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CHPATER FIFTEEN

A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left

VAN GOSSE

Historians and Reconstructions

To write the history of Cold War radicalism – of the New Left – is exciting and risky. The events, movements, organizations, crises, polemics, and persons involved are so near at hand that anger, nostalgia, and unresolved disputes hang over the historiography like a cloud.

In key respects, the successive narratives of "the Sixties" and the New Left resemble the historiography of the Civil War in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when many participants were still alive. At first, the sharp-eyed contemporary reporting of the war and Reconstruction was forgotten, as northern whites turned their back on the politics of racial equality. After a period of silence, scholarly histories appeared, offering a new consensus based in commonsense truths regarding black political incapacity, scalawag rapacity, and Reconstruction's disorder, which went unchallenged for decades among whites, and even many blacks. Eventually, however, radically different perspectives confronted that consensus.

The historiography of the New Left follows a parallel, if compressed, trajectory: extensive political journalism in the 1960s, followed by an exhausted pause during the 1970s, then a first wave of scholarship in the 1980s, offering a compelling, insistently tragic account of declension, which in turn provoked a proliferation of counternarratives in the 1990s. To capture this evolution, and because many of the earliest accounts retain a surprising utility, this essay will examine both scholarship from the post-New Left era and certain contemporary books.

To some, it may seem presumptuous to compare the New Left, posited here as the totality of the overlapping social movements for radical democracy and social justice in the post-1945 era, to the defining events in United States history – the Civil War and Reconstruction. But if one puts the black freedom struggle and the passage from First to Second Reconstructions at the narrative's center, the analogy becomes not only apt, but unavoidable, as Manning Marable (1991) and Maurice

Thanks to Max Elbaum, Jeffrey Escoffier, Eric Foner, and Lise Vogel for critical readings which greatly improved this essay.

Isserman and Michael Kazin (2000) have suggested in different ways. At a minimum, one can usefully compare the "unfinished" character attaching to two periods of greatly divisive, revolutionary social change that remained unacceptable to much of the body politic for generations after. It remains to be seen whether the New Left "failed" as a social revolution, a quarter of a century after the concluding events in its trajectory, given that most revolutionary movements fail in the short term, as they are overturned, betrayed, or made redundant.

This essay seeks answers to three major questions about the New Left: *what and who was it?* (which movements and organizations should be included); *when did it function?* (its beginning and ending); *what did it achieve?* As we shall see, the first and second questions are intimately related – by "starting" the New Left sooner rather than later, in the mid-1950s or earlier, one is compelled to include a much wider range of groups and constituencies. Similarly, by extending its history well into the 1970s, one must contend with new movements and trends, a challenge few scholars have met.

Conversely, if one defines the New Left through the personal memories and engaged scholarship of veterans, its history becomes compressed into the 1960s, and takes on the contours of a youth revolt, more specifically, the white student movement, especially the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). This briefer, contained New Left begins fortuitously in 1960 with the wave of southern sit-ins and the renaming of the Student League for Industrial Democracy as SDS, and concludes equally neatly in 1969–71 with that organization's self-destruction and the putative waning of anti-war protest. In effect, one has a self-reinforcing syllogism, whereby the New Left equals "the Sixties" in a literal sense, and political developments before or after are shoehorned into the silent Fifties or the hedonistic Seventies, leaving "the Sixties" alone, pure and isolated. That mass movements and cultural watersheds rarely conform to abstract chronological boundaries should not require underscoring; such is the power of old-fashioned narrative and the "presidential synthesis," since scholars who equate the New Left with the 1960s usually invoke John F. Kennedy's victory as heralding a new, youthful era – a prospect that escaped many then, given his manipulative centrism.

The distinction between a broader, larger, more diverse, and longer-lasting New Left, and one tightly defined by age, race, the moment, and a particular organizational identity, marks the central axis of historiographical argument. If one presumes a single, coherent New Left of white youth led by SDS, then other movements and struggles can be treated as influences, points of origin, schismatic developments, and after-effects. The campaigns, organizations, and mobilizations led by African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, women, gays and lesbians, poor people, prisoners, pacifists, anti-imperialists, and others are perforce something other than "the left." Traditional liberal historians (and some former New Leftists) claim one or another of these movements as dissenting species of liberalism that ultimately returned to the fold. Most recently, they are described as evidence of "identity politics," outside of and detrimental to the left. Of course, these struggles are not omitted from history itself, but they are either captured in isolation – a social movement here, a social movement there – or pushed to the margins and deprived of agency, portrayed as either precursors (the civil rights movement) or legatees (women's liberation) of the student New Left at the Sixties' center. This makes for a tidy, but profoundly limited, narrative.

The alternative to this privileged vision of a generationally based white New Left is necessarily much more provisional, as it encompasses "all of the above," and resists closure, or absolute clarity about where liberalism, or just particularism, leaves off and radicalism begins. The pluralist thesis of a "movement of movements," a framing once ubiquitous and since forgotten, requires investigating a constant efflorescence of sub-movements, temporary coalitions, breakaway factions, and organizational proliferation over several decades. It is wary of permanent demarcations between "old" and "new" lefts, since often the latter required the incorporation of the former, whether pacifist, religious, or Marxist. But accepting the challenge of making sense of this chaos, with its confusions, political contradictions, ideological richness, multiplicity of organizational forms, and great regional and local variety, will ultimately provide a more accurate view of that fractionated left that reemerged publicly in the later 1950s and was genuinely "new."

To clear the ground, we need a history of the various histories. This will take two forms. First, I describe the rise of the canonical narrative focused on SDS from the mid-1960s to late 1980s, indicating how one particular story moved to the foreground, pushing many others to the side. Second, I argue that an alternative account developed simultaneously, ceding the use of the term "new left," but demonstrating a more complete grasp of Cold War radicalism by examining varieties of political experience not limited to the campus, or by race, gender, or a particular ideological configuration – the exceptional scholarship on the civil rights movement, and to lesser extents on women's and gay liberation, the anti-Vietnam War movement, and Black, Brown, and Red Power. Finally, I discuss the major gaps in the historiography.

Whose New Left?

From its earliest days in the late 1950s, problems of subjectivity, self-definition, naming, and ambiguity about "newness" have surrounded the New Left. More than forty years ago, C. Wright Mills wrote his famous "Letter to a New Left" in the British *New Left Review*, adopting the self-identification of former English communists after Khrushchev's 1956 denunciation of Stalin. Mills hailed a new generation of international youth, unafraid to challenge orthodoxy and untainted by socialism's "labor metaphysic." Since then, the assertion of that newness has remained a rallying cry, a place to stand upon, to speak from, and, not infrequently, to denounce. Even those who adopt the elegiac pose, evoking the New Left as a dream stillborn, do so to damn contemporary varieties of political action (Gitlin, 1995; Tomasky, 1996).

The political cartography of the New Left, setting boundaries and defining frontiers, has three major phases.

During the 1960s, most writing about the "new radicalism" was inclusive and eclectic, defining it as a multiracial "movement of movements." All writers recognized how the black freedom movement catalyzed the reemergence of visible activism among students, women, white liberals, and other racial and ethnic groups (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Newfield, 1966; Long, 1969). Early documentary collections with "New Left" in their titles were highly pluralist, linking Herbert Marcuse and Stokely Carmichael, the anti-war movement and Freedom Riders, radical pacifism and Berkeley's Free Speech Movement (Long, 1969; Oglesby, 1969; Teodori, 1969).

