



The end of ideology

Daniel Bell ¹

İdealist felsefenin evrimci entelektüellerine göre (örneğin Max Weber) endüstriyel kapitalizmle birlikte kültür ve gelenekler ve geleneksel değerler dönüşüme, değişime uğramaya başladı. Kapitalizm, bürokratik devletin yükselmesiyle birlikte, artan bir şekilde toplum ve insan etkinliklerini rasyonelleştirdi ve gelenekleri, görenekleri, dini inanış ve pratikleri değil tekniksel etkenlikte insan davranışını kendine ölçü olarak aldı. Sosyal yaşamın ve siyasal gücün laikleşmesi "ideolojilerin" çıkması ve yayılmasının koşullarını yarattı. Bu çerçevede, "ideolojiler" öncelikle harekete geçirme ve meşrulaştırma fonksiyonlarına sahip laik inanç sistemleri olarak anlaşıldı. 18. yüzyılın sonu ve on dokuzuncu yüzyılın başları bu anlamda "ideolojiler çağı" olarak, işaretlendi: Fransız ve Amerika devrimleri, sosyalizm, komünizm, liberalizm, tutuculuk, milliyetçilik gibi siyasal doktrinlerin veya "izmlerin" yaygınlaşması gibi... Bu "izm"lerin yayılmasında artan gazete endüstrisinin ve okuma yazmanın belli bir etkisi olmuştur. İletişim araçlarının etkisi bazen büyük ölçüde abartılmış, bazen de "kaç kişi okuyazardı ki, kim okuyor veya okuyabiliyordu" savıyla yapılan incelemelerle büyük ölçüde küçümsenmiştir.

Bazı bilim adamları, ABD'de İkinci Dünya Savaşından sonraki ekonomik gelişmenin sağladığı refaha bakarak, endüstriyel toplumun son bulduğu ve yerini hizmet sektörü ağırlıklı bolluk içindeki, ideolojilerin son bulduğu post-endüstriyel toplumun aldığı tezini sunmuşlardır.

"İdeolojinin sonu" tezi yeni bir fikir değil: orijinal olarak bazı tanınmış liberal ve tutucu aydınlar, örneğin hepsi de 1950'lerde yazılmış olan Raymond Aron'un *Entelektüellerin Afyonu*, Daniel Bell'in *İdeolojilerin Sonu*, Seymour M. Lipset'in sınıf mücadelesinin gerilediği ve "kızıl bayraksız" ve ideolojisiz mücadeleye dönüştüğü savunulmuştur. Özgün şekliyle, bu iddiaya göre, ikinci Dünya savaşından sonra radikal ve devrimci doktrinler gelişmiş endüstriyel

¹ [Http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/bell-chap13.html](http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/bell-chap13.html)

toplumlarda gerilemeye başladı, ikna-edici gücünü yitirdi. İdeolojiler sadece varolan sosyal ve siyasal örgütlerden memnun olmayan entelektüeller tarafından tutulmaktadır. örneğin, Gouldner'a göre, elektronik iletişim araçlarının gelişmesi modern toplumlarda ideolojinin rolünün gerilemesini işaretler. İdeoloji gittikçe toplumda yerini kaybetmekte ve bilinç artan bir şekilde elektronik araçların ürünleri tarafından biçimlendirilmektedir. İdeoloji artan bir şekilde sınırlı üniversite alanında entelektüeller tarafından tutulmaktadır. "İdeolojik siyaset" ve Marxist ve komünist sosyal değişim arama gelişmiş ülkelerde yerini pragmatizme bırakmaktadır. Bu aydınlar ideolojilerin az gelişmiş ülkelerde devam edeceğini, bu durumun sadece gelişmiş endüstri toplumlarında olduğunu savunmuşlardır.

İdeolojinin sonunu ilan edenler "ideoloji" dediklerinde herhangi bir laik inanç sistemlerinde bahsetmiyorlardı. Bahsettikleri gerçekte Marxizmdi. Dolayısıyla, ideolojinin sonu gerçekte Marxizmin sonu anlamındadır. İdeolojiyi sadece siyasal bir doktrinle, siyasal inanç, tutum ve siyasal sembolik sistemle sınırlamakla dikkatimiz günlük yaşamın çeşitli durumları içinde egemenliğin kurulması, tutulması ve sürdürülmesinden uzağa çekilir. Bu şekilde ideoloji dar bir çerçeve içine sıkıştırılır.

