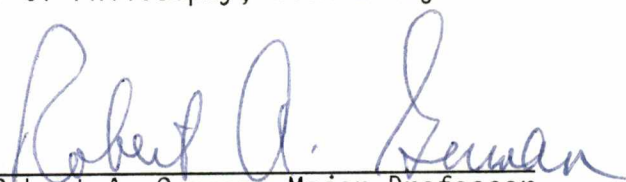
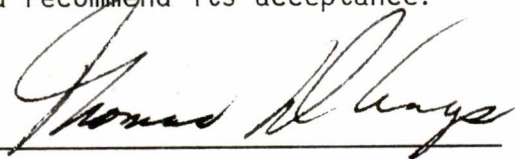


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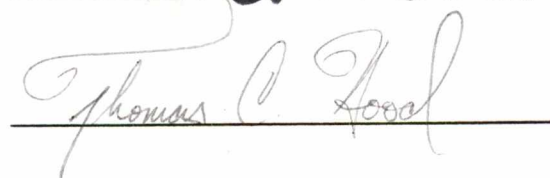
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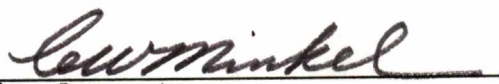
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MICHAEL HARRINGTON'S RADICAL LIBERALISM

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Bong Hi Lee

June 1985

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with all my love to my wife, Boyoung Lee, without whose love, support, patience, and encouragement this effort would not have been possible. I am also deeply indebted to my daughter Soyun and my son Young Do. My deepest gratitude is extended to Dr. and Mrs. Suk J. Chang, whose love I cannot forget.

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the political thought of Michael Harrington. Harrington may be the most important figure in the post-world War II American Left. He succeeded Norman Thomas, not only as the head of the Socialist Party of America, but also as the spiritual leader of American radicalism. But he soon left the Party and divorced himself from traditional socialism. Since the early seventies he has come under the influence of European neo-Marxism and has developed his own unique vision of socialism.

This dissertation analyzes Harrington's special conception of Marxism, what he called "spiritual materialism." It also examines Harrington's general approach to the theory and practice of socialism, his assault upon what he called the "anti-socialist socialisms" of the past, and his quest for a more humanistic and democratic alternative. His reinterpretation of Marx and alternative approach to socialism place him in the neo-Marxist school of political thought. The overall purpose of his work in this field has been to further the cause of democracy in the economics of post-industrial societies.

The theoretical foundation of Harrington's thought comes, not from the standard ideological categories of the American Left, but from the integration of neo-Marxian ideas and America's democratic traditions. In this context, he is neither an orthodox Marxist nor New Deal-style liberal, but a radical liberal who has attempted to

push every liberal cause in the direction of humanist socialism by integrating a new Marxism with today's American liberalism.

Michael Harrington is not a Marxist socialist in the orthodox sense, but a humanist and genuine democrat who began to seek the roots of democracy in Marxism and the democratic traditions of America for the twenty-first century's vision of American society. The average American may not be familiar with Harrington's political thought, but he cannot be overlooked in a time when an ideological alternative to New Deal-style liberalism is so desperately needed.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of contemporary American socialism is that it has been primarily an ideology rather than a general guide to policy formulation and politics. As such, it has been mainly a vehicle for intellectual debate, and has failed both to engage the popular imagination and to provide working concepts and ideas for Americans, and for American politicians, who are concerned with power, negotiation, compromise, and constituencies, as well as with issues. In other words, socialism in America has too often been an intellectual's platform, which, as Gordon Lloyd indicates, leads to the notion of "intellectual socialism."¹ At the same time, it has not often enough been a set of ideas and attitudes that other people find relevant to their own lives and roles. Michael Harrington's new concept of socialism, which brings socialism into association with the views of the Democratic Party, is an unprecedented attempt to reverse this trend of traditional American intellectual socialism. Harrington has suggested some ways in which American socialism ought to be reconsidered and must change, if it is to become widely accepted among the American people.