Other than some tendentious sociology reflecting outrage at students' lack of deference (examined in Breines, 1989), there was little scholarship on the New Left

during the years of its rise and influence upon national politics. Among historians, one exception is a dissertation by James O'Brien (1971), which traced the revival of northern student activism through sympathy pickets of chainstores during the 1960 sit-ins that birthed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and a surge in disarmament activism via the Student Peace Union, all preceding SDS's development. Equally important was August Meier and Elliot Rudwick's (1975) dense organizational history of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), outstanding for its linking of grassroots activism against de facto Jim Crow in the North with the better-known southern mobilizations, demonstrating how "Black Power" grew up organically within civil rights organizing. In that same year, the political scientist Jo Freeman, a pioneer of women's liberation, published a still useful account of its genesis and rapid evolution. Otherwise, writings from this period that remain influential are theoretical and autobiographical. Three stand out: a powerful narrative of SNCC by its Executive Secretary James Forman (1972), and two books acerbically dissecting black nationalism and radicalism by Harold Cruse (1967, 1968), which remain highly influential for anyone seeking to unravel the rise of Black Power.

The early 1970s marked a major shift in the popular and then academic definitions of the New Left. The waning of the vast anti-war coalition that was its common ground, the emergence of new movements after 1968, increasingly sharp political differences between constituencies, the implosion of SDS in 1969–70, and the movement of many radicals into the Democratic Party via the McGovern campaign exploded the old understanding of a collective, pluralist New Left. Within a few years, that term came to mean only white student radicals – or even, just their self-conscious leadership in SDS.

This new understanding emerged with lasting impact in Kirkpatrick Sale's (1973) history of SDS. Working directly from its papers microfilmed in neat chronological order, Sale constructed a dramatic, coherent, and ultimately mythic narrative of ascension and declension compressing or eliding the history of many organizations into a single group. African Americans, the women's and anti-Vietnam War movements, Marxist organizations, seasoned "old left" and pacifist activists who actually led many coalitions and campaigns – all became external actors while subjectivity was granted to a select group of heroic youth. Key to the book's success was its "historical" style, as events and personalities evolved over time. In a larger sense, Sale's account succeeded precisely because of its embrace of "newness," with clean beginnings and endings, as specific individuals made personal choices, versus the methodology of historical scholarship emphasizing multiple origins, contradictions and continuities, the significance of larger impersonal or "overdetermined" processes constraining individual agency, and long-term causality rather than immediate effects.

Writing when the shibboleth of the silent, McCarthyized 1950s was universal, Sale had little to say about the complex roots of "new" leftism, which germinated long before SDS's halting emergence. Nor did he assay the New Left's practical political effects, then evident all around him in the flowering women's movement, the advent of black electoral power, thousands of young organizers in multiracial "party-building" formations, shifts to the left in US foreign policy, and much more. Instead, the reader follows a thrilling, hermetic account that foretells the 1970 self-immolation of Weatherman bombers in a New York townhouse, and casts that minor disaster as the nadir of a downward spiral – a tragic *finis* to what was finally

more of a romance than a history, yet one that spoke to many white radicals in the 1970s, because it made sense of their own lives, living in an unromantic time.

After Sale, little appeared for more than a decade, with two outstanding exceptions underlining for a new generation of activists and scholars how the New Left's axis was the black movement in the American South. Sara Evans's (1979) justly admired examination of how the women's liberation movement germinated in SNCC and SDS remains one of the few works focused on links between the segmented parts of the larger radical movement, tying black liberation to the young whites' radicalization, with SDS as a transmission belt. Clayborne Carson's (1981) model study of SNCC's evolution focused on its intensive organizing practice, and the complex ideological responses to its role in spurring the constitutional milestone embodied in the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. By reminding readers of how the arc of organizing that led up to and then out of the Mississippi Freedom Summer was the mainspring of 1960s radicalism, Carson and Evans established a touchstone. (Though more sociological than historical, Todd Gitlin's [1980] analysis of the distorting effects of media attention upon SDS, published at the same time, has remained highly influential.)

The next major historiographical phase came in the later 1980s, at the height of the Reagan Revolution. Three books by James Miller, Maurice Isserman, and Todd Gitlin (1987, all) expanded upon and reinforced Sale's prescription for a white student New Left defined by SDS. While offering valuable insights, each presumes the exceptional importance of that particular organization, in terms of its ideological insights, unrealized promise, and the belief that its 1969 disappearance heralded the "end" or "death" of the New Left. Collectively, these authors (aided by Tom Hayden's memoir, appearing the next year) established a new consensus, which reinforced powerful political currents defining the New Left's legacy as a severe hindrance to new progressive initiatives (Hayden, 1988; Edsall and Edsall, 1991; Gitlin, 1995; Tomasky, 1996; Sleeper, 1990).

Isserman's book has the greatest explanatory value, because it offers a nuanced excavation of seedbeds for the white New Left in 1945–60: the 1956–8 crisis of the Communist Party, when a majority declared its commitment to an American road to socialism, and then departed *en masse*; Shachtmanite Trotskyism advocating a "third camp" position between East and West; the powerful trend of direct-action pacifism dating from World War II, heralding how pacifists like A. J. Muste and Dave Dellinger would act as a center of gravity in the subsequent decade. After Isserman, no one could write as if the New Left emerged spontaneously as a literal break with the "Old." Though the influence of *Dissent* and similar anti-communist socialist projects is exaggerated, and the "death" of the communist (more accurately, Popular Front) left considerably overstated, it remains foundational.

On its own terms, Miller's history of SDS as an intellectual project to reestablish democratic radicalism in modern America is equally definitive. No one interested in that organization, with its talismanic significance for certain white radicals, can ignore it. As an organizational narrative of one important group, it is a model history, akin to Carson's work on SNCC, if ultimately different in that SDS achieved so much less. The problem is the claim, once again, to speak for all – the unblinking insistence that the New Left's definitive manifesto and birth-moment is the 1962 Port Huron Statement, and that the New Left as a whole flamed out in the "siege of Chicago" at the 1968 Democratic Convention and the October 1969 Days of Rage.

This claim to primacy has unfortunate consequences. Though his narrative is replete with examples of how SDS responded to and attempted to emulate the formidable organizing practice of SNCC and the larger, southern-based "human rights movement," Miller never draws the appropriate conclusion, to study SDS not in isolation, but as a heterogeneous and unstable wing of the larger white student left that rose up in solidarity with the civil rights movement and then turned to its own liberation, even self-preservation, during the Vietnam War (that much campus radicalism operated outside of SDS is rarely acknowledged here or elsewhere).

Of all these books, Gitlin's is the most problematic, and its great public resonance is linked to its flaws. As acknowledged at the outset, he blended two different genres: the scholarly work, and the memoir. Gitlin had been president of SDS in 1962, and a well-connected member of its "Old Guard" for the next decade. In his sweeping but always accessible account, he moves back and forth from the largest panorama of radical change to his own witnessing of, and personal responses to, many events. By detailing his own standpoint, both then and later in hindsight, Gitlin presents an "auto-critique" which brings controversies much closer than they would normally seem. This tone of immediacy and critical self-consciousness combined with an elegiac tone, and its moderate political stance, explains the book's popularity with the public and many intellectuals as a comprehensive résumé of what "the Sixties" changed in America, and what went wrong – that the left failed is the bedrock frame and argument of the book.

