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The New Left and the Counter-Culture

When I first attempted to write this article, students and friends in jail, Nixon in Cambodia, and shootings at Kent created a context in which I could get nowhere. My own non-revolutionary progressivism, one foot in both worlds, was called into deep question. The books seem, even now, to do the same thing — to appeal to my moral sense, my knowledge of social evil, my recognition that moderation has failed—and demand that I move.

I am still not ready to abandon my rôle in the straight world; but after working through these books I find more human substance, less destructive and manipulative threat, in the radical movement than my prejudices allowed for. The radicals show more coherence than I had granted them, and more responsibility and capacity to survive. I hope to convey some sense of how I reached that conclusion.

A liberal reader can approach the radical scene with Walt Anderson's *The Age of Protest*, an uneven collection of essays, but, on the whole, a good introduction. It begins with Paul Goodman's "Causerie at the Military-Industrial," which is still perhaps the best summary of the gap between our social system and our social problems. His thesis is that the only people with the technical competence to handle the difficult issues of war, pollution, poverty, urbanization, are dependent on the very institutions which create those problems and are therefore incapable of dealing with them. The presentation of this argument gains a lot of dramatic force from the fact that

Goodman's original audience was a conference of the National Security Industrial Association on the theme, "Research and Development in the 1970's" — his audience is composed of the very people he condemns, and young war protesters are pounding on the doors as he speaks.

Most of us start our view of the radical scene with a single issue, usually the Viet Nam war. We are also concerned about racism, poverty, pollution, but all separately, as single issues. Anderson's collection,

The Age of Protest, edited by Walt Anderson. Goodyear. \$4.95.

The Making of a Counter-Culture, by Theodore Roszak. Anchor. \$1.95 paper.

The New Left: A Collection of Essays, edited by Priscilla Long. Porter Sargent. \$6.

The Making of an Un-American, A Dialogue with Experience, by Paul Cowan. Viking. \$6.95.

An Essay on Liberation, by Herbert Marcuse. Beacon. \$1.95 paper.

Do It!, by Jerry Rubin. Simon and Schuster. \$2.45 paper.

indeed, is organized on the apparent assumption that these are separate problems. Goodman's argument, for me, at least, destroys this assumption by taking up each issue in turn, and showing that they all interrelate, and that the same social forces feed and perpetuate them and frustrate our attempts to cope with them.

This sense that the popular moral issues are interrelated in a general

social pathology is developed further through the sections of the book on integration and black power. We move from King and the boycott, through the Washington march, Selma, and the 1964 Civil Rights bill, to the core of the issue in Stokely Carmichael's "What We Want." Carmichael develops the concept of Black Power in terms of self-determination, including self-defense, and attacks the contradictions of patronizing white liberalism; we see here again that the problems are systemic. What is at stake is economic and political power — black people's power over their own lives, vs. white people's power to control even the black man's liberation. Carmichael exposes the arrogance, the protection of economic interest, the insensitivity to human suffering which pervade white society, and the way in which we put the whole burden of proof on the black man to justify his claim to humanity. The same value system and power system that Goodman attacks operates here, the same system that perpetuates the war in the name of peace.

Father Groppi's article, "The Place of the Priest," contributes further to this theme. The problem of housing segregation in a northern city is presented quickly but graphically. The march, the attacks of counter-demonstrators, the hostile police, the tear gas, the National Guard, the arrests, are becoming part of the American tradition. In Selma and Milwaukee, Chicago and Kent, there seems to have developed a ritual, the symbols of which are given diametrically-opposite values by conflicting groups

— a ritual which tragically reenacts our unreconciled divisions, but which offers no catharsis, no chorus to speak its meaning for us all, no sanctuary before which we consent to leave our weapons and unite at the altar. In this ritual of confrontation Father Groppi exercises his priesthood; the evil against which it is pitted is that same establishment indicted by Goodman and defied by Carmichael. The saving community and saving truth, however, are not yet in sight; are we then condemned to an endless, unhealing repetition of the sacrifices?