Bell'in homojen ve bütünlük postendüstriyel toplum görüşü 60'ların ve yetmişlerin mücadeleleri, başkaldırıları, sosyal ve ekonomik krizlerle dolu gerçeğinde çöküntüye uğradı. Fakat küreselleşmeyle ve homojenlikten çok farklılıkların olduğu anlayışının güç kazanmasıyla birlikte, post endüstriyel görüş homojenlik fikrini terk edip Huntington ve benzerlerinin elinde "kırılmalar, çökmeler, kesintiler" fikrine dönüştü. 1980 ve 1990'lara gelindiğinde, eski kalkınma ve değişim fikirleri bu görüşle yeni-kılıflara büründürüldü; globallikle ideolojik ve sınıf mücadelesinin son bulduğu, evrensellik içinde "karşılıklı bağımlılık" geldiği belirtildi. Aslında, küresel ideolojinin "karşılıklı bağımlılığı" küresel pazarda sömürenlerle sömürülenler arasındaki "karşılıklı bağımlılıktır." Bu bağımlılıkta sömürenin sömürülene bağımlılığı, yaşamsal önem ve değer taşır. Sömürülenin sömürene bağımlılığı ise, yaşam koşulları elinden alınmış insanların bağımlılığıdır.

İdeolojinin sonunu ilan etmek için, akılcılığın, mantığın ve düşüncenin sonunu ilan etmek gerek. Çünkü ideoloji (a) belli karakterler taşıyan düşünce demektir, (b) belli karakterler taşıyan düşünce sistemi demektir, (c) düşünce-bilim, yani düşünce ve düşüncenin materyal ve soyut doğası üzerinde kuramsal açıklama, demektir. Dolayısıyla, "ideolojinin sonu" olamaz, olabilmesi için düşünen insanın kendisi, dışı ve hiçbir ilişki hakkında

düşünmemesi gerekir. Kendini “düşünüyorum o halde varım” diye tanımlayan insanın ideolojisi olduğu gibi, ideolojim yok, “yiyor, içiyor, kullanıyor, tüketiyorum, o halde varım” diyen insanın da ideolojisi vardır. “Hürriyet gazetesinin ideolojisi yok” diyenler ya aptalca ve geri-zekalıca ya da D. Bell gibi akıllıca bir küresel pazar ideolojisinin sözcülüğünü yapmaktadır.

Chapter 13: The mood of three generations

It is difficult for me to know if I am, or am not, of the "young generation." I came to political awareness in the Depression and joined the Young People's Socialist League in 1932, at the precocious age of thirteen. At the age of fifteen I was writing resolutions on the "road to power." At C.C.N.Y., in the late thirties, I was already a veteran of many factional wars. Since graduating, in 1938, I have worked for twenty years, half my life, as a writer or teacher -- a respectable period, yet whenever biographical details are printed, I am, almost inescapably, referred to as a young American sociologist, or a young American writer. And so are others of my generation of the same age or slightly older. To take some random examples: Harvey Swados, now thirty-nine, is still called a promising "young" writer although he has published three novels; Richard Hofstadter, who, at the age of forty-two, has published four first-rate historical interpretations, is called a young American scholar; James Wechsler, over forty, a young editor; Saul Bellow, over forty, a young American novelist; Leslie Fiedler, aged forty-three, a young American critic; Alfred Kazin, aged forty-four, a young American critic, etc., etc.

Two generations ago, a man of forty would not have been considered young. The Founding Fathers of the American Republic were largely in their thirties when the country was formed; so, too, were the leaders of the Russian Revolution. But this is an older man's world, and in the lengthening of the "shadow line" a damper is put on the younger generations.