During the sixties, an academic movement for the resurgence of American socialism had a significant impact on the development of Harrington's neo-Marxian socialism. Two decades ago, American

¹See Gordon Lloyd, "The Intellectual Socialism of John Kenneth Galbraith," The Political Science Review, 10 (Fall, 1980), pp. 365-386.

radicals--in a broad sense, non-conservative intellectuals--became acutely aware of the crisis in American socialism. The major arguments put forth to explain this crisis were the historical weakness of socialism in the United States, the lack of enthusiasm within the socialist movement for the more familiar embodiments of socialism, plus perhaps some shying away from the semantic overkill characteristic of both McCarthy-type redbaiting and orthodox Marxism's dogmatics hold on socialist thinking.² For all these reasons, the socialist label still seemed to lack meaning or appeal in the United States outside of a small circle of followers.

At the same time, most American radicals began to think that the revival of American socialism could provide a non-corporate post-industrial alternative to the so-called New Deal liberalism. One of the earliest by-products of crisis consciousness in American socialism was the formation of the Socialist Scholars Conference (SSC) in 1964, which was an active agent serving as a cradle for the main face-to-face intellectual forum for the revival of American socialism. The SSC annual meetings until 1970 laid a cornerstone upon which enthusiastic American radicals entered into a new chapter in the socialist movement in America. And, for the most part they stressed a new socialism, following the neo-Marxian tradition.

Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking has played a significant role in reversing the traditional trend of socialism generally, as

²George Fischer, ed., The Revival of American Socialism: Selected Papers of the Socialist Scholars Conference (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. v.

well as in seeding a new socialism in American's minds so as to mobilize the popular imagination and to change the working concepts of American socialism. Harrington's concept of socialism provided a new starting point for American socialism and presented a path beyond the distortion of New Deal liberalism. Harrington's work has given American socialism a new face. Harrington's socialism offers a general guide to policy formulation and American politics, in both theoretical and practical terms. It is believed that Harrington's new approach to socialism came out as a timely response to the reconstruction of contemporary American socialism.

Since the SSC, Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking has transformed American socialist thought in the direction of a new humanism. His neo-Marxian formulation implies an emphatic rejection of the degenerated socialisms of the past, and shown a tremendous enthusiasm to create a new real-world orientation, based on humanistic values drawn from the conception of the "new" Marx. Thus, recalling the young Marx's idealism and tempering the orthodox Marx's materialism, the mature Marx's "spiritual materialism" emerges. This is an eclectic notion in opposition to the reductionisms of idealism and materialism, where Harrington has sought to moralize and humanize American Marxism, as a means toward the democratization of corporate power in post-industrial capitalism. In other words, his neo-Marxian new humanism has not only been conducive to undercutting the socialist revolutionism of the Old Left but also has shown a willingness to explore more and more democratic alternatives to both the collectivist formulations of

traditional socialism and the liberal formulations of bureaucratic welfare capitalism.

Harrington has not been unconcerned with economic conditions and contradictions, but he has increasingly focused his analysis on the political realm in his neo-Marxian perspective, hoping to uncover "new sources of political energy," by which he means a democratic Left, or a new majority lined up with the Democratic Party. Other contemporary neo-Marxists like Alan Wolfe have categorized a "new class" as an alternative to the working class, committed to "embourgeoisement," or the conservative tendencies of the working class to enjoy the bourgeois comforts and values.³ But in Harrington, the new class, as we will soon see, is one of the significant components of the democratic Left. Probably other socialist theorist can match Harrington's enthusiasm for embodying contemporary American socialism in neo-Marxian perspective. It remains, however, to be seen under what circumstances more people will come to see Harrington's neo-Marxian position as constituting a significant resurgence of American socialism.

While accepting the connection of the young Marx's idealism and the old Marx's materialism as he generates the concept of the mature Marx's "spiritual materialism, Harrington makes a distinction between the distorted socialisms of the past (i.e., "anti-socialist" socialisms) and his own neo-Marxian socialism. For

³Alan Wolfe, Limits of Legitimacy: Political Contrdictions of Contemporary Capitalism (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 321.

Harrington, the problem for historical analysis of "anti-socialist" socialisms (especially, Soviet-style socialism, European social democracy, the Third World's authoritarian socialism, and American welfarism) is not to invent a past relevant to the needs of the present but to become critically conscious of these maleficent influences. In theoretical terms, though he does not believe that all Marx said is right, Harrington turns to the roots of the authentic (or real) Marx in order to justify his neo-Marxian socialism which is more popularly known as "democratic socialism." For the result of his studies of the real Marx, he comes to the conclusion that democracy is the essence of socialism. In other words, what he wants to conclude from his reading of the real Marx is that democracy and socialism are one and the same. This argument leads to a seemingly paradoxical conclusion that democracy is socialism and vice versa. To Harrington, that is what Marx meant through his whole life. To be sure, Harrington's demystification and dramatically refreshing interpretation of Marx can be regarded as a tremendous contribution to Western Marxism and even to the theoretical convergence between Marxian humanism and one of the mainstreams of American thought (i.e., Jeffersonian radical democracy or American progressivism) in the modern sense.

