On the one hand, SDS is a very middle-class-conscious movement. On the other hand, these self-consciously middle-class elements think of themselves as "going to the people," by which they mean, going to the *unorganized* slum-proles and poor, but not to the organized workers. The analogy—only an analogy—that imposes itself on me is that of Mao Tse-tung's elite party deciding to bypass the city proletariat in favor of going to the peasants—who, precisely in the Marxist view which Mao is supposed to accept, constitute a class historically susceptible to being led *from outside and above* but incapable of effective political self-organization. For the Marxists this was a reason for orienting toward the city proletariat; for the bureaucratic-collectivists, this is a reason for orienting toward that class of the poor who can be ridden most easily. When I read, in one SDS community worker's discussion article, a reference to the "poor" as our "clientele," I experienced the shock of recognition.

*Pace:* the SDS worries about nothing so much as the dangers of the relationship I have just described; but the new-radicals think the danger is a matter of style and awareness. I am arguing that it is built into the ideology of "organizing the poor."

The attempt to find a course *outside the Establishment but not in collision with the Establishment* has not been successful. A question-mark is placed over a conception that has become popular among new-radicals and verges on becoming an ideological tenet: the notion of parallel or dual-power institutions as the road to revolutionary social

change. According to this idea, you do not have to come into a headlong collision with the existing institutions of the Establishment; you create your own independent dual institution, and build its power up to the point where it can eventually simply supplant the other. (Once again, you do not march against the Establishment, you go off at right angles.) As was always the case with the early 19th century utopian schemes which aimed to create the Dual World on the largest scale, the outcome is and has to be elitist and anti-democratic in practice—as when a self-styled “Congress of Unrepresented People” is conceived of as actually representing the people of the United States.

At this point one is duty-bound to launch into a discussion of “participatory democracy,” the SDS’s most successful phrase. My difficulty is that I do not have the least idea what it means. I was confused enough when I heard it meant rejection of representative democracy, or else a “consensus” form of meeting (one of the most inherently anti-democratic devices I know, by the way). Things were worse when Staughton Lynd explained in *Dissent* that it means the dual-power institution idea, among other things. When I found out from Sid Lens, in *Liberation*, that “participative democracy” exists under Castro, Nasser and maybe even Sukarno *more* than in the U.S., and that it does not necessarily entail free elections, I decided to go back to old-fashioned democratic democracy. I mean the “old-leftist” conception of socialist democracy in which the criterion is the degree to which people *participate* personally and unconstrainedly, from the bottom up, in political and social decision-making and in the immediate appointing and firing of decision-makers, through free organizations, assemblies, elections, trade unions, demonstrations and hell-raising.

In sum: in spite of the implicitly revolutionary significance of the new-radicals’ anti-Establishmentarianism, they have so far not developed into a genuinely revolutionary tendency—not into a new kind of revolutionary tendency and not into an old one. The movement has been blurred by its unresolved need to maintain bridges to the coalitionist lib-lab wing of “mainstream” politics.\* It has been blurred by its effort to avoid a collision course; by its flights into the fantasy world of dual-power institutions. *So far*: the story is not over.

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\* The article by Dick Flacks which we quoted previously puts the same thought honorifically: “the main thrust of the organization [SDS] has been, must and should be toward the organization of grassroots constituencies capable of exercising power independent of the establishment. But it has also been characteristic of the organization that we have been able to maintain this position, implement this strategy, and advocate a radical program while maintaining some relationship of dialogue with establishment-oriented liberal organizations and individuals—i.e., we have wanted to stay relevant to the main politics of the nation and participate in them, even as we engage in radical organization.” Or, in other words, we would like to eat our revolution and have it too.



THE LIBERAL/SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC attack on the new-radicals, which is most competently represented by Irving Howe's denunciation, may be powered by the politics of permeation and coalitionism, but it pays more attention to another issue: pro-Communism or anti-anti-Communism.