Except for this one essay, the section on religion deals chiefly with movements for change within the Catholic Church; this is an interesting theme, but doesn't much advance anyone's understanding of our general crisis. Other sections of the book are also weak. Jack Lind's exposure of the shallowness of the Sexual Freedom League does not really illuminate current reevaluations of marriage, of homosexuality, and of "pornography;" an important family of issues is thus neglected. The section on the universities give some narrative material on Berkeley and Columbia, but it doesn't include any incisive analysis of the root issues. Theodore Roszak, in discussing "the complacencies of the academy," does score some useful points on the artificiality of the "non-political" university. But Roszak is too academic in his critique of academicism, too detached in his objections to detachment, as though he didn't dare believe his own ideas. And he scarcely touches on the University as a corporate social institution.

The discussion of the war is also disappointing. Andrew Kopkind's account of "The Trial of Captain Levy," the dermatologist who refused to train Special Forces medical aidmen to handle skin ailments in Viet Nam, is a good study in the development of one man's opposition to the war, and of the reactions he provokes; but no more general or comprehensive indictments are included. In view of the centrality of the war in the protest scene, this is a serious gap.

The book concludes with a mixed bag of essays on the psychology of protest; I will comment on only two. Abraham Maslow treats the whole phenomenon of protest in terms of his theory of individual self-realization, with scarcely a reference to real social problems. Kenneth Keniston, on the other hand, discusses "The Sources of Student Dissent" with that combination of psychological objectivity and a sense of the reality of people which distinguishes all his work.

Keniston rejects the notion that student protest is essentially a product of psychopathology; he finds, on the contrary, that activist students tend to be more secure, more flexible, more intelligent, and academically more successful than the generality of students. They tend to come from more affluent, more liberal, and more intellectual families than other students. Keniston's studies and interviews indicate that positive commitment to the traditional values of the American creed (freedom, equality, justice) plays a larger role in motivating protest than does a negative sense of alienation from the society.

The culturally-alienated students, Keniston finds, tend not to be political activists; anti-war, anti-establishment, they are nonetheless so far from the main stream of political action that they find no hope in counter-action, either, and rely on personal non-conformism and intensified personal experience (through sex, drugs, aesthetic experiences of various kinds).

Keniston seems to conclude that the young radicals, in their optimism about the relevance of political action, are essentially a healthy, responsible group of people while the alienated youth of the "liberated" subculture, with their disaffection from the larger society and their involvement with drugs, are predominantly immature and inadequate people. As psychological description this may be true; as a cultural judgment, however, a case can be made for the contrary view, that the drop-outs are the realists, the activists self-deceptively naive.

In a sense this is Theodore Roszak's view in *The Making of a Counter-Culture*. The book has the same conventional academicism as his article in *The Age of Protest*, and its critical perceptiveness is uneven. But it contains quite a bit of good discussion of the intellectual and cultural elements of the movements. Roszak is a romantic anarchist, looking for a culture shaped by immediate relationships, valuing natural feeling over disinterested intellect, more sympathetic to magic than to science.

The book is best at its beginning, with a good chapter on "Technocracy's Children" — an analysis of the cultural sources of the alienation of the young. It shows various ways in which commercial, technocratic, depersonalizing, and manipulative values are at work in politics, in the media, in the schools. Comments on such phenomena as *Playboy's* sexism break no new ground, but Roszak gives us an intelligent account of how they converge with the draft, expanded higher education, and unfocused prosperity to generate in the young the potential for a counter-culture.

The counter-culture Roszak sees is personalistic, predominantly non-violent, and inclusive. New Left activism and "beat-hip bohemia" are contrasted, but in the framework of the claim that they are unified at bottom. Roszak sees this unity basically in cultural rather than political terms, and sees a general shift of the disaffiliated from an initial political activism to increasing focus on personality and community which he regards as progress toward a deeper relevance.