An important question can be raised: Given the fact that Americans have been quite familiar with the notion of so-called liberal democracy, often recognized as bourgeois or political democracy which has been intermingled with New Deal liberalism, how will

they respond to Harrington's Marx? To be sure, Harrington's ceaseless enthusiasm for absorbing the ideas of the real Marx into his democratic socialism can be perceived in different ways from person to person. American conservatives may perceive Harrington's Marx simply as the old Marx in the traditional orthodox Marxist sense, even before they look into it carefully. To this group, Marxism of any sort is still a taboo and even identified with totalitarianism and revolutionism. Extremely far-left radicals may see it as a false Marx because they have mainly identified the real Marx with the old Marx. Liberals or moderate liberals may or may not accept it as it is. Only left-wing liberals seem to find Harrington's Marx acceptable.

It is probably impossible to firmly state Harrington's position in ideological terms, since his neo-Marxian approach assumes that Marxism is not a complete, fixed doctrine, but ongoing, emergent one. However, this dissertation sees Harrington as a radical-liberal in the American sense, and follows his career as an attempt to push left-liberals within the Democratic Party in a more radical direction, while maintaining an ongoing critique of revolutionary-statist socialism. He is not a social democrat in the European sense. He criticizes social democracy as a rationalized form of bureaucratic socialism. Even though he always speaks of socialism or Marxism, his ideological position is correctly termed neo-Marxist and is somewhere between American New Deal-style liberalism and a kind of socialism that Americans have ever known in a traditional sense. In this context, I want to call Harrington's

ideological position radical liberalism or revived liberalism in the sense that it is a form of radicalizing liberal reformism.

There are a few radical intellectuals in America who have shared Harrington's ideological guidelines. Arnold S. Kaufman, among others, called for the political mobilization of radical liberals who, as he insisted, accept the convergence of Marxism and liberalism, although this is an eclectic position in ideological terms.⁴ In a sense, Harrington and Kaufman shared in the neo-Marxian attempt to establish a radicalizing liberal reformism in America. Irving Howe, editor of Dissent, developed a similar ideological position, but he preferred the term "democratic radicalism."⁵

In examining the competing political beliefs of the 1970s, Kenneth M. Dolbeare and his associate categorized these radical movements by Kaufman, Harrington, and Howe as "reform liberalism." Dolbeare used this category to describe various contemporary versions of reform ideology. According to Dolbeare, reform liberal beliefs are liberal in the sense that they are rooted in individualism (humanism), civil liberties, faith in the reason and

⁴See Arnold S. Kaufman, The Radical Liberals: New Man in American Politics (New York: Atherton Press, 1968): "Wants, Needs, and Liberalism: The Convergence of Marxism and Liberalism," Inquiry, 14: 3 (Autumn, 1971); and "A Strategy for Radical Liberals," Dissent, 18: 4 (August, 1971).

⁵See Irving Howe, Steady Work: Essays in the Politics of Democratic Radicalism, 1953-1966 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966); and Howe, ed., The Radical Imagination (New York: The New American Library, 1967).

capacity of all men, the perception of a pluralist political process in the United States, and the acceptance of a continuing unresolved tension between the values of equality and property. And they are radical reformist in character because they seek the realization (or moderate change) of long established values, and in doing so, accept the procedures and affirm the validity of the established political process.⁶ In ideological terms, Dolbeare defined reform liberalism as an eclectic belief that represented one of the major directions in which welfare capitalism and socialism might evolve. He also saw the reform liberalism of the 1970s as a contemporary version of the traditional American radicalism, and regarded Harrington's democratic socialism as one major reform liberal ideology.

Perhaps there is no difference between reform liberalism and radical liberalism in character. But the term "radical liberalism" seems to better characterize Harrington's democratic socialism, because the term "reform liberalism" seems to refer more generally to New Deal liberalism, and Harrington and other American radicals have always been critical of this as a distortion of radicalism. In any event, since the SSC, the term "radical liberalism" has been popularized among radical intellectuals (including Harrington himself) in America. This is why this dissertation examines Harrington's democratic socialism (or new socialism) from the

⁶Kenneth M. Dolbeare and Patricia Dolbeare, American Ideologies: The Competing Political Beliefs of the 1970s (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1971), p. 80.

viewpoint of radical liberalism, even though Harrington bases its theoretical insights on his neo-Marxian thinking.