So far, so good, if indeed this was recognized as just a personal account and polemic. But Gitlin insists upon the legitimacy of his own narrative, interwoven seamlessly with events he neither participated in nor even observed (like civil rights, Black Power, women's and gay liberation), as a or even *the* general narrative for all social change during "The Sixties," as his title claims. Ultimately, after various qualifications, the reader is led to the conclusion that the experience of early SDS leaders like Gitlin and Hayden was at the center of this period of mass movements and state crisis, and the book's memoiristic character naturalizes that narrow vision: the movement that Gitlin remembers begins to gear up in 1960–2 as he goes to college, hits a series of high points defined by SDS's episodic engagement with the larger "Movement," and winds down precipitously with the author's estrangement from the post-1968 radicalization of the anti-war movement and allied groups like the Black Panther Party, a final stage he consigns to history's dustbin as a "death culture" of nihilism and self-destruction.

The enduring power of these three books illustrates the power of agreement among able scholars to define a consensus that shapes and contains subsequent scholarship. Isserman and Miller also posit a fatal decline in 1968–70, tied to the war and SDS's collapse. Like Gitlin, they see no need to engage with the rise of new social movements that defy any narrative of collapse – the women who built "second-wave" feminism into a mass movement melding radical and liberal currents, ascending throughout the 1970s; the gay and lesbian movement that dates its symbolic founding from 1969, for which the 1970s constituted a mass "coming out" into visible politics; the wave of Black Power leading up to the Gary Convention of 1972, and successful electoral campaigns in cities from Cleveland (1967) to Newark (1970) to Detroit (1973).

This new consensus regarding who constituted the New Left, when it came into existence, and when and why it failed (or died, or declined) has come under sharp attack. Wini Breines's (1988) review in the *Journal of American History* asking "Whose New Left?" is repeatedly cited, since she pointed out the organizational affinities of these authors (Isserman had been in SDS like Gitlin, and Miller counted himself as a partisan), disputing their assumption that a handful of white male SDS intellectuals were the leaders of radical change, and the positing of a "good" New Left in the early 1960s that was betrayed by the revolutionary fantasies of a later "bad" New Left.

Subsequently, Alice Echols and I published studies that, falling outside the "short Sixties" posited by Gitlin, Miller, and Isserman, suggested a wider frame of reference, and critiqued the declensionism of their books. I investigated a broad current of support for the Cuban Revolution, first among liberals rather than leftists in 1957–8 when Fidel Castro led a guerrilla movement, and then in 1959–61, when the Fair Play for Cuba Committee linked the widest array of proto-New Left forces, from old-style conscience liberals to Robert F. Williams, the North Carolina National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) leader who advocated armed self-defense. My argument was that this early instance of the New Left was clearly multiracial, and not limited to students. I also showed that disgust with US government backing of right-wing dictatorships, and willingness to take sides in solidarity with the third world, existed long before the ground war in Vietnam (Gosse, 1993). At the decade's other end, Echols (1989) investigated the intense internal life of radical feminism during the 1968–75 high tide, before women's liberation diffused into a "cultural feminism" that ceded political leadership to liberal feminists in the National Organization for Women (NOW). While not all scholars and veterans see this downturn, Echols caught the explosive excitement of those years of consciousness-raising and theoretical innovation in "small groups" like New York Radical Women, Redstockings, The Feminists, Cell 16, and The Furies. Most recently, in a dissection of the premises of Gitlin, Miller, and Isserman's work, Allen Smith (2000) argues that the epochal influence claimed for the Port Huron Statement is based mainly on assertions repeated over decades by its partisans, undergirding a larger body of myths about SDS.

An alternative approach to the New Left examines how radicalism germinated at flagships of revolt during "the Sixties": the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the University of Texas at Austin. At two of these, SDS played little or no role; at all three, the emergence of a visible "New Left" began well before 1960, and mainstream city and state politics (two are capitals) were directly connected to on-campus organizing. W. J. Rorabaugh's (1989) study of Berkeley connects local civil rights struggles for open housing and an end to job discrimination to the development of student insurgency, leading to the 1964 Free Speech Movement, then mass anti-war mobilization and pitched battles with Ronald Reagan's administration. He also sketches how Berkeley's radicalism became institutionalized, via a takeover of city government and Ron Dellums's election to Congress. Paul Buhle's (1990) book about Madison from 1950 to 1970 is more modest – a collective memoir with some documents by a large group associated with the History Department that played a central role in revolutionizing the study of history in the U.S. It provides an excellent feel for how people rethought radicalism at the Cold War's height, and how their politics evolved. Douglas Rossinow's (1998) rich exploration of Austin's campus left and larger counterculture, centered by a Texas-style SDS chapter based in Christian radical and civil-libertarian populist traditions, is the most ambitious. While still identifying the New Left with white student radicalism, he sharply contests other historians of SDS, decrying the dismissal of

indigenous American radical traditions and ideological elitism he sees reproduced in their scholarship. Taken together, these geographically distinct case studies – "beginning" early and "ending" late or not at all, cutting across any single issue, with national organizations playing a secondary role – indicate the work needed for an appropriately complex picture of the New Left as a whole.

Despite these counterarguments, the SDS-centered accounts continue to shape the definition and periodization of the New Left, establishing a cul-de-sac that blocks systematic efforts to contextualize the new radicalism that gathered force from 1955 on, surged to national prominence in 1960–5, accelerated in tandem with the war in 1965–8, reached a crest of disruption in 1968–71, and diffused into separate currents of change in the mid-1970s. The most common route out of this blind alley has been to avoid theorizing "the New Left" as a general phenomenon and instead, following Gitlin's lead, address social change via the trope of "the Sixties" (Morgan, 1991; Farber, 1994; Steigerwald, 1995; Anderson, 1996; Isserman and Kazin, 2000). Of these studies there have been many – perhaps too many, for while all have their virtues, and their differences are productive, none offers a coherent narrative of the era's radicalism. Indeed, William Chafe's general history of the post-1945 United States has a more nuanced reading of the social movements' relationship to power and policy than any of the above (Chafe, 1999). As syntheses, they remain bound by the limitations of current scholarship. All suffer from the unexamined premise that the New Left was defined by youth; all insist that "the Sixties" (and therefore the New Left) must literally parallel the decade itself; all give short shrift to a host of significant radical leaders, organizations, and even whole movements whose chronology, age, or politics does not fit the established pattern, so that the Berrigan brothers and Dorothy Day, A. J. Muste and Dave Dellinger, Corky Gonzalez and Reies Tijerina, James and Grace Lee Boggs, LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and Robert F. Williams, Shulamith Firestone and Bella Abzug, are absent or barely noted, along with many, many others. It is to those ellipses, and the possibility of a new narrative embracing all of the movements, that we now turn.

Historians, "The Movement," and the Movements

While the New Left's historiography became narrower and more exclusive, scholars focusing on each of the postwar social movements, without preconceptions regarding "the Sixties," put the building blocks for a competing, grander synthesis in place.

The sharpest challenge to assertions that the New Left was defined by SDS, and came crashing down with that organization's demise in 1969, can be found in the extraordinarily rich writing on black politics and the civil rights movement (for a key historiographical review, see Lawson, 1991; also the bibliographical essay in Payne, 1995, which critiques top-down, white-inflected history ignoring poor and working-class people, the women who were the backbone of local organizing, and radicalism).