Does the anti-rationalism of all this carry a demonic potential for something like a neo-Nazi youth movement? Roszak is aware of a pathologically destructive strain in the counter-culture, but he denies that it exposes an essential dimension of the whole. He is probably right; but his arguments, that the rationality of the technocrats is destructivistic and that the Nazi horror was technologically sophisticated, are unconvincing. It is Rousseau updated, arguing once

again that evil comes from an excess of rational and institutional sophistication, and that salvation comes through return to feeling. But he who remembers Rousseau should remember Robespierre and the popular, emotional, primitive character of the Terror. If cultural romanticism does *not* lead to Terror, the case should be made better than Roszak has made it.

After the basic characterization of technocracy and counter-culture, Roszak presents four chapters of criticism of contemporary interpreters of our situation: Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse, Alan Ginsberg and Alan Watts, Timothy Leary (and the whole drug scene), and Paul Goodman.

The Brown-Marcuse discussion is central to the book, because the relation and contrast between Brown and Marcuse is central to our cultural crisis. Both develop their theories of culture on the basis of Freud's analysis of repression and sublimation as the foundation of civilization. Brown's *Life Against Death* regards repression, and hence civilization, as fundamentally destructive, and seeks liberation through the victory of the pleasure-principle over the reality-principle, in a polymorphously perverse life of direct gratification of instincts. Marcuse, however, holds in *Eros and Civilization* that the problem lies not with the reality-principle and repression as such, but with a particular cultural form of it. In any society, he says, repression of instinctual life is imposed not just by natural necessities, but by the demands of a certain social system; we must deny ourselves not just so we can survive, but so a specific system for survival will work — so the power-relationships and the priorities of a particular society are maintained. Marcuse calls this denial of pleasure for the sake of the society "surplus repression." The objective of social and cultural revolution is the liberation of instinct from surplus repression, while continuing to accept that minimal repression which is imposed by natural necessity. Thus, while Brown's thrust is toward cultural and individual liberation (all

politics is built on repression), Marcuse aims toward change in the structure of the society (surplus repression "is imposed by the social system").

From my own point of view these two approaches have to be held together. Taken alone, Marcusean revolutionary politics is dependent on a still-repressive, destructive consciousness, organized in terms of power, of abstract forces and counter-forces; it carries the well-known risk that a post-revolutionary society will be as repressive as its predecessors. Brown's Nietzschean-Dionysian evocation of instinct and passion has by itself no evident defense against being isolated and co-opted; its force spent in immediate experience, it lacks the drive and coherence to cope with the forces of repression, and they are able to turn it to their advantage.

Rozzak does not see the necessity of this sort of dialectical balance between the two views. He is all on the side of Brown; imagery, especially exotic, visionary imagery, has more appeal for him than politics. My objection is not that he likes Brown and uses him to expose the limits of Marcuse's view. The problem is his failure to see that it cuts equally the other way, that what is required is not to choose sides but to embrace both poles of the antithesis in quest of a synthesis.

Rozzak next considers Alan Watts and Alan Ginsberg. Watts is commended for introducing many Americans to Zen, but his preference for authentic Zen over imaginative and loose appropriations and combinations is too straight for Rozzak. Ginsberg's Jewish Zen Hinduism has the exotic, eclectic freedom Rozzak cherishes, and his contributions to broadening our cultural heritage and to liberating our imagination from straight-Western ruts are effectively discussed.

Watts also figures in the next chapter, where he and Huxley, as responsible investigators of psychedelic experience, are contrasted with Timothy Leary. Rozzak bitterly characterizes Leary as promoter of an irresponsible, escapist, self-deluded, destructive LSD cult. His conclusion

may be sound, but his argument is weak; indeed, the tone and content of his condemnation seem indistinguishable from the moralizing of straight society. I am also struck by a similarity between Brown's quest for ecstatic consciousness through liberation from repression and Leary's promise of mind expansion through acid; it seems to me that Rozzak's comments on the escapist character of the drug scene and its susceptibility to being co-opted and exploited would apply also to Brown, but Rozzak doesn't notice the parallel.