The middle section of Howe's article, entitled "Ideologues and Desperadoes," would seem, at least at first reading, to describe whom he means by the new-radicals. It presents cogent polemics against the following political types and no others: (1) The "remains of Stalinism," comprising the Communist Party, *National Guardian* supporters, and CP dropouts who still function on behalf of the party's "heritage." (2) "On the far left . . . a scatter of groups," not specified, who still believe in "Marxism-Leninism." (3) "Authoritarian leftists . . . like Isaac Deutscher and Paul Sweezy" who are "the true intellectual progenitors of at least part of the 'new leftism'" (and who are, of course, pro-Soviet or Maoist). (4) Black nationalists from Malcolm X and the Muslims to Leroi Jones, including kamikaze Negro militants resembling "the late 19th century Russian terrorists." (5) Another category of "white desperadoes" of whom we are told only that one of their "central battlecries" is "alienation," and that "in effect" Howe has "already described this group" in the previous points.

Now what is the relation of these political types to the subject of the article, the new-radicals? Are these the new-radicals? or most of them? Howe doesn't say so, and it would be risky to accuse him of believing it, since the first three categories are obviously "old-leftist," and black nationalism à la Malcolm, Muslims or Jones is not too common among the new-radicals. Also there are phrases tucked into the article which, properly interpreted, may mean that it is all about "a segment" of new-leftists—in which case one is never told who represents the body—and there is also a section which says flatly that "The 'new leftists' feel little attachment to Russia. . . ."

No, there is no linkage made between this section and the subject of the article: it is just there. Howe could just as well have similarly included a section on narcotics, pornography, juvenile delinquency, bad modern poetry, anarchosyndicalism, Zen-existentialism, and other ideologies and desperations, as long as he remained equally discreet in relating them to the new-radicals. It reminds me of nothing so much as the sometime method used by Clark Kerr of asserting that there were some Maoists and Castroites in the FSM—an irrefutable fact—and innocently allowing the public to infer that the FSM's complexion was thus described.

With enemies like Howe, do the pro-Communists need any friends—to evoke sympathy from new-leftists?

It is the odor of decayed radicalism which gives its characteristic effluvium to the anti-Communist pitches of men like Howe, Sidney Hook, Tom Kahn, Bob Pickus, et al. Literally since they learned to read, the radical students have been reading and hearing anti-Communist harangues from their elders, from all quarters. They may have discovered the very existence of terms like Communism and anti-Communism only in the midst of the McCarthyite period. They grew up understanding anti-Communism and witchhunting to be synonyms, like other good Americans. Many of them (or most of them) may never even have met an anti-Communist who was not also a witchhunter or an apologist of some sort for the ongoing system. This is the Standard American pattern, and the pattern itself does not change if one puts a minus sign in front of it, instead of the majority's plus sign.

The new-radicals, therefore, first found Communism to be the bogey not only of the reactionaries but also of the Establishment liberals, and finally found anti-Communism to be an overshadowing preoccupation also of a whole generation of decayed radicals, "old-leftists" of a certain type. They thereby acquire a conditioned-reflex response to the phrases of anti-Communism, including all the true ones, since they find these phrases only in association with apologies for peaceful coexistence with the status quo.

Secondly: these new-radicals (I am assuming they are under thirty and were not politically conscious before the beginning of the Cold War) have never known the Communists except as enemies—or rather targets and victims—of the Establishment authorities. In this respect, for example, I am painfully conscious of the enormous gap between my own experience and theirs. Except for the tag-end of the Stalinist "Third Period" on which I came in (1932–34), but certainly from 1935 on, my own generation of revolutionary socialists learned to know the Communists as the worst anti-militant finks in the field. This was during the Popular Front period of the latter '30s when the Communists were busily "holding out the hand of friendship" to the NAM and denouncing Norman Thomas as a sectarian Trotskyite and ultra-left adventurist. At this time the student movement of the '30s was gutted and turned into a pink-tea party. (For the theory and practice of permeation and coalitionism, there is no worked-out course comparable to the writings of Earl Browder; they could be, and maybe are, a textbook for Harrington today.) The Hitler-Stalin Pact interlude, brief as it was, did not change this much since the new-found "militancy" was too transparent after Molotov announced that fascism was "a matter of taste." Then for the rest of the Second World War, the Communist Party went all-out as a

counter-insurgency corps in the labor movement, Negro movement and elsewhere, more vicious than the FBI, and as a witchhunting organization of considerable punitive power in comparison with which the present saurian-minded HUAC is a lollypop. The current identification of Communists with "far left" is nothing but a Cold War cliché.