But, beyond the general change in the tone of the culture, there is a more specific reason why the college generation of "the thirties" has been, until now, at bay. This is because those who dominated "the thirties" were young themselves when they became established, and, until recently, have held major sway in the culture. *Partisan Review*, for example, is twenty-three years old, yet its editors, William Phillips and Philip Rahv, are not "old" men (say, fifty, give or take a year). Our intellectual nesters--Lionel Trilling, Sidney Hook, Edmund Wilson, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Dos Passos, Newton Arvin,

F.W. Dupee, James T. Farrell, Richard Wright, Max Lerner, Elliott Cohen--were in their late twenties and early thirties when they made their mark as a new generation. The reason why there has been no revolt against them, as they, in asserting a radical politics, had ousted their elders, is that they led their own "counter-revolt." They had both Iliad and Odyssey, were iconistic and iconoclastic. They were intense, oratory, naive, simplistic, and passionate, but, after the Moscow Trials and the Soviet-Nazi pact, disenchanted and reflective; and from them and their experiences we have inherited the key terms which dominate discourse today: irony, paradox, ambiguity, and complexity. Curiously, though they--and we--are sadder and perhaps wiser than the first political generations of the century, we are not better or greater. There are few figures today, or of the last twenty years, and few books, that can match the stature and work of Dewey, Beard, Holmes, Veblen, Brandeis. But to read these men today is to be struck by their essential optimism (even Veblen: read his *Engineers and the Price System*, and its technocratic vision of the future), which was based upon an ultimate faith in the rationality or common sense of men. Ours, a "twice-born" generation, finds its wisdom in pessimism, evil, tragedy, and despair. So we are both old and young "before our time."

The remarkable fact about the recent post-college generation, as one of its spokesmen, Norman Podhoretz, has pointed out, is its sober, matter-of-fact, "mature" acceptance of the complexities of politics and existence; but also, as he concludes, an underlying restlessness, a feeling of being cheated out of adventure, and a search for passion. There is a hankering for the misspent life that was never misspent. (But, I suspect, there has been, along with the strong emphasis on estheticism, homosexuality, and the like, a greater sub-rosa exploration of the decadent than Mr. Podhoretz admits.) And, among the more serious-minded, a longing for "a cause to believe in," although the self-conscious awareness of the desire for "a cause" itself is self-defeating.

Yet no generation can be denied an experience, even a negative one. Previously sane periods have seen such efflorescences as the "Yellow Book estheticism" of England in the nineties, or the mysticism and debauchery of Russian intellectuals (cf. Artzybesheff's *Sanine*) in the 1910's. In England today, in Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* or John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, we have the flowering of what Christopher Sykes has called "redbrickism, provincialism, and all this belly-aching"--meaning a revolt against the cultural inbreeding of Oxford and Cambridge, and the grayness of the Welfare State.

What will happen in the United States is difficult to foresee, for all expressions of revolt, whether it be Zen, or abstract expressionism, or Jungianism, or progressive jazz, quickly become modish and fiat. In the Christian trials of conversion (i.e., a genuine experience that transformed one's life) one had to be lost to be saved. Today, experiences are transposed from the moral to the psychological level, and to become "ecstatic" (literally, "ex-stasis," or outside one's self) one has to "let go" completely. But consciousness of self has become so inbred that even an impulse to "let go" becomes self-conscious; and so there is, almost, an infinite regress.

But the problem for the generation is less, as Mr. Podhoretz says, the "fear of experience" than an inability to define an "enemy." One can have causes and passions only when one knows against whom to fight. The writers of the twenties -- Dadaist, Menckonian, and nihilist--scorned bourgeois mores. The radicals of the thirties fought "capitalism," and later, fascism, and for some, Stalinism. Today, intellectually, emotionally, who is the enemy that one can fight? The paradox is that the generation wants to live a "heroic" life but finds the image truly "quixotic." This is, as for Cervantes' Don, the end of an age. For the younger generation, as for all intellectuals, there is this impasse. It is part of the time which has seen the end of ideology.

The ideologist--Communist, existentialist, religionist-- wants to live at some extreme, and criticizes the ordinary man for failing to live at the level of grandeur. One can try to do so if there is the genuine possibility that the next moment could be actually, a "transforming moment" when salvation or revolution or genuine passion could be achieved. But such chiliastic moments are illusions. And what is left is the unheroic, day-to-day routine of living.