When Rozzak gets to his discussion of Paul Goodman's communitarian anarchism, his enthusiasm runs away with his criticism. Goodman's confidence in direct, natural communities and his distrust of formal institutions articulates a major theme of the counter-culture. And his, and Ginsberg's, open affirmation of homosexuality has contributed to the openness of the counter-cultural sexual ethic. But these themes are not developed. Rozzak seems to find in Goodman the necessary fusion of cultural and social (if not political) liberation to make possible the resolution of some of the internal tensions of the movement. But, having presented those tensions and having brought Goodman on stage as hero, he fails to show what Goodman has in fact achieved to justify the role.

Following these critical discussions, Rozzak presents a debunking of "the myth of objective consciousness" which is the weakest section of the book. He properly condemns the tired dogma that reality is merely a deterministic system of objects measurably interacting with each other. But he naively supposes this theory to be universally assumed in the scientific world, and that debunking it is enough to provide an adequate philosophy of science. Unwillingly, he becomes an illustration of C. P. Snow's thesis of the impoverishment of the humanities through ignorance of the sciences. There is no hint of the openness, curiosity, humility, and humanism which animate many scientists.

There is a legitimate target, though, for one aspect of Rozzak's

polemic. A long appendix to the book discusses dehumanizing and even sadistic components of some "scientific" research: vivisection, "value-free" operations analysis for the military, biological and chemical warfare research, and various sorts of behavioral-science inquiries which reduce human agony to percentages. This is not, as he supposes, "the scientific mind;" but it is a cultural reality which may be more widely influential than the spirit of humane scientific inquiry, and it is a sickness to be resisted.

Roszak concludes with an appeal to shamanistic, animistic, magical styles as alternative to this sick scientism. He offers a bit of amateur anthropology of American Indian cultures, asserts that only thus can we recover a spirit of wonder and an expression for the non-rational components of the personality, claims a greater political relevance for magic than for "grim militancy," and rests his case.

Thus the book has a lot of material, covers a lot of issues, opens a lot of ideas. It is marred by a conventional style complete with stodgy footnotery, and by a preference for adjectives rather than analysis as a means of making his points. But it lets the interesting problems and possibilities show through the shortcomings of the treatment, so it is well worth reading. Personalism, mysticism, romanticism, shamanism — these are the elements of a healthy counter-culture, according to Roszak. Recover the non-rational, recover the body, recover the earth. Marcuse's thesis that the resources for liberation must be derived from the technology of abundance, and Goodman's dilemma, that only the technocrats have the expertise required to solve the crises of technocracy, are not even discussed. Roszak contributes to the exploration of the possibility of a viable counter-culture, but he does not face the really hard problems.

Turning from cultural to political radicalism, we have in *The New Left*, a collection of essays edited by Priscilla Long, a wide variety of themes and quality, but a characteristic con-

cern with issues, organizations, social theories, political doctrines. There is scant humor or poetry in the book, but there is plenty of the dogged wordy sobriety that is characteristic of radical political writing today.

A good bit of the book has developed out of the history of the development of the Students for a Democratic Society, and the experiences of its people in working on various practical projects, theoretical issues, and models for the future. The conflicts between Marxists and anarchists, between centralized discipline and people's democracy, which have often divided the Left are clearly reflected. The writers are consistently on the side of non-violent action and a student-worker alliance, and in general favor the decentralized and anarchistic currents.

The book begins with a sketch by Staughton Lynd of a history of the New Left up to early 1969. He concludes, "The disunity of the white New Left is the more disturbing because of the danger of right wing oppression. . . . Like black radicals in 1965, white radicals in 1969 must find ways to cope with an oppression greater than they had supposed to exist." If he is right that pre-1969 white radicalism assumed the nation would not turn to overt repression, then the loss of that illusion has become a critical point for the movement.