But this is now history; and the new-radicals are Standard American enough to be indifferent to the historical view, which is inseparable from a theoretical and ideological view. History is the voice of somebody older preaching at them (a new version of the famous Ford aphorism that "History is bunk"). They prefer to make their own mistakes; that is, they prefer to repeat the mistakes of primitive radicals in the past (as they must, since they don't know what they were and don't want to find out) under the impression this course is new.

Then there is another conditioning influence: since 1953 (when our present new-radicals were teen-agers) the Standard American press, punditry and professoriat have made it an article of faith that the Soviet regime is in the process of "liberalizing," in fact converging toward our own Way of Life. If Clark Kerr can write a book with this thesis, it cannot be too monstrous for new-radicals to absorb the same outlook with a somewhat different emphasis.

Still another influence: Since the end of the war and the beginning of the irrepressible wave of national-liberation revolutions all over the world, the Standard American version (this time with a right-wing rather than a liberal cast) has been that these revolutions have mostly been controlled, tainted or permeated by the Communists. (Where U.S. interests were deeply embroiled, even liberals went for this, as in the case of Guatemala, where social-democratic liberals like Robert Alexander and ex-Stalinist liberals like Max Lerner accepted the "anti-Communist" justification for the American-sponsored overthrow of the Arbenz regime.) As with our other cases, this identification spreads its poison both ways. For the Standard-Americans, this *taints* the liberation revolutions with Communism; for the Standard-Americans-turned-inside-out, it ennobles Communism with the glory of the liberation movements. Where the leadership of national-liberation movements *really* goes Communist or Communist-dominated, as in the case of the Vietcong or Castroism, the issue of Communism is then far overshadowed by the clear proofs of U.S. policy that it is intent on repressing national freedom in the name of anti-Communism, and not on defeating Communism for the sake of national freedom.

For all of these reasons, it is not easy for a *non-ideological* radical to perform the far-from-simple feat of combining enmity to the American Establishment with enmity to the enemy-of-this-enemy. How unreasonable it is to expect that this stance can be facilely taken can be seen by

remembering the experience of the Second World War, when, finding themselves allied with the Russian regime, major magazines and newspapers, leading Hollywood dream-mongers and sober politicians glorified Stalin and his happy democracy in terms that would be printed today in the *Worker* only with embarrassment, and in comparison with which some of the queasiest new-left statements are principled documents.

But only in comparison. For all the reasons given here and perhaps some others, there is a very strong tendency among the new-radicals to “cop out” on the question of Communism. This tendency was written down most bluntly—and crudely—in a recent joint statement by Tom Hayden and Staughton Lynd in *Studies on the Left*:

... we refuse to be anti-communist. We insist that the term has lost all the specific content it once had. Instead it serves as the key category of abstract thought which Americans use to justify a foreign policy that often is no more sophisticated than rape. It also serves as a deterrent to building an open movement for change in this country, because organizations that refuse to be anti-communist must fight bitterly for funds and allies. Our feeling is that the anti-communist organizations, such as the trade unions, are far less democratic than the organizations, such as SNCC and SDS, which refuse to be anti-communist. We have confidence that movements can be built which are too strong to be “used;” the anti-communists do not have that confidence.

It would be instructive to analyze these five reasons for anti-anti-Communism in detail, but we do not have the space for this exercise. Briefly, what stands out in this statement, *from the viewpoint of new-radicals*, is that it is extraordinarily immoral and intellectually non-responsive.

Three short years ago, the Port Huron Statement on which SDS was founded included a section on “Anti-Communism” which vigorously attacked the role of the “unreasoning anti-communism” which permeates America and “even many liberals and socialists,” “takes on the character of paranoia,” perverts democracy, etc. Clearly it did not mince words in rejecting this anti-Communism. At the same time, it found it possible to state its *own* view on Communism, right in this context:

As democrats we are in basic opposition to the communist system. The Soviet Union, as a system, rests on the total suppression of organized opposition, as well as a vision of the future in the name of which much human life has been sacrificed, and numerous small and large denials of human dignity rationalized. The Communist Party has equated falsely the “triumph of true socialism” with centralized bureaucracy. The Soviet state lacks independent labor organizations and other liberties we consider basic. And despite certain reforms, the system remains almost totally divorced from the image officially promulgated by the Party. Communist parties throughout the rest of the world are generally undemocratic in internal structure and mode of action. Moreover, in most cases they have subordinated radical programs to requirements of Soviet foreign policy. The communist movement has failed, in every sense, to achieve its stated intentions of leading a worldwide movement for human emancipation.