Max Weber, more than forty years ago, in a poignant essay entitled "Politics as a Vocation," posed the problem as one of accepting the "ethics of responsibility" or the "ethics of ultimate ends." For the latter--the "true believer" all sacrifices, all means, are acceptable for the achievement of one's belief. But for those who take on responsibility, who forgo the sin of pride, of assuming they know how life should be ordered or how the blueprint of the new society should read, one's role can be only to reject all absolutes and accept pragmatic compromise.

The loss of innocence in the thirties

For A Small Group, the thirties have a special meaning. These are the individuals who went through the radical movement and who bear, as on

invisible frontlets, the stamp of those years on their foreheads. The number is small. Of the four million college and high-school youths, less than twenty thousand, or one-half of one per cent, took part in radical activity. But, like the drop of dye that suffuses the cloth, this number gave the decade its coloration.

A radical is a prodigal son. For him, the world is a strange place whose contours have to be explored according to one's destiny. He may eventually return to the house of his elders, but the return is by choice, and not, as of those who stayed behind, of unblinking filial obedience. A resilient society, like a wise parent, understands this ritual, and, in meeting the challenge to tradition, grows.

But in the thirties, the fissures were too deep. Seemingly, there was no home to return to. One could only march forward. Everybody seemed to be tramping, tramping, tramping. Marching, Marching was the title of a prize-winning proletarian novel. There were parades, picketing, protests, farm holidays, and even a general strike in San Francisco. There was also a new man, the Communist. Not just the radical--always alien, always testing, yet open in his aims -- but a hidden soldier in a war against society.

In a few short years, the excitement evaporated. The labor movement grew fat and bureaucratized. The political intellectuals became absorbed into the New Deal. The papier-mache proletarian novelists went on to become Hollywood hacks. And yet it is only by understanding the fate of the prodigal sons and the Communists that one can understand the loss of innocence that is America's distinctive experience of the thirties.

Murray Kempton, in his book *Part of Our Time*, has looked at the small band who dreamed, and who--because of having a dream "possessed no more of doubting"--sought to impress that dream into action. But in action, one defies one's character. In some, the iron became brittle, in some it became hard; others cast the iron away, and still others were crushed. In the end, almost all had lost the dream and the world was only doubt.

The story opens, naturally enough, with Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers. Kempton retells the familiar story, but with a special nuance. What united the strange pair was their symbiotic relation to Baltimore, a mildewed city which was Kempton's home and whose musty character he captures so well. Hiss, from a shabby, genteel Baltimore family, fled its faded elegance to meet Chambers, the tortured man from the underground, who settled gratefully into its Victorian dust. Each found, in the secret craving of the

other, the lives they were rejecting, until, locked in defeat, they both sank beneath the waters.

The story spreads out and touches on the writers attracted by the myth of the revolutionary collective, the "rebel girls," the militant labor leaders, the youth movement, and others who were riding the crest of history's waves. It is not a formal history of the left, but a series of novellas. What gives it its special cast and enormous appeal is the elegiac mood, the touch of adolescent ache in the writing.

A descendant of an old Southern family, James Murray Mason Ambler Kempton carries many bloodlines in his full name. In the thirties, he was, briefly, a college Communist, went to sea, became a Socialist, and, fleeing the deracinated talk of New York intellectuals, enlisted and found a community, for a while, in the fighting platoons of New Guinea. Like all utopian moments, this communion had vitality only in memory, rather than enduring reality, and Kempton returned to New York, where, for the past six years, as a widely read columnist of the New York Post, he has been another Brunn the iconoclast.

There are no villains in the book--none so wholly black that some degree of pity does not remain--only the pathos of those who, by living a lie, became consumed by it: John Howard Lawson, whose nervous Processional promised a new style in the American theater, but who, as a Hollywood commissar, played at revolution by smuggling lines of "progressive dialogue" into banal movies; Lee Pressman, the taut, brilliant labor lawyer, who chose Henry Wallace and the Progressives over Phil Murray and the C.I.O., and found, too late, that he had made the wrong choice; Ann Moos Remington, the prototype of the "rebel girl," who would only marry ardent William Remington if he would join the Young Communist League, but later, as his ex-wife, testified against him in a perjury trial.