Much of this scholarship has focused on the organizations and leaders identified with the great campaigns of 1955–65. Besides the works on CORE and SNCC already cited, David Garrow (1986, 2001), Taylor Branch (1988, 1998), and Adam Fairclough (1987) have authored significant treatments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and Nancy Weiss (1989) has analyzed the most moderate wing of the movement, the National Urban League, via its head, Whitney Young. Various historians have offered overviews, notably Manning Marable, whose sweeping narratives of twentieth-century black politics are notable for their attention to nationalist and radical currents, and almost alone in extending the narrative forward into the 1970s and 1980s, when "black power" became a reality (Marable, 1985, 1991; Weisbrot, 1990; Sitkoff, 1993; McAdam, 1999). Further studies emphasizing the continuity of the struggle to regain political rights include those by Steven Lawson, the historian of black electoralism (1985, 1997, 1999), and Aldon Morris (1984), examining incubators of the movement that surged in the 1950s. Also important in uncovering origins are Patricia Sullivan's (1996) study of New Deal liberalism in the South, Irwin Klibaner's (1989) little-known history of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, carrier of the Popular Front legacy into the later era, and Michael Honey's (1993) sophisticated unpacking of interracial working-class politics in Memphis during the 1940s.

The framework for interpreting the history of civil rights was laid during the 1980s. Recently, powerful local studies have deepened this account, questioning the emphasis on leadership exercised by national organizations, including exceptional books by Charles Payne (1995) and John Dittmer (1994) on Mississippi, crucible of the movement. Both are notable for their attention to the fabric of rural organizing, and their insistence that understanding the civil rights movement requires looking at the trajectory since Reconstruction. Similarly, in his study of the struggle to overturn Jim Crow in Louisiana, Adam Fairclough (1995) goes back to 1915, and disfranchisement's immediate aftermath. Exceptional in this framework is George Lipsitz's (1995) investigation of "a life in the struggle" by one unsung St. Louis activist who helped hold the local movement together. All of these works suggest, again, the need to rethink "the Sixties" as a radical break. The most evident new direction in studies of civil rights organizing, however, is the tide of books, collections and memoirs focused on women's leadership, effectively rewriting a very male-centered narrative. These include general histories (Crawford, Rouse, and Woods, 1993; Olson, 2001), biographies of key figures in SNCC, such as Joanne Grant's study of Ella Baker (1998), Cynthia Griggs Fleming's recovery of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson (1998), and biographies of Fannie Lou Hamer by Kay Mills (1993) and Chana Kai Lee (1999), a collective memoir by white women activists (Curry et al., 2000), and a study of Jewish women who "went south" (Schultz, 2001).

The impressive histories of civil rights organizing contrast sharply with the limited historiography on Black Power. Only in the late 1990s did scholars begin examining specific instances of this politically fragmented but culturally pervasive movement, and the concomitant reorientation of black activists toward electoral politics. Many aspects of Black Power, or simply black politics and culture after 1965, are still unexplored. Until recently, other than Forman and Cruse's accounts and Carson's tracing of SNCC into the later 1960s, readers had to rely on contemporary texts and a handful of crucial contemporary analyses, including two accounts of the key nationalist-Marxist formation, Detroit's League of Revolutionary Black Workers (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975; Geschwender, 1977) and Frank Kofsky's (1970) essays on revolutionary nationalism and the jazz avant-garde led by John Coltrane. One standout is Essien Essien-Udom's (1962) study of the Nation of Islam, written when a mass revival of black nationalism seemed outlandish, still the best work on that subject. Amiri Baraka's (1997) autobiography is also invaluable.

Professional historians have had little to say. Besides Marable's essential overviews, a lone standout is William Chafe's (1980) exploration of Greensboro, North Carolina, across the 1950s and 1960s, demonstrating the bitter, very partial character of civil rights victories, and Black Power's organic relation to earlier efforts. In the early 1990s, scholars began filling in this picture, including James Ralph's (1993) look at Dr. King's disastrous 1966 move into Chicago, and the sociologist William Van DeBurg's (1992) survey of Black Power as a cultural phenomenon, which lacks historical grounding but suggests how the new black consciousness was lived and understood. Also important was William Sales's (1994) study of Malcolm X's last year, and the ideological perspective and new strategy envisioned for the Organization of Afro-American Unity, prefiguring Black Power.

The 1990s were most notable, however, for a flood of memoirs, essay collections, Hollywood films, and other evocations of Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party (BPP) as embodiments of the aspiration to self-determination. Some of these are worth noting, because they "stand in" for scholarship as yet unwritten, including memoirs by BPP leaders Elaine Brown (1992) and David Hilliard (1993) and the Detroit activist Grace Lee Boggs (1998), a muckraking biography of Huey P. Newton (Pearson, 1994), many works reflecting on the contemporary significance of Malcolm X (Wood, 1992; Strickland, 1994; Dyson, 1995), and a remembrance of his travels in Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean by Jan Carew (1994) – one notes the urgent need for a comprehensive political biography of this seminal leader. The decade's end brought a wave of scholarship, enlarging our understanding of Black Power's origins and impact: a voluminous anthology on the BPP edited by Charles Jones (1998), in which Nikhil Singh's essay is a model of situating Black Power globally, and meeting the challenge of the Panthers' strategy of the spectacular gesture; Timothy Tyson's (1999) masterful biography of Robert F. Williams, demonstrating that armed self-defense against racist state and paramilitary forces had a long history predating the Panthers, and illuminating Williams's prophetic role; Suzanne Smith's (1999) engaging study of Detroit as the site of a new black entrepreneurial culture, via Motown Records, that interacted with many of the Detroit-based organizations, theorists, and cultural activities that birthed the Black Power movement; Komozi Woodard's (1999) sensitive investigation of Amiri Baraka's multifaceted "cultural nationalist" organizing project in Newark; Yohuru Williams's (2000) examination of black politics in New Haven from the mid-1950s through the arrival of the BPP; Rod Bush's (1999) broader-based study of black nationalism and leftism across the twentieth century. But we are still at the beginning.

Scholarship on the other social movements is much less developed. Women's liberation, for instance, and feminism's resurfacing as an organized political presence have been examined by only a handful of historians. Scholarship has emphasized recovering points of origin for "second-wave" feminism, including a respectful analysis of the "old" feminism, a residual, patrician radicalism embodied in the National Women's Party (Rupp and Taylor, 1990), Cynthia Harrison's (1988) study of women's issues in mainstream politics through 1968, and an influential collection (Meyerowitz, 1994), examining women's lives and politics during the 1950s, demonstrating that many women's groups never acquiesced in the *faux* Victorianism of the High Cold War. Most recently, Daniel Horowitz's (1998) biography of Betty Friedan, revealing her roots in the Popular Front left, and Kate Weigand's (2001) examination of communist women's "red feminism" post-1945 have demonstrated another source for what became women's liberation. Continuing this investigation, Susan Hartmann (1998) argues that consciously feminist women embedded in the network of mainstream liberal organizations and trade unions pursued policy agendas to bolster women's civil rights and access. Collectively, these recent books force a reexamination of the century's middle, well before "the Sixties," suggesting that liberal feminism's seemingly spontaneous emergence between 1961 and 1966 was a culmination rather than a sudden new beginning. Moving forward to women's liberation in the late 1960s and 1970s, memoirs are appearing from important activists (Smith, 1998; Brownmiller, 1999; Jay, 1999; Hollibaugh, 2000), and Ruth Rosen (2000) has published a wide-ranging cultural history of the women's movement from the 1950s onwards, with only modest attention to its political evolution. Rosalyn Baxandall's and Linda Gordon's (2000) scintillating collection of leaflets, articles, and ephemera is complemented by a "memoir project" (DuPlessis and Snitow, 1998) featuring many key leaders of women's liberation, and Miriam Schneir's authoritative documents collection (1994). Still, other than useful syntheses by Myra Marx Ferree and Beth Hess (1994) and Flora Davis (1999) we have no comprehensive organizational history, examining all parts of the country, and all the feminist roots and branches – radical, liberal, cultural, lesbian, and socialist.