Barbara Deming's pragmatic argument for non-violent radicalism, included in the book, does not depend on that illusion, but her warning that the non-violent must be prepared for counter-violence and casualties is more obviously relevant than it was when she wrote. By the same token, Noam Chomsky's argument against "seeking confrontation" seems to me to have become both more relevant and more convincing. Chomsky's point is that New Left theory holds that an effective political or community action which threatens established interests will perforce provoke repression. Confrontation should be *expected* as a consequence of effective action, but should not be its goal.

SDS's earlier attempts at direct action through community organiza-

tion have perhaps contributed more to New Left experience than to change in the communities, according to Richard Rothstein. He also observes that several axioms of the movement were either developed or confirmed by this experience: that the liberal-labor forces will not actively aid radical change, that community power structures resist changes from below even when those changes are rational, and that coalition between the white poor and the black poor is a long way off.

Hilary Putnam discusses another phase of the evolution of the New Left — the transition of some New England radicals from anti-war resistance to pursuit of a student-worker alliance. The argument rests on the classical Marxist theory about who the revolutionary class must be; but it does not rest on the kind of real experience out of which Rothstein writes. Putnam understands the issues of the campus and of the army; he cannot discuss alliance with the workers for more than a paragraph without lapsing back into what are primarily student issues. (This inability of the radicals to close the gap with the people their theory drives them toward is clearly recognized, but not overcome, by John McDermott in a brief piece in which he epitomizes the problem in his unsuccessful attempts to make his case to a soldier named Terry in the field in Viet Nam.)

New Left theory, in the area of labor issues, comes down strongly on the side of workers' control of industry, a theme which is touched on in several articles and is the main theme of two. Charles Denby, a black auto worker with a history of dissent both against management and against the UAW bureaucracy, has a good deal to say about the effects of automation on the life of the worker: time pressure, loneliness, job insecurity, a general sense of loss of freedom and control. Denby believes that control of production speed, division of labor, and other working conditions by the workers is the only recourse against these pressures. Paul Mattick approaches the issue of workers' control historically, examining

in this regard the experiences of the syndicalists, the Russian soviets of the 1905 revolution, the Bolsheviks, German socialists, and the Yugoslavian workers' councils of the Tito era. Though Denby does not discuss theory, Mattick specifically concludes that workers' control cannot be attained under capitalism, and he looks to its overthrow.

While Putnam, Denby, and Mattick discuss workers' control from a Marxist perspective, George Benello, and Paul and Percival Goodman, advocate it on basically anarchistic grounds. The Goodmans, in particular, make the point that factory conditions could (and should) be organized as human situations, and the intrinsic satisfactions for the workers made a major goal; this would require that the workers be given some opportunity to know the whole process of which they are a part, to move within the process, to relate to one another, and to find aesthetic value in what they are doing.

The Marxist-anarchist contrast is explicitly discussed by Howard Zinn, with a good grasp of the force of the Marxist critique of capitalism, and of the character and the dynamics of the Marxist utopia. But Zinn rejects the Marxist's centralist approach to revolution, and holds that the movement needs to embody in its present life and tactics the personalist, communal, democratic style expressed in its vision of the future.

This is the problem which occupies George Benello as well. He recognizes the movement's need for coordination and self-discipline, but he sees in any institutionalization the formation of an elite. From his anarchist perspective, the formation of elites, no matter what class populates them, creates alienation and oppression. Benello holds that social reorganization can be achieved on the basis of the primacy of the person, on participation, on coordination by information rather than by coercion. Even the complex problems of an industrial society, Benello believes, can be met on this participatory and personalistic basis.

Zinn's and Benello's idea of a communal movement, of a present em-

bodiment of the democratic and socialistic vision of the future, is a theme of a number of other articles. Barbara and Alan Haber are concerned about the danger of people losing radical identity and radical momentum when they leave the universities, and also about the necessity for greater communication so tentative theories and models can be revised through experience and mutual criticism. They believe both problems can be solved together, through development of communal living patterns, where resources and ideas are shared and strategies evaluated, and where committed people can find a base and support while working at a profession within the larger world. Michael Appleby, seeking means for effective radical action in an urban environment, adopts and expands on the Habers' model, envisioning a community of radicals locating in a city that is large enough to embody the main problems of the society but small enough to feel the political impact of the radical community.