There are heroes, for, unlike many disenchanted, Kempton has some--that radical breed, who, though patronized by the later "realists" who equated revolution with tough-mindedness, retained their kindness and idealism: James T. Farrell, an unpolished novelist, perhaps, but one whose bullheaded grasp of truth sent him rampaging against the Communist writer fronts; Gardener Jackson, who organized the Sacco-Vanzetti defense but ran afoul of the Communist amoralists; Mary Heaton Vorse, who wrote of labor not as an abstract collective but as individuals; Edmund Wilson, whose canon of criticism kept him on an inviolate path of honesty.

There are many others: the incredible J.B. Matthews, a political Reverend Davidson, who, having slept with the red Sadie Thompsons, got lascivious contrition in exposing them; John Dos Passos, who found the Communist manipulations too frightening for his anarchist impulses and turned Republican; Joe Curran, who in going from park bench to labor leader became trapped by the dilemmas of responsibility and was forced to sweep aside his old rebel cohorts; the Reuther boys, uncomplicated by bohemian trappings, who soberly have sought to install a sense of social discipline in America. And many others--the middle-class Vassar girls, the boy who died in Spain, the Negroes who rebuffed the Communists and obtained a new dignity. Like Malcolm Cowley's *Exile's Return* or Vincent Sheean's *Personal History*, Kempton's book is the story of a generation, and if it sometimes lacks the personal element of those accounts of the twenties, it has a sweep and power fired by the ache for the lost Arcadia.

In the end, the generation failed. Not because the idealistic impulses became exhausted; this is the inevitable trajectory, perhaps, of any radical generation. Not because events had belied the predictions, this is a healthier America. But because this may well have been the last radical generation for a time--the last because it was the first that tasted power and became corrupt. (Yet it is not only that power corrupts, for, as Alex Comfort once said, corrupt men seek power.) But the seed of the corruption was the hubris of the "possessed." Generous of impulse, it sought the end of injustice, but in the single vision the dogmatism grew hard and the moral sense cynical, so that, when reality proved the vision false, all that was left was the hardness, or the despair.

Politics in the forties

Dwight MacDonald made his political debut in 1937 by writing a five-page letter to the *New Republic* protesting Malcolm Cowley's pusillanimous review of the official transcripts of the Moscow trials; after considerable haggling, the *New Republic* printed one-third of the letter. Earlier, he had formed an exclusive club at Phillips Exeter Academy under the revolutionary motto of *Pour Epater les Bourgeois*. ...

In 1944, Macdonald rounded his monthly, later quarterly, periodical, *Politics*, an extraordinary achievement in personal journalism. In 1949, exhausted by these efforts, Macdonald surrendered *Politics* and politics, and turned to the more genteel pastures of the *New Yorker*.

Macdonald is a journalist-burn-intellectual, not a social scientist or a philosopher. The intellectual takes as a starting point his self and relates the world to his own sensibilities; the scientist accepts an existing field of knowledge and seeks to map out the unexplored terrain. The impulse of the journalist is to be novel, yet to relate his curiosities to the urgencies of the moment; the philosopher seeks what he conceives to be true, regardless of the moment. The changing nature of experience, thus, always seduces the intellectual. That is why Macdonald, temperamentally, is not really interested in ideas but in moral posture, and his is a constant search for inconstant verities.

These impulses, plus a remarkable devotion to his craft, did lead him for a moment to a unique place in American intellectual history. For when we come to look more closely at the forties, as our curiosities are now turned to the earlier decades, we may see that *Politics* was the only magazine that was aware of and insistently kept calling attention to, changes that were taking place in moral temper, the depths of which we still incompletely realize.

The singular theme of *Politics* was the event of depersonalization: the denigration of the individual through the impersonality of killing; the role of terror and extreme situations; how things happen to people and people became "things," the turning of society into a mechanism. The theme of depersonalization has now been made abstract and objectified, almost a literary commodity, by existentialism, Tillich's theology, and the popular sociology of the mass society. But in *Politics* it was there, palpable, in concrete detail, and illustrated in the ways in which individuals lost their humanness.