The scholarship on gay and lesbian politics is more limited but follows a similar trajectory. During the 1970s, as the movement flourished, it produced numerous topical books, such as Donn Teal's (1971) early activist outline of activism, and Jonathan Katz's (1976) groundbreaking documentary work. Since then, two foundational studies by John D'Emilio (1983) and Martin Duberman (1993) traced the quiet political emergence from the 1950s on that exploded in 1969 and after. D'Emilio brought to life two decades of moderate "homophile" politics prior to the "riot" sparked by a June 1969 police raid on New York's Stonewall bar. In a pattern familiar from other movements, he demonstrated conclusively that, despite the sensibility of "newness" felt by gay liberationists in the early 1970s, they were building upon a substantial history of formal politics (lobbying, publishing, networking) and community-building in bars and neighborhoods in certain urban centers since World War II; see also Stuart Timmons's (1990) biography of Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society. Turning to Stonewall, Duberman's book of that title is a highly original exercise in capturing a single disruptive event that lit the spark of a new kind of gay politics, militant, confrontational, joyful – and consciously, polymorphously, perverse. His method is to focus on a few individuals, and through their memories, deconstruct and then rebuild the meaning of the streetfight and subsequent movement-building. Generally, however, there is little scholarship on how Gay Liberation evolved into Gay Rights (and Pride) during the 1970s. The journalists Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney (1999) use extensive oral histories to chronicle this transition, extending it to Clinton's 1992 election, but their work is essentially descriptive and celebratory, though its massive detail will aid later historians. For the international context, Barry Adam's (1987) compact survey of the politics of homosexuality and homophobia since the nineteenth century in Europe and America is useful, but relies on existing scholarship. An excellent account of the briefly flaming radicalism after Stonewall is Terrence Kissack's (1995) article on New York's Gay Liberation Front. Also indispensable are the essays of the publisher, historian, and

activist Jeffrey Escoffier (1998), reflecting practical experience and theoretical acuity in applying the "ethnic model" of American politics to political enclaves. The next step is to begin constructing those local histories that will situate gay movement and community-building into a larger context, beyond the trope of Stonewall. An essay by Justin Suran (2001), excavating the relation of Gay Liberation to the larger antiwar movement, is a pathbreaking example of the work to be done.

The limited historiography on gay politics is relatively impressive, however, when one turns to other movements with considerable political impact. Only in the 1990s did scholarship develop on the Native American movement, and events once famous – the occupation of Alcatraz island in 1969, the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee. Troy Johnson (1996) has examined the Alcatraz occupation in detail, as the movement's defining moment, and Joane Nagel (1996) has placed the cultural politics of "Red Power" into a larger frame of Indian renascence. Paul Chaat Smith's and Robert Allen Warrior's (1996) narrative of the movement's meteoric rise and fall effectively captures the *mentalité* of activists and their Nixon administration antagonists, and critically analyzes the charismatic, quixotic American Indian Movement (AIM). The New York-based Puerto Rican movement of the Young Lords Party and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party is still undocumented, except through contemporary accounts (Abramson, 1971; Lopez, 1973) and a recent collection of essays, recollections, and interviews (Torres and Velazquez, 1998). A single book by William Wei (1993) examines Asian American radicalism, but considerably more wide-ranging is a collection of documents, evaluations, memoirs, and oral histories of this multi-ethnic tendency (Louie and Omatsu, 2001). Besides Eric Cummins's (1994) history of organizing at San Quentin, encompassing Caryl Chessman, Eldridge Cleaver, and George Jackson, the nationwide prisoners' movement is unrecorded. The Chicano movement is something of an exception. Numerous social scientists have assessed the fight to reclaim New Mexican land grants, the Raza Unida Party in Texas, and the Chicano student movement in California, tracing the move into mainstream Democratic Party electoralism since the 1970s (F. Garcia, 1974; Gomez-Quinones, 1990; I. Garcia, 1997; Navarro, 2000). Among historians, Mario Garcia's (1989) work on Mexican American organizing since the 1930s, and Carlos Munoz's (1989) politically acute study of *Chicanismo* at its radical peak, are notable.

The largest problem in the New Left's historiography, however, is the degree to which we lack a thorough historiography of the anti-war movement. Though the largest movement of the time, the most far-reaching into towns, cities, and schools in all parts of the country and into nearly all sectors of the population (church members, business people, alumni and professional associations, the State Department, trade unions, the armed services themselves), it remains mysterious, seemingly amorphous and uncoordinated. Both its effect upon the conduct of the war and its composition and political stance (student-based? Old or New Left? liberal or radical or neither?) are still debated. This cloudiness and uncertainty stand in sharp contrast to the highly advanced historiography of the other overarching movement of the New Left, for civil rights and black empowerment. Why?

The most obvious reason is that the civil rights movement can be approached through the histories of distinct national organizations, each with its own ideological positioning and grassroots base, while the anti-war movement lacked similar stable national formations to provide vertical integration at the time and historical coherence after the fact. Indeed, the multiple histories of SDS can be seen as an effort to find a way out of this impasse. Telling the story of anti-war activism via SDS is unsuccessful, however, because though it was a pole of anti-imperialist radicalization in 1965–9, it had consciously abdicated its role as an "anti-anti-communist" ecumenical movement center after leading the Easter 1965 march in Washington, DC. Further, SDS had completely disappeared by the time of the student New Left's apogee – the nationwide campus strike after the invasion of Cambodia in April 1970, involving 2 million or more students and closing hundreds of colleges and universities as young people were randomly shot down at Jackson State in Mississippi and Kent State in Ohio.

A diffuse, decentered, multilayered movement that coordinated its major initiatives through a series of ad hoc, overlapping, rival national coalitions presents the historian with a daunting challenge – it was everywhere and nowhere, and trying to assert unequivocally "this is the anti-war movement" is akin to holding sand. Only the encyclopedic account by the eminent peace historian Charles DeBenedetti (1990) provides national coverage, because it alone posits that understanding the movement which took off like a rocket after 1965 requires a solid grounding in the immediately preceding period of intensive anti-nuclear activism, starting in 1955 and leading up to the Test Ban Treaty of 1963. The other attempts at sweeping narratives, by Tom Wells (1994) and Adam Garfinkle (1995), are marred by a looking-backward sectarianism in the former case (assigning blame to various leftists, especially the Socialist Workers Party, for the movement's purported failure), and in the latter by trying to prove something unprovable and absurd – that the movement prolonged the war.

The reason that DeBenedetti's massive account succeeds as narrative record but falls short as analysis lies in the larger myopia of "peace history": that the various constituencies that oppose unjust wars, militarism, and exploitive, imperialistic foreign policies can be adequately summed up as "peace activists." The core reality of the anti-war movement was that it became the space where all the scattered remnants, hunkered-down ideological currents, underground traditions, and new outgrowths of American radicalism regrouped: independent socialists of all sorts; pacifists; Catholic Workers; Trotskyists; anarchists; religious radicals; black, Asian, and Latino revolutionary nationalists; communists and many no longer in "the Party" but still of it; Yippies; SDS'ers and other "revolutionary youth"; left-liberals marginalized by the Democratic Party's move right after 1945. Any such movement had a lowest-common-denominator quality regarding common campaigns, and sprouted initiatives in all directions, ideologically and otherwise. But until historians are willing to approach the anti-war struggle from this angle, and with genuine neutrality toward the perspectives and contributions of every one of these political tendencies, we will lack a satisfactory narrative.