This passage did not say everything that should be said about Communism nor did it try to, but it was enough for the purpose. It stated

why *radicals* had to reject Communism in their own way, for their own reasons, and in the name of their own vision of a better society; that is, why they had to be anti-Communist. Has this statement “lost all the specific content it once had”? Is it the “term” that has lost this content, or is it rather Hayden and Lynd who have lost something? What is now wrong with the *content* of this passage?

When this rejection of Communism appeared in the context of the Port Huron Statement's attack on American anti-Communism, did it serve to justify a foreign policy no more sophisticated than rape? Was SDS less democratic then than it is now because of it?

Hayden and Lynd's field of vision includes only one fact: the use of anti-Communist tirades as a weapon against America's cold-war rival. But in every war and in every pre-war propaganda barrage, the Establishment always tries to pose as the defender of Good and the enemy of Evil; and there usually is an Evil around to serve the purpose. In the First World War, it was Prussian militarism and Kaiserism, which was a reality: did the Haydens and Lynds of 1917 proclaim indignantly that they refused to be anti-militarist because a hypocritical government was using anti-militarism to justify rape? (On the contrary, Gene Debs went to prison for his anti-war activity while proclaiming quite accurately that he was far more hostile to Prussian militarism than Morgan's government ever could be, and solidarized himself with the revolutionary German enemies of Prussianism like Karl Liebknecht.)

There was a peace movement in America in 1939–40 too, which faced the fact that the government was heading into the Second World War under the slogan of anti-fascism. Should it have announced that it refused to be anti-fascist or take a stand on Hitlerism, on the ground that anti-Nazism had no content other than pro-war propaganda? There was indeed one tendency which did take this line, represented most prominently by the Lindberghs; and Mrs. Lindbergh's book *The Wave of the Future* launched this notorious phrase on its career. It is not true that she was pro-fascist; she merely argued for anti-anti-fascism.

On the other side of the cold war, there are people in Russia who are hostile to their own Establishment, let's say among the students who listen to Yevtushenko's poetry readings. They hear all about capitalism as the whipping boy of their own propagandists. Should they decide that anti-capitalism has “lost all specific content” for *them* because it has been turned into a cuss-word by their own government?

It is an old story: Hayden and Lynd see anti-Communism solely in terms decided by the Establishment; they accept the same frame of reference and put a different sign in front of it. It is the Establishment's ideology they are working with; and isn't this inevitable as long as they eschew a consciously thought-out one of their own? The vacuum is going to be filled, one way or the other.

Their anti-anti-Communism is immoral because it asserts indifference to the fate of oppressed peoples in one third of the world. One of the greatest humanistic traditions of the world's radical movements has always been their ready responsiveness to injustice anywhere. American revolutionists eagerly solidarized themselves with Irish revolutionaries and anti-Tsarist conspirators, and in return there were demonstrations in a dozen foreign countries against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. Today one of the most remarkable of the arguments heard in some new-radical circles is the one which says that, since we are Americans, we must concern ourselves *only* with what is wrong with America. This is chauvinism turned inside-out. Fortunately, no one really believes in this despicable principle—when it comes to demonstrating against *apartheid* in South Africa, or against suppression of student demonstrations in Franco Spain, etc. (Presumably, however, if the U.S. were at sword's-points with the South African government, the anti-*apartheid* position would lose all of its specific content . . .)

The Port Huron Statement also had this remark, in the section on "Anti-Communism":

It would seem reasonable to expect that in America the basic issues of the Cold War should be rationally and fully debated, between persons of every opinion . . . It would seem, too, that there should be a way for a person or an organization to oppose communism *without* contributing to the common fear of associations and public actions. But these things do not happen; instead there is finger-pointing and comical debate about the most serious of issues.

It is indisputable that rational debate on the basic issues of the Cold War is infrequent in this country, but it should be possible for radicals. Therefore (the Port Huron Statement is saying) this is added reason for the SDS to make its own "conscious, determined, though difficult, efforts in this direction." Very good; and "there should be a way for a person or an organization to oppose communism *without* contributing" either to the Cold War or the witchhunt.