The best essays in the book, unfortunately only a fifth of the total, are those written during the war, when Macdonald, with his remarkable eye for significant detail, illuminated the psychology of killing, the pathetic attempts to expiate guilt, the mock bravado of war. Perhaps the most extraordinary article that *Politics* ever published was the abridgement of Bruno Bettelheim's account, from the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, of "Behavior in Extreme Situations." The sense of fear that it evoked arose not from the descriptions of sadism in the concentration camps, but from the horrifying awareness that a victim, out of the deep, infantile, regressive aspects in one's own nature, would willingly take on the hideous mask, stance, and code of the brutes. Whatever we have heard subsequently about confessions,

brainwashing, and the like, hardly matched the awesome revelation of those first disclosures.

Macdonald was more sensitive to these concerns because, as a pacifist, he was more alive to and horrified by these changes than those who justified the war; he was also influenced by Nicola Chiaromonte and other refugees who had had first-hand contact with these sickening events.

Yet, more fundamentally, this awareness derived from a singular innocence about politics. One of the accusations that Ortega y Gasset brought against liberalism, as Mrs. Judith Shklar reminds us in her interesting book *After Utopia*, is that it forgot the violence inherent in politics. Ortega's indictment derived from the liberal's inability to understand the "fierce nature of the State," which, owing to the Hobbesian need to maintain order, must rule by threat against all. (And it followed for Ortega that all political activity was degrading, especially for the intellectual, whose vocation--the desire for truth--brought him into opposition to the politician, with his need for expediency, compromise, and myths.) Macdonald's fall from innocence came in the horrifying realization that violence--and the drive for domination--was a craving in man, and, following Hannah Arendt, that modern society had become a bureaucratized apparatus for periodically, and necessarily, evoking and suppressing such violence. And since the indictment of innocence could be leveled against radicalism as well, politics--and Politics--had to come to an end.

There remains the difficult question--far beyond the scope of this essay--of how true such a theory is. These political images are conceptions that derive from "heroic" and ultimately romantic images of life and man's place in it. To see politics on the more mundane, and civil, level of reconciling diverse interests may be naive. But this has been the British experience and, McCarthy apart, that of America, too. We do not live "at extremes" (and when we do, as in popular culture, this represents vicarious violence, not real experience, and is perhaps a useful displacement). That is why, perhaps, we have avoided some of the extreme ideological conflicts that wrecked Europe.

Apart from the apathy of the fat fifties, one reason, perhaps, why Politics could not last is that it drew from alien experiences. Is the fabric of American life strong enough to resist such rents as occurred in Europe? Did the war really leave us unmarked? It is the merit of Dwight Macdonald's *Memoirs* that he forces us once again to confront such desperate questions.

Dissent in the fifties

Dissent is one of the few cultural periodicals in the United States avowing socialist politics and radical in its criticism of contemporary culture. It is, like *Universities* and *Left Review* in England and *Arguments* in France, at odds with the doctrinaire interpretation of orthodox Marxism, and at one with the search for a new socialist humanism. But in important respects the differences are greater than the similarities. *Universities* and *Left Review* arose out of the ferment in the Communist world following the Khrushchev admissions that the Stalin regime had criminally murdered thousands of innocent Communists. *Arguments'* came into being after the 1956 events in Poland and Hungary, and, in its intense philosophical absorption, reflects the revisionist discussions that have taken place in Eastern Europe. *Dissent*, five years older than the other two, was rounded largely by individuals who had left the Trotskyite movement a few years before (the "class of 1950"), and who were long schooled in the doctrinal debates of Marxist exegetics.

The difference in origin accounts for the differences in tone and content. The first two are products of the fifties, cut off from the past by the war and the tales of their tired elders; the latter is an echo of the thirties, repeating, in mournful anger, the concerns and debates of the past. *Universities* and *Left Review* and *Arguments* represent a new generation with all the earnestness and questing freshness of the young; *Dissent* is a magazine of the epigone, the after-born, jejune, and weary. *Universities* and *Left Review* and *Arguments* are intense, frenetic, naive, bursting out with a new sense of autodidact wonder about theoretical issues that had been wrangled over by the Left twenty years before; *Dissent* is querulous, scornful, magisterial, sectarian, yet infinitely more sophisticated.

These differences in style caricature, as extreme statements are wont to do, the gulf between European and American radicalism. It is not only that America has become an affluent society, offering place (in the universities and in the publishing houses) and prestige (if not in the society as a whole, certainly in the universities and the publishing houses) to the onetime radicals--and it is interesting to note that the two chief editors of *Dissent*, Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, are university professors--but American radicalism had, intellectually, long ago disposed of the very questions that rack the serious European Left today. It is that fact--as well as the one that American society, through the modifications introduced by Roosevelt and

Truman, belied Marxist predictions of "fascism and collapse"--which explains much of the difference in intellectual atmosphere between the two continents.