The absence of a larger perspective on the movement's composition explains why two nonscholarly, first-person accounts, plus one local case study, prove invaluable to deciphering the anti-war movement: Norman Mailer's (1968) famous reportage from the October 1967 march on the Pentagon; a partisan history by Socialist Workers Party leader Fred Halstead (1978), a key player in the national anti-war coalitions; David Farber's (1988) brilliant, multivocal account of the protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Halstead's book was for many years the only movement history, until the journalists Gerald Sullivan and Nancy Zaroulis (1984) produced a fine, ideologically neutral survey in the 1980s. It is unapologetically a work of sectarian advocacy

steeped in Trotskyist perspectives, but cogently lays out the arguments, personalities, and inner workings of the movement's highest level. Of course, that sphere of intra-coalition maneuvering and strategizing for national demonstrations often meant little locally, where the bulk of activism was self-generated by independent activists observing from a distance the movement's putative national leadership (one of the most useful, if tendentious, investigations of local activism is Kenneth Heineman's [1993] comparison of four different state university campus towns). Farber's is a bold attempt to show how three parallel actors assembled and then converged violently on the streets outside the Convention: the main body of the anti-war movement, the "Mobe" led by the pacifist Dave Dellinger; the publicity-seeking, counterculturalist agitators who called themselves "Yippies," led by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin; on the other side of the national divide, the Chicago political establishment and the police themselves, who ultimately swept the streets clean of those they perceived as enemies of all civilized order. As for Mailer, allowing for his dated hypermasculinist voice, it is still the best personal account of how the war radicalized people – even those as famous and comfortable as the celebrity author – as well as a superb moment-by-moment description of a decisive mass mobilization by a movement that defined itself through its ability to put large numbers on the streets and bodies on the line. What all three of these books share, in radically different ways, is a sense of the larger, intensely charged context – the war itself as it lurched forward from one catastrophe to another, the weight of the forces backing it, how it tore apart the larger society.

Thankfully, many smaller parts of this sprawling history have been studied, notably the disarmament movement of the 1955–65 period. Lawrence Wittner (1993, 1998), the preeminent historian of anti-nuclear activism, has authored a two-volume international history of that movement since Hiroshima. Milton Katz (1986) has traced the organizational history of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (or SANE), the major new peace formation of the late 1950s, notable for its anti-communist caution; much more needs to be written about the network of established peace organizations, including SANE, the American Friends Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the War Resisters League, since they provided much of the left's infrastructure and political ballast throughout the Cold War. In this context, Jo Ann Ooiman Robinson's (1981) subtle and sympathetic biography of A. J. Muste, the sophisticated pacifist leader who rebuilt the peace movement after 1955, is crucial. Also important is Amy Swerdlow's (1993) portrait of Women Strike for Peace, which invoked a "maternalist" ethic to blunt McCarthyite attitudes while mobilizing women outside of the left.

For the Vietnam years, basic organizational histories are available for a few branches of the movement, including Mitchell Hall's (1990) study of Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, Andrew Hunt's (1999) account of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and Philip Foner's (1989) survey of those parts of the labor movement that supported the anti-war struggle. Richard Moser (1996) has looked at the phenomenon of GI and veteran resistance in the larger cultural context of American history, suggesting the ways in which Vietnam reanimated a popular understanding of radical citizenship with lasting impact. Charles Meconis (1979) produced an early sketch of the Catholic left that generated unflinching direct action against the war's bureaucratic machinery through raiding draft boards, destroying records, and inviting trial, though Daniel Berrigan's (1968) impassioned writings and Garry Wills's (1971) contemporary account of the sea change in Catholicism remain useful. Still, so much more needs to be done – investigations of some of the largest national phenomena, such as the development of organized anti-war groups and caucuses in the mainstream religious denominations, and among business and professional people; even more important, comprehensive local histories, beginning with major cities like New York, San Francisco, Chicago and then moving into the heartland, where President Nixon's "silent majority" resided. Eventually, scholars should follow up on Heineman's pioneering work, by examining university communities in selected regions or states. Most difficult but necessary will be studying the war's impact on, and dissent within, small towns and rural areas, including the South and the Great Plains.

This survey of movement historiographies is incomplete because in some cases the scholarship does not exist. The community-organizing tradition associated with Saul Alinsky and the Industrial Areas Foundation predates the 1960s, and was an important current linking labor liberalism with parts of the New Left, including both the United Farm Workers and SDS's moderate wing. It surged from the 1970s on, through powerful national organizations based in door-to-door canvassing like Citizen Action (in which former SDS'ers Heather and Paul Booth and Steve Max played central roles). A related variant of citizen activism rejecting a clear-cut left-wing ideological stance, the "consumer politics" associated with Ralph Nader's organizational empire, is another product of New Left populism. Other than Sanford Horwitt's (1989) uncritical biography of Alinsky, there are no histories of this significant trend. Similarly, while environmentalism is routinely examined by social scientists as exemplary of interest-group activity, no historian has investigated its relationship to the New Left; the sole exception is Barbara Epstein's (1991) theoretically sophisticated account of how a "direct action" movement linking radical environmentalism, peace, spirituality, and third world solidarity prospered in the decade after 1975.

Finally, we are only at the beginning of international histories of the New Left. Though clearly a global trend, was it essentially a response to rising postwar affluence and a concomitant democratization of consumption in the advanced capitalist countries, as Arthur Marwick (1998) argues in his intriguing, scattershot look at "cultural revolution" in the United States, England, Italy, and France? Or a generalized rejection of the West's political order, as some authors suggest in a recent collection about 1968 edited by American and German scholars (Fink et al., 1998)? Clearly, 1968 looms large in theorizing a global New Left, as books by authors like Ronald Fraser (1988), Paul Berman (1996) and George Katsiaficas (1987) testify. The subtitle of Fraser's collective oral history, "a student generation in revolt," indicates their common thesis, for which there is ample evidence. Berman links the "generation of 1968" to the liberal revolution in Eastern Europe in 1989, the development of identity politics via Gay Liberation, and varieties of neoliberal ideology, such as the French New Philosophes and Francis Fukuyama's thesis of an "end to history," which he argues share a common moral economy. Katsiaficas's is the most ambitious, asserting a transnational confrontation with statist power, East and West, that parallels the pan-European revolutions of 1848, and initiated a new epoch in world history. The problem with this visionary argument is that Katsiaficas argues that a single, shared purpose links protest in Eastern Europe against the Soviet sphere of influence with upsurges in Western Europe and the United States, and with the third world tide of armed liberation movements stretching from Vietnam to southern Africa to the hills

and barrios of Latin America. Such a claim is simply untenable: most third world guerrilla movements were led by Leninist parties, attempting to smash the existing state or imperial order in the classic fashion prescribed by Marx in "The Eighteenth Brumaire," and actively supported by the Soviet Union. That most of the Western New Left supported them, and rallied behind the banner led by Ho Chi Minh and Fidel Castro, is an evident fact, and Katsiaficas's book does bring to the fore the largest confrontation of the 1960s, between the "Free World" led by the United States, and the revolutionary-nationalist arc of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Whether this constituted a transnational New Left is still an open question.