On one side of the coin is the paranoid view that Communism is a great danger in the U.S. today. Turn it over and on the other side is the Hayden-Lynd position: that to state a principled democratic stand in criticism of Communism, in proper context and proper proportion, is to condone rape.

The only alluring thing about the Hayden-Lynd theory is its convenience. It is useful if one is to coexist happily with the pro-Soviet and pro-Communist elements of various kinds who are to be found in new-radical circles. Since 1962 the SDS has lived in a state of uneasy balance, one component of which was the LID presence. The principles of political mechanics tell us that, once the counterweight of the LID is removed from the scene, there is going to be a swing in the center of equilibrium.



"We have confidence," says Hayden and Lynd, that our movement can be built "too strong to be 'used' " by the Communists. But it is not a matter of either confidence or strength, but of politics. I suspect that the proclaimed confidence is based on the same conception of "conspiratorial Communist infiltration" as forms the theoretical equipment of HUAC or the FBI. (Once again the non-ideological vacuum is filled by the Establishment.) Hayden and Lynd do not want to be "used"; but what do they think is a manifestation of being "used"? Do they imagine that the devilish Communists—if the SDS were not "too strong"—would have them passing manifestos for a Soviet America or sending greetings to the various Communist world fronts? Many of the real Communist fronts—I mean the ones that Hayden and Lynd know to be fronts as well as I—are not doing that either; they are content to swing energetically into all attacks on American policy while remaining stonily silent about the other side. They are, so to speak, masquerading as anti-anti-Communists. There is no great point to be made simply by "exposing" them. It is the *politics* of the position—whether genuine or fake—which has to be dealt with. Except from the conspiracy-theory slant of the HUAC-FBI mind, there is no great difference between the crypto-Communist who makes like a non-ideological radical, and the non-ideological radical who has developed his own rationale for behaving like a crypto-Communist. *Politics is primary.*

THE GENERAL PATTERN OF WHAT IS HAPPENING can be expressed in the following schema: *There is a break in the continuity of the radical tradition; the socialist movements waste away; there is no handing on of the torch. But that does not mean the end of the impulsion to revolutionary change. After the interval, radicalism sends its shoots up again, from the seed. It is new, green, inexperienced, unknowledgeable, immature, even bumbling, and exists in a welter of question-marks and confusion. In other words, it is a new beginning. Some shoots spring up and die out; others live and flourish and give rise to the new movement at last. But the new movement is not a reduplication of the one that existed before the hiatus: it works out new forms, new phrases, new activities, even maybe new theories, which eventually merge with the old ones and change them and are changed. . . .*

All this has happened before, dozens of times. A new-radicalism is one of the oldest phenomena in the history of the movement. In England there were the discontinuities that followed the growth of British reaction to the French Revolution, that followed the decline of Chartism, and the defeat of the 1848 revolutions on the Continent. In France there was the political desert that followed the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune. In America there was notably the sharp break in the fortunes of socialism made by the First World War and its aftermath.



But like everything else that has happened before, it always happens in a new way. It is far from true that the new-radicalisms always represented progress in the movement; more typically, they crystallized at some distance back, and painfully made their way to levels previously attained, albeit in new ways. All the "old-leftism" around now is the end-result, in the sere and yellow leaf, of a series of "new radicalisms."

But there is no other way. Rosa Luxemburg once said that it is the fate of all revolutionary efforts to fail—except the last. (It seems almost tautological when you speak of what is involved.) In the same sense, it is inevitable that all generations of radicals will fail—except the last, of course, which is not yet. The pole-vaulter either clears the bar or he fails; his last successful vault is built on nothing but the failures. So there can be no doubt that "my generation" of radicals failed—like all the others. That in itself is not at all enlightening. The usefulness of the experience comes only when it is studied, so that *new* ideas are generated.

The present new-radicalism is extreme in its self-inflicted cut-off from the past, from the lessons of experience, from its own history. It suffers from a morbid fear of repeating the old. This is a gangrenous weakness—not because the old holds the Answers, but because it is only in a study and critique of the old that fruitful *new* ways can eventually be found.