Rick Margolies is interested in developing community socialism within the larger capitalist society not so much for survival as for active social change. His idea is not simply that radicals should constitute a commune for themselves, but that they should generate local community through dialogue with neighbors, through day-care centers, through mini-schools, a community center, a spirit of openness and sharing, gradually expanding toward a sort of urban *kibbutz* in which work and life are reintegrated.

An interesting pattern is developing here. New Left criticism of our social institutions is basically Marxist. But the Marxist strategy of a centralized revolution is rejected on the basically anarchist ground that institutionalism or centralism inherently breed oppression. And the utopian-socialist tradition of Owen, Fourier, and the *kibbutzim* is then invoked, not as an adequate conception of the end to be sought, but as the present form of the revolutionary movement, in place of the centralized structure of classical Communist parties. I suspect that in practice this

strategy, too, will require a radical openness to revision, and a radical readiness to endure repressive confrontation, if it is to have more success than its nineteenth century predecessors. At any rate, though, it is already a partial answer to those critics who charge the New Left with trying to destroy our society without any constructive ideas about what to put in its place.

A major part of the book which I have not yet discussed involves heavy analyses of social institutions and problems. These require some perseverance from the reader, and they can't be adequately evaluated without knowledge of history, sociology, and economics which I don't have. From an amateur point of view, Dave Gilbert on consumption as domestic imperialism, Richard Barnet on the national security bureaucracy, and Peter Irons on the rôle of family, school and state in a capitalist-imperialist system make most sense. The trouble, even with them, is that they require a pre-existing conviction of the truth of the Marxist critique of capitalism and imperialism as their framework; even partial skepticism about the framework leaves a reader unable to determine whether the specific criticisms, even where valid, merit the weight given them by the authors.

The two best single pieces in the book don't fit any category. "Journey to the Place," by Amy Cass (ten years old), is a story about children who did everything on schedule, and hated it, until they discovered a special door. Beyond it, there were rooms to get neat and pretty in, to break and spill and throw things in, to get toys without money, to learn when they wanted to, and to walk outdoors among flowers and animals and birds. No one was there but children, until a Mother discovered the door, and came in to tidy up. Before long, other mothers and a teacher followed, the learning room was restricted to a schedule, the mischief room was locked, and the children left.

Perhaps it is male chauvinism that has led me to leave until last Sue Munaker, Evelyn Goldfield, and

Naomi Weisstein's article, "A Woman is a Sometime Thing." But it is something else that leads me to say it is the best single article in the book, and the best presentation of what Women's Liberation is about that I have seen. Anyone who has formed his image of Women's Liberation from the mass media and the cartoonists, and thinks in terms of penis envy, lesbianism, anti-sexuality, or merely of classical feminism and equal opportunities for women in the world men have made, ought to read this article. The rôle-stereotypings, the put-downs, the condescensions dumped on women have the same kinds of unobtrusive universality we have come to recognize in racism. The authors see them as one more facet of the same sick system; Women's Liberation is a part of the whole general struggle against a dehumanizing and exploitive society.

Paul Cowan's *The Making of an Un-American* gives us a quite different approach to political radicalism, though not without points of contact. It is an account of Cowan's development from progressive liberalism to increasing radicalism, through his experience in and out of college, in the Mississippi Freedom Summer, in Peace Corps training, and in the Peace Corps itself in Guayaquil, up to the point where his assignment was prematurely terminated in the context of a controversy over a piece he wrote for the *Village Voice*.

The strongest and liveliest part of the book is the section dealing with Cowan's work as a community-organization worker for SNCC in Jackson, Mississippi, and his self-critical reflections on what it all meant. Here we see a man living through just that kind of attempt to put collegiate theory into community practice (with the experiences of irrelevance, failure, self-doubt, and renewal such attempts entail) which were more-impersonally discussed over and again in *The New Left*. The self-discovery of his own condescension, his need for self-justification, his preference for academic, middle-class styles and techniques over indigenous, popularly-based ones, which Cowan goes through is a process

with which many of us can identify and from which most of us can learn.