The Contours of Postwar Radicalism: Outline of a New Democratic Order

This essay rests upon the premise that there was a fluid, complex, self-conscious left in the United States during the Cold War era, and that the name it took circa 1960 and kept until late in the decade, as a "new left" to distinguish itself from the working-class left of 1877–1948, remains valid. Though one can move its starting point back as far as the social tumult occasioned by World War II, I see this phase in American radicalism as spanning the two decades from the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 through the Watergate crisis and the end of the Vietnam War in 1973–5. And as indicated earlier, opening up the timeframe to include all of the radical social movements of the period, rather than positing civil rights protests as the New Left's precondition and second-wave feminism and gay liberation as its outgrowth, guarantees that this left's history cannot be summed up through one group or movement (see Gosse, 2003a).

But does grouping the totality of radical movements through these two decades under a common name merely constitute a catch-all for a series of only tangentially related struggles? Did these movements have any common politics, ultimately? Equally important, how did they relate to one another – what unity was established at different points to substantiate the claim of "a movement of movements"? Those questions bedeviled political strategists at the time, and need to be addressed here.

Reflecting my conviction that the practical mechanics of politics require as much analysis as the study of evolving ideological perspectives, even when that organizing is at its most utopian and participatory, let us begin with the question of whether there really was a functioning "Movement," a coherent New Left greater than its disparate parts. Some scholars see the cascading series of coalitions, collectives, caucuses, cooperatives, and communes spilling over each other from the later 1950s through the early 1970s as disconnected, even canceling each other out, evidence of an entropic diffusion that some praise as a prefigurative anarchism and others damn as "single-issue" tunnel vision. Against this view, I have argued that it is not adequate to define the New Left as chaotic and lacking any structure. Rather, it is properly understood as a "polycentric" left encompassing a series of overlapping, contingent social movements, each with its own centers of power, that related to each other through a series of strategic arrangements (Gosse, 1993). I further argue that in each of its two major phases, there was a locus of protest, a "moral economy" that generated a rising tide of visible radicalism and defined the politics of a particular convergence. Each of these radical convergences included significant elements of the

much-disparaged "old left" of communists, Trotskyists, other socialists, and, very importantly, pacifists and religious radicals. Though difficult for many veterans both "old" and "new" to acknowledge, or many schooled in recent historiography to perceive, one cannot make sense of the New Left without recognizing that it incorporated most of the Old Left into its free-floating practice (though hardly all – the abstention by the Socialist Party's trade union-based apparatus spawned New Right neoconservatism in the early 1970s, a very unintended consequence).

In 1955–65, it is indisputable that the civil rights movement in Dixie provided a moral, political, discursive, and physical center for the new postwar radicalism. The most cursory examination of left publications during these years reveals an overriding awareness that the "Negro Revolution" was the locus of change. In a literal sense, the American left had to "go South," into that other country and semi-colonial reality, to rediscover itself in struggle and find a new basis of unity. Simply reciting a litany of well-known events and tableaux, including the Kennedy-backed funding of groups from the NAACP to SNCC to do grassroots voter registration, the fight between Republicans and Democrats for the black vote from 1956 to 1964, the internal dynamics of the August 1963 March on Washington, and the famous challenge of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic Convention, indicates that this particular "movement" was the terrain of struggle, of negotiation, cooperation, co-optation, and final confrontation, between the nascent radical coalition and the institutions of Cold War liberalism.

After 1965, the focus rapidly shifted away from the South, and away from the black leadership of the civil rights movement. This shift is much debated in the literature on "the Sixties," but in truth the reasons are both overdetermined and obvious. Certainly, the black freedom movement faced a crisis because of its signal victories in 1964–5, while its internal unity was collapsing from the bottom up as grassroots organizers demanded more than liberals could or would deliver. More important, however, is that in the United States, as elsewhere, bloody, drawn-out foreign wars trump all else. Inevitably, the single unchallenged point of unity among all of the left's constituencies became opposition to the war in Vietnam. Again, virtually any source from those years indicates that radical organizers, from Black Panthers to the Catholic left to gay liberationists, began their analysis of the ills afflicting America with "the war." Crucially, the war and one's position on it was the clear marker dividing, and then ultimately reconciling, liberals and radicals, as the peeling away to an anti-war stance of successive layers of Democratic Party constituencies and politicians registered the anti-war movement's growing power.

But demonstrating that the different wings of the new, decentered left cooperated around one and then another overriding cause does not demonstrate any common ideology, a "New Left politics" transcending the particular. Asserting the lack of a shared worldview is the linchpin of the insistence that only SDS deserves the name "New Left" because it alone proposed a comprehensive, genuinely new ideological stance, versus a plethora of "single-issue" groups. This assertion is often made, but will not stand scrutiny. The various organizations and constituencies of the multigenerational, multiracial New Left were politically and ideologically united by exclusion from, and eventually a fierce anger directed at, the narrow world of Cold War liberalism, and their insistence on reasserting the radical "perfectionist" strain in American democratic thought, as James Gilbert argues in an important collection defending the

radicalism of the New Left, "without apology" (Sayres et al., 1984). In that sense, the New Left represented a break not just from Cold War America and the New Deal Order, but from the frame of American politics established by Reconstruction's defeat and the grinding down of black citizenship rights coinciding with a new imperialism and a dynamic industrial order based in a new white immigrant working class.

The politics of the broad New Left asserted here stemmed from an organic, often highly personalized rejection of one, two, and then many of the bargains, seductions, and "deals" of that way of life, starting with the contradiction between a democracy supposedly based in universal suffrage and citizenship, versus a caste-like racial hierarchy. The refusal to tolerate white supremacy at home or abroad, the openness to alternative humanistic forms of socialism, the invocation of the "beloved community" – all of these strains run from King's SCLC to SNCC and SDS, and then on to the vast decentralized "Resistance" to the draft that sprang up in 1966. The most complete and wrenching statement of this New Left politics is King's famous speech at Riverside Church in 1967. Indeed, for anyone embracing the inclusive definition of the New Left, King was its preeminent articulator and popular leader, if not at all the one-man Movement founder of liberal iconography. And it is his new, radically democratic, prophetic stance that does supersede the Old Left's orthodox socialist teleology, suborning its constituencies and requiring it to operate on a new terrain.

Interestingly, the scholars who put SDS at the center will concede that a common vision, derived from the black freedom movement, animated the New Left in the early 1960s, so as to argue for the dissolution of that unity later. In a sense, the civil rights movement is put on a pedestal as it is separated from "the left" itself. Again, however, this minimizes the common radicalization of all the movements as the Indochina war escalated, especially after 1968, when the Nixon administration consciously polarized US society and implemented a domestic version of counter-insurgency. The radical sections of the left, multiracial but usually youthful, adopted a joint identity as "anti-imperialist," as any reading of literature by the Young Lords Party, the Black Panthers, the various post-SDS factions moving toward Maoism, AIM and the numberless unaffiliated local groups involved in Black Power or anti-war activities, will show. The insistence that the now truly "radical" left after 1968 can be adequately summed up via the small anarcho-populist sect called Weatherman is one of the most unfortunate claims of Sale, Miller, Gitlin, and others following their lead (its sad history can be traced in Jacobs, 1997). The newly Leninist "anti-imperialist" or "new communist" left that surged from 1969 on found numerous expressions much larger and longer-lasting than the Weather Underground and needs reasoned scholarship that dispenses with old polemics about a "death culture." A collective oral documentary of one of the anti-imperialist left's earliest projects, the Venceremos Brigades that sent several thousand people to cut sugar cane in Cuba in 1969–71, is an invaluable window into the discourse of the time (Levinson and Brightman, 1971). I have examined briefly the Chile and Puerto Rico solidarity movements, which flourished in the mid-1970s and drew support from every branch of the New Left (Gosse, 1996). Max Elbaum (2002), a perspicacious veteran, has produced the first historical examination of the "new communist" movement which drew in thousands of young organizers. The more moderate main body of the New Left, stretching across the sectoral boundaries, came to a similar conclusion, that the central problem in American politics was a pervasive urge to empire, no matter what

the price in blood, treasure, and morality. By 1970, powerful US senators like J. William Fulbright were openly denouncing "militarism" in the company of avowed New Leftists, and the attraction of the McGovern campaign for radicals was the Democratic candidate's commitment to unilaterally withdraw from Vietnam and cut the defense budget by 30 percent – positions for which Nixon savaged him, but which articulated an agenda at the outer limits of radical discourse as late as 1968.