The new-radicals have in their mind's-eye an image of the "old-leftist" as a graybearded fuddyduddy sternly rebuking them for departing from the hallowed ways of their ancestors. These caricatures do actually exist in life, and they truly deserve no attention. Any old radical who thinks that an American socialist movement can be reborn simply by resolutely picking up where he came in, by going back to business at the old stand, is dreaming senile dreams. The problem is *how* to work out the new.

The question-mark over the current crop of new-radicals is not whether or not they have the Answers now—they haven't, and they know it; it is not whether they now have the capacity to work out the new answers—they haven't yet, and I don't think they have any illusions about this. The question-mark is whether the course they are on is fitting them to do this job, or disabling them. That is why it is crucial that, after getting over the Ideological Hang-up, they now get over the Non-Ideological Hang-up, which has been sterilizing them. It would be the end of the road if, after rejecting the enervating coalitionism of the liberal/social-democrats, they get hung up on the musty neo-stalinism of the various theoreticians of "totalitarian socialism."

The failure of the older generation of radicals is epitomized in that it offers the new-radicals only these two popular models, viz. the apologists for Western capitalism, or the apologists for the new bureaucratic-collectivist Establishments. In short, it offers only one or the other

side of the Cold War, which enmeshes the varieties of radicalism like everything else. I am far from predicting that this present wave of new-radicals will be able to unravel its way out of this entrapment. But the help they need from older radicals is not simply a scolding but a demonstration of a revolutionary democratic politics—one which is a revolutionary alternative to the apologists for the one camp and a democratic alternative to the apologists for the other.

HAL DRAPER is on the Editorial Board of *New Politics*; chairman of *The Independent Socialist Committee*; and author of *Berkeley: The New Student Revolt*.

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# Pacifists in Battle

David McReynolds

IN THE LATE fifties and early sixties the firm control that pacifists had of the peace movement was shaken loose by the "Ban the Bomb" movement. Suddenly, we had SANE, the Student Peace Union, Women Strike for Peace. A large number of people, a few of them former "progressives" of one kind or another, a handful of them Republicans, but the vast majority either totally non-ideological housewives or anti-ideological and pragmatic liberals, came together to fight for an end to nuclear testing. It was a movement which was basically respectable, hostile to any talk of social, economic or political change aside from banning the bomb, and which tended to treat pacifism as an extremist left wing impeding serious work for peace.

This broader movement simply opposed the multilateral insanity of all the great powers—including Russia, as well as the United States. It faltered and, in part, collapsed following the Test Ban Treaty and Kennedy's winning gamble on ultimate brinkmanship during the 1962 Cuba crisis.

Today, a new movement is emerging—and I do not simply refer to the "New Left," which I will discuss later. The Vietnam war has produced an incredible range of ad hoc committees of doctors, lawyers, artists, school teachers, etc. This "Vietnam peace movement," unlike its "Ban the Bomb" predecessors, is much more inclined to make sharp attacks on the United States and demand domestic social and economic changes necessary for a new foreign policy. This is a peace movement which is being "radicalized" by the daily news of U.S. atrocities in Vietnam, and—as in Berkeley—is prepared for such dramatic actions against the government as the attempt to block troop trains. No one group controls it. The Communists are in it but do not make policy or guide actions.

This is a movement which tends to look upon the pacifists as somewhat conservative. It is difficult to keep track of this mushrooming and multi-facted movement, with its plethora of mimeographed bulletins coming from a hundred separate and independent local committees. But it is growing clear that within it are reflected a number of the political conflicts taking place today in the pacifist movement. I shall deal in this article with the political disputes in the pacifist movement since it is the one with which I am best acquainted as an active participant. While mentioning the personalities involved is unavoidable, that is not my concern. I am concerned with the political disputes and the conflicting political approaches current among pacifists.

IN THE MAY ISSUE of *Liberation*, Dave Dellinger wrote an editorial (and it is important to note that his piece was an editorial—not an article) in which two associate editors of the magazine—Bayard Rustin and Robert Pickus—were sharply criticized. In the June/July issue, Staughton Lynd, an associate editor, drove home Dellinger's point by virtually reading Bayard Rustin out of the pacifist movement, accusing him of being in a coalition with the U.S. Marines. In the same issue, Robert Pickus had an article which countered