This discussion carries directly into a discussion of the politics of the 1964 Democratic Convention and especially the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Here Cowan is a useful supplement to Carmichael and Hamilton's account in *Black Power*; but his ugly tendency to condemn people who have not gained the same insights he has somewhat mars the telling. This tendency increases as the book progresses; it is to Cowan's credit that he is candid enough to let his reader see that he is a rather obnoxious person. Though he is not always so; there are moments of humility and sensitivity in any section of the book that offset the irritating quality.

The hostile and judgmental tone of some of the book works to best effect when Cowan is recounting his and his wife's experiences in Peace Corps training. Here is a microcosm of the social ills discussed so heavily in *The New Left*: nationalism, imperialism, racism, petty-bureaucratic repression, liberal rhetoric sold out in performance — they are all there in Albuquerque, at the training center. They persist in the field, in the administration of the Peace Corps in Ecuador, and in the attitudes of the Americans the Cowans worked with. But something disturbing seems to be happening, and Cowan doesn't acknowledge it.

The Cowans are unable to function in the futile rôle assigned them by the Corps. But they are also unable to devise viable alternatives. Nobody prevents them from developing modified roles, but they just don't seem to find any. And communication with the people, the key to their own conception of community action, doesn't work either. (In Juárez, where they got field experience during their training, they related well to the people among whom they lived; but not in Guayaquil.) I get the sense that the lesson of Vicksburg, of the inadequacy of imposed leadership and the necessity for identification with the people on their own terms, needed to be relearned on a deeper level, but that the slums of Guayaquil

were just too far from the world of the Cowans for them to achieve that identification.

This kind of failure, Cowan maintains (probably rightly), is characteristic of the Peace Corps. People who maintain distance and prejudice and carry out limited rôles (and people with specific technical functions and skills) may survive, but those who try to be really humanly and socially relevant necessarily fail, and guiltily blame themselves, and despair. In rejecting this guilty reaction, Cowan focuses the blame on the society that created these patronizing and false rôles. He becomes more bitter about America, about the Corps, about the people he is directly responsible to. His criticisms clearly are at least partly valid; but they don't have real force for his reader. When Cowan is becoming more radical through his experience in the United States, we can see the objective grounds for the change, and see in ourselves the same weaknesses he discovers. But in Guayaquil he increases the bitter and hostile tone of his judgments without giving us the insight into either Guayaquil or Cowan that would enable us to move with him. (In short, while the whole book is worth reading, the first half is much the better.)

Roszak offered an antipolitical counter-culture, in which personal, inward, aesthetic liberation is central, and non-rational social forms and rites, exotic, magical, anything but political, are the shape of the future. *The New Left* and Cowan show the deepening radicalism of the political revolutionaries, and their growing concern with communal forms of present society en route to the participatory socialist democracy of the future. On what ground, if any, do they meet?

Herbert Marcuse, in *An Essay on Liberation*, has addressed himself to this question. In *Eros and Civilization*, he had developed the idea of surplus repression and the possibility of a society of instinctual liberation. He there implied that political revolution, a change of power structure, was the means to get there (a solution Roszak, as we saw, finds to be

itself too manipulative and repressive). In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse confronts the problem, but in a way which gets us farther from a solution, for it is the theme of the book that the technocracy can manipulate demands and desires in such a way that men find their gratification in acceptance of domination and manipulation; their freedom is destroyed by exploitive gratification of their conditioned desires.

In *An Essay on Liberation*, Marcuse tries to show how liberation is possible even under these circumstances. He argues that negation, absurdity, obscenity, and disruption are crucial to the liberation process, because they enable men to imagine, to entertain the alternative. Aesthetic revolution in perception, disturbance of the predictability of life, evocation of feeling, sense-awareness, self-discovery, break the domination of the one-dimensional syndrome and create the possibility of liberation. Marcuse is here closer to Norman Brown than in the earlier book: the strategy of revolutionary politics and the vitalism of the counter-culture converge.