In retrospect, the New Left's legacy was embodied by the radicalized liberalism manifested in McGovern's campaign and the temporary conquest of the Democratic Party, and that institution's subsequent restructuring to accommodate once radical constituencies, rather than the revolutionary hopes of anti-imperialists as the United States retreated from Indochina in 1970–5. The new understandings about race, gender, and sexuality negotiated throughout civil society (family, church, school, workplace, union, campus) over the next decades represent the New Left's partial success in revolutionizing America, even while the New Right focused single-mindedly on accreting power in municipal, state, and federal governments, and within the Republican Party. Elsewhere I argue that this tentatively named "New Democratic Order" explains the grinding political stalemate over the past generation, and the fierceness of conservative mobilization against what right-wing activists insist on calling "the left" while many radicals deny there is any left in America (Gosse, 2003b).

Where Do We Go From Here?

Several major directions are indicated by this review of New Left historiography. First, in every respect, we urgently need local studies, of city, town, state, and countryside. Second, we should look closely at how the once new radicalism inflected and influenced institutions, communities, and constituencies, or what Latin Americans call "sectors." Third, as our understanding of "the Movement" extends backwards and forwards, every instance of this decentered radicalism should be evaluated in relation to the whole of American politics. Finally, there is the problem of anti-intellectualism – the unfortunate idea that scholarship on the New Left can be done without a thorough grounding in the international history of the left.

Case studies constitute an endless process for historians – every community or locality, rendered historically, can be compared against other communities. This process has just begun for the New Left – a few public universities, some prominent states and cities during civil rights campaigns. So, for example, examinations of gay liberation outside its coastal redoubts, women's liberation in the suburbs and the South, anti-war activism in religious colleges and high schools, Black Power in white-majority cities, and so on, are all necessary: a fine example of this kind of book is Marc Stein's (2000) study of gay and lesbian community-building and activism in Philadelphia from the end of World War II through the early 1970s. Equally important will be studies assessing the New Left in all its forms, across time and constituencies, in a single locale. There were few places where individual movements were so strong and self-contained that they did not cross-pollinate, subdivide, and collaborate – at least around the Vietnam War and civil liberties issues. Such histories would demonstrate the reality of how many movements did (or did not) make up "the Movement."

For some reason, US historians seem loath to study societal groups ("sectors") outside of the major categories of workers, women, and people of color, though this is a very practical way of looking at, or fomenting, political change. Regarding the New

Left, one can easily envision studies of students, intellectuals, the various professional groups (doctors, architects, public employees, teachers and so on), artists, and more. In particular, this methodology would enable investigations of a neglected but exceptionally significant aspect of "Sixties" radicalization – the churches, both mainline Protestant and Catholic. A little-cited but excellent example of this approach is James T. Fisher's (1989) exploration of the "Catholic counterculture" from the 1930s to the 1960s, including Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Jack Kerouac. Peter Levy (1994) has initiated the study of the relationship of the New Left to organized labor at the national level, but studies of specific cities are needed to penetrate the defensive silences created by McCarthyism and locate the pockets of "old" leftists (for instance, in the United Packinghouse Workers), who played crucial roles in underwriting the New Left. The widespread movement of younger activists into the labor movement in the 1970s, effecting a "revolution from below" in some instances, is an inviting topic for research.

A larger perspective on cultural-political shifts within major social groups and institutions would help historians avoid the voluntarist fallacy – the premise that a movement's victory or defeat can be attributed primarily to its own agency, degree of perspicacity, and ideological clarity. This may be a truism, yet it is common in the historiography surveyed in this essay. Therefore, we need to turn away from hermetic accounts of organizations and campaigns, and focus on integrating radicalism during the Cold War era into the larger structure of US politics. That framework had two main axes: this nation's political, economic, military, and cultural supremacy on the world stage after 1945, and the peculiar left–right character of the rickety "New Deal Order," and an essentially unreconstructed Democratic Party. The historiography of the black freedom movement has largely met this challenge; for other movements much remains to be done. Only on this basis, paying careful attention to the post-1960s decades, can we have reasoned arguments about the New Left's real impact.

To conclude, regarding anti-intellectualism, it should no longer be acceptable to write about "new" versus "old" lefts in the United States without fully appreciating the global scope, sophisticated ideologies, and revolutionary commitments of the socialist, anarchist, and communist movements, their forebears in the revolutionary democratic traditions of 1776, 1789, and 1848, and the twentieth-century anti-colonial and anti-imperialist revolutions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In sum, we must demand that historians of US radicalism be as internationalist and historically minded as their subjects.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Triumph of Conservatives in a Liberal Age

DAVID L. CHAPPELL

Conservatism has almost as many definitions as it has opponents. In deferential response to those opponents, Samuel Huntington (1957) modestly defined conservatism as a "positional ideology," meaning it was not an ideology at all but an ad hoc, pragmatic stance against dangerous excesses. Huntington's was a definition and a defense of conservatism fit for an age when the ruling liberals celebrated their own "end of ideology," a development that they equated with maturity, sobriety, responsibility, and the like. Albert Hirschman (1991) has much more fun boiling two hundred years of conservative thought down to three dazzlingly clear reactions: Perversity! (liberal proposal X will be counterproductive); Futility! (it will not work at all); and Jeopardy! (if it did work, it would destroy the values and institutions liberals depend on). Stephen Holmes (1993) applies a hotter flame, reducing conservatives and other "non-Marxist antiliberals" to uninformed, unconstructive naysayers. Without grounding in monarchy and an established church, Holmes believes, conservative impulses are either incoherent or crypto-fascist. Jerry Muller (1997), with greater patience, makes a useful historical case that the phrase "historical utilitarianism" fits most conservatism most of the time better than other definitions. Like most thoughtful students, however, Muller emphasizes that conservatism lives only because it changes; it retains conservative *bona fides* and self-respect by changing more carefully than liberalism and radicalism. So its definition changes and will keep changing.

So far, these definitions have to do with how conservatives work and what they reject. Does conservatism have positive content? All the definitions that ring true for late twentieth-century America have in common some fundamental value akin to "ordered liberty" or "balanced authoritarianism," as John Judis (1988) calls it. Either way, conservatives do not merely attack the left and center. Like liberals, conservatives defend liberty, at least their own. Unlike liberals, conservatives resist social experiments with untested ideals, which they fear will deplete the supply of liberty. Anxious to avoid liberty shortages, conservatives also dread gluts. They tend to see programs to expand liberty as latitudinarian and licentious rather than realistic and responsible. Conservatives think that "order" – whether its source be the bourgeois family or religious tradition or the state's police power or "the discipline of the market" – needs as much attention as liberty.