This is a seeming paradox. Europe, in legend, has always been the home of subtle philosophical discussion; America was the land of grubby pragmatism. Questions laid to rest in Europe found their reincarnation (an old quip had it) twenty years later in the United States. Whatever the truth of the remark once, the reverse is true today. Take any of the questions that in the last five years have preoccupied Sartre and Camus in France, Wolfgang Harich in East Germany, Kolakowski in Poland--the questions of ends and means, of class truth, the meaningfulness of dialectic materialism as a scientific construct, the definition of a workers' State, party democracy, the nature of bureaucracy, the relationship of literature to propaganda, the mixed economy--and you will find that these were thrashed out more than twenty years ago by Sidney Hook, Ernest Nagel, Lewis Corey, Edmund Wilson, Philip Rahv, John Dewey, and dozens of others in the pages of *Partisan Review*, the *New International*, and the *New Leader*. It is not that these men had greater theoretical acumen than Marxists in Europe, many of whom, individually (most notably Ignazio Silone, in *Bread and Wine*), had explored these same problems. But while in Europe only a small number of intellectuals left the Communist orbit before the war, in the United States almost the entire group of serious intellectuals who had been attracted to Marxism had broken with the Communist party by 1940. Thus, as an intellectual problem, Bolshevism disappeared from the American scene almost twenty years ago.

The sociological reasons for these differences in behavior are varied. Being 3,000 miles from Europe, the American radicals were not caught up in the immediate political struggles of fascism--and the possibility of having to become refugees-- so there was less reason to suppress the political doubts which had been fired by the Moscow Trials and the Nazi-Soviet Pact. In the United States, moreover, the Communist party never had a large following in the labor movement, so there was no emotional force the party could use to hold the intellectuals. ...

As a result of such flee-spiritedness, the basic political drift of the former Left intelligentsia in the United States in the forties and fifties has been anti-ideological--that is to say, skeptical of the rationalistic claim that socialism, by eliminating the economic basis of exploitation, would solve all social questions; and to a great extent this anti-rationalism is the source of the

intellectual vogue of Freudianism and neo-orthodox theology (i.e., Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich), with their anti-rational stoicism. Moreover, the American intellectuals found new virtues in the United States because of its pluralism, the acceptance of the Welfare State, the spread of education, and the expanding opportunities for intellectual employment. And, in the growing Cold War, they accepted the fact that Soviet Russia was the principal threat to freedom in the world today. These political attitudes were reflected largely in the pages of *Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, and the *New Leader*, the three magazines, and the writers grouped around them, that originally made up the core of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. On the academic level, these re-evaluations called into question the populist basis of American radicalism and argued that the political conflicts of the fifties, such as McCarthyism, were more fruitfully explained by sociological concepts such as "status anxiety" than by the more conventional notions of class or interest group conflicts. The changes in intellectual temper can be seen in Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*, Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform*, Edward Shils' *The Torment of Secrecy*, and the various essays on "McCarthyism" in *The New American Right*, edited by this writer.

It was in this context of the breakup of the old Left, and in reaction to these re-evaluations, that *Dissent* arose. Its targets were those who were calling the old radical clichés into question, and the internal debate was carried on, as it has usually been in the United States, in that large, exotic cauldron that is the New York intellectual world. While *Dissent* talked of the conformism of American society, and the need for "new ideas," there was little path-breaking thought on radicalism. "What Shall We Do?" asks one of the editors, Lewis Coser, in a programmatic essay. "Above all, it would seem to me," says editor Coser, the radical "must be concerned with maintaining, encouraging, fostering the growth of the species 'radical.' If it becomes extinct, our culture will inevitably ossify from want of challenge." But challenge to what? Radical about what? *Dissent* attacked *Partisan Review* and *Commentary* for not being radical. But, other than attacking these magazines, there was little in *Dissent* itself that was new; it never exemplified what it meant by radicalism; and it has not been able, especially in politics, to propose anything.