The students, the automated workers about whom Denby wrote, the white urban poor, the farm workers, unliberated women, and the mass of exploited peoples of the Third World, have an objective community of interest on which, Marcuse believes, the success of the revolution will be built. But that objective communality of interest is not subjectively recognized, and the revolution is not ripe. In the meantime, the liberation of the imagination, disruption of the active forces of violence, development of the spirit and reality of community and democracy within the movement, and a continuing quest for real grounds for achieving the solidarity of the oppressed constitute the strategy of liberation.

I think all these materials reflect a great deal more emergent substance in political and cultural radicalism than most people suspect. The counter-culture is developing its images and tradition, as we can see in Roszak. It is developing an ethic of toleration, of non-violence, of sharing, and a social ethic that insists

that the means must resemble the ends which justify them. It is solving the problem of a humane political agency for change, to the extent that the communal strategy succeeds. There is no utopia around the corner, and no general revolution. But there are elements of political and social and cultural creativity at work which give some hope that man will survive, if we live long enough.

In this framework, the Yippies are not trivial, but illustrate a central point. Jerry Rubin, in *Do It!*, shows a consistent awareness of the function of imagination, of symbol, of theater in the process of liberation. He has repented his one fling into electoral politics, epitomized in a two-page group picture of his friends after the election, each clad only in the words, "one vote." Such a reductionism is not for Jerry any more. Rather, he prefers the announcement of the grand plan to put LSD in the Chicago water supply, an obviously impossible as well as undesirable project, and letting Mayor Daley provide the comedy by his reaction. He prefers scattering money at the Stock Exchange and letting the traders on the floor react.

Rubin is not only obscene, theatrical, funny, surrealistic; he is disorganized, tedious and unoriginal. But the incongruities he creates and exposes are essential to what Marcuse so uncomically finds necessary — the creation of an imagination which can recognize absurdity, which can entertain alternatives, which ceases to take for granted the whole straight established system of values. Rubin will not inspire us with a vision of communes, of workers' control, of community organization. Others will do that. But Rubin's book contributes to the liberation of the imagination, and it vigorously maintains the conviction that life is fun.

In Defense of Nature, by John Hay. Little, Brown. \$4.95.

Direct experience with the world of nature is becoming a rare event for the majority of Americans. The reason is simple and frightening. The natural world, the world in which

man has evolved and successfully adapted, is being thoughtlessly destroyed at an unprecedented rate by an ever increasing number of people. In its place a new world is emerging, one that is artificial and man-made; a world unproven in terms of adequately providing for human need; an order that imposes new forms of stress upon man's being and that tests the limits of his genetic plasticity. The two worlds are growing apart. A decision must be made as to which of these worlds serves human need best. The choice cannot be avoided, for the two worlds are in conflict. The new regime is consuming the old—the old is irreplaceable. This is the theme of *In Defense of Nature*, a book urging man to inventory his needs and re-examine the contributions of the rapidly vanishing old order before casting it aside.

Hay's book is not the scientific, analytical treatment that one would expect from Lamont Cole, Hugh Illitis, Paul Ehrlich, Barry Commoner and other pioneers of environmental improvement. It is the elegant literary effort of a philosophic naturalist communicating the beauty of the New England countryside as it unfolds before him.

I go down to the town landing and look at the wide landscape of the shore, and I find scope again Take the local elements apart on an easy flowing day, with light winds and little clouds, expand them, and you know the vast, wind-driven frigidities north of us, graduating southward to tundra, birch, and spruce . . . Marine life of all kinds is synchronized to tides and currents, depths and temperature, the light, the salinity, the time of year. It acts on a given flow of opportunity in terms of each different range of land and sea, each form responding out of profound history.

All landscape contains the potential world.

Interwoven with these passages, Hay reveals his innermost sensitivities and concerns about nature and the meaning it brings into his life. His