Harrington is a unique theorist who has persuaded Americans to adjust themselves, without any resistance, to a new civilization, through which a just society can be realized in America. This just society should be built not on a socialism Americans have ever known before, but on the new concept of socialism where traditional American radicalism meets his neo-Marxian perspective. By radicalism I mean in general a movement to return to the "roots" of things ("radical" is from the Latin word for "root"). Thus radicalism cannot be identified simply with the socialism and communism that Americans have known in the orthodox Marxist sense. Above all, the social and political aspects of radicalism in both modern European and American histories were in essence democratic.⁷ Such democratic traditions in America has always been radical, and thus seems to have faced a turning point in the works of Michael Harrington. Probably, it is timely and relevant, I think, to comprehensively evaluate Harrington's political thought as it has effected the popular imagination in America, as well as the working concept of contemporary American socialism.

With this in mind, the purpose of this dissertation is to (1) examine Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking and his epistemology,

⁷See Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955); and R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World, sixth ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

(2) define the characteristics of his neo-Marxian socialism in the context of the revival of American socialism, and (3) evaluate his contributions to Western Marxism and contemporary American radicalism. In this context, we will cover four main topics. First, we will describe and examine Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking, focusing on his distinctive position in neo-Marxism. Second, we will explore Harrington's proposals for democratic socialism, which, as he insists, is theoretically different from the social democracy practiced in Europe. Third, we will examine Harrington's practical (political) strategies to formulate and mobilize a new majority, or a political force that supports his ideological guidelines in American politics. For the theoretical aspect of these strategies, the theory of the "new class" will be examined with regard to the problems of how the new class may be mobilized. Finally, while looking into the theory of the state which has been mystically treated by Marxism since Marx, we will examine Harrington's approach to the modern state.

Even though he is still in his late fifties, Harrington has left a full and rounded body of work, nine or more important books, including many of his journal and magazine articles in the last two decades. Among them, The Other America (1962), Toward a Democratic Left (1968), Socialism (1972), and The Twilight of Capitalism (1976) are believed to be the best that most American radicals can hope for. Each of Harrington's books bears an important relation to his previous works, and those that are to come. None, accordingly, can be seen in isolation from the others. His continuing

encounter with the frustrations of American socialism, especially with the age of the end-of-ideology, informs all Harrington's work and provides new beginnings for American socialism. My reading of Harrington is the primary source of my description and analysis of Harrington's political thought.

In addition, the following secondary sources are necessary at least in comprehensively understanding Harrington's political thought. First, the works of other famous radical liberals such as Arnold S. Kaufman, Irving Howe, and Kenneth M. Dolbeare have been useful in defining and labelling Harrington's political thought. Second, works by American socialist historians and theorists like Gabriel Kolko and James Weinstein have also been useful in formulating a general picture of socialist movement in America since Eugene Debs. Third, for an understanding of the theory of neo-Marxism, general works by many radical intellectuals like Leszek Kolakowski, Andrew Feenberg, George Lichtheim, Jack Lindsay, Perry Anderson, Stanley Aronowitz, Robert A. Gorman, and C. Wright Mills have been useful especially in outlining the political thought of pioneering neo-Marxist (Western Marxists) such as Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno. Fourth, works dealing with the theories of the new class by Thorstein Veblen, John K. Galbraith, Daniel Bell, André Gorz, Alain Touraine, and Serge Mallet have been helpful in contributing to the understanding of Harrington's political strategies for democratic socialism. Fifth, general works on American thought by Louis Hartz, Vernon Louis Parrington, and Kenneth M. Dolbeare have been helpful for uncovering the mainstreams of

American thought and defining Harrington's ideological position. Finally, general works on American radicalism, the theory of poverty, and liberal critiques of New Deal liberalism have also been utilized when relevant topics have been discussed.

Chapter I will describe the social and political activities in which Harrington has been actively involved to date, and then delineate the chronological development of his political thought. This chapter will give us a quick glance at his predecessors and the social environments which have had an impact on his intellectual growth.

Chapter II will describe and analyze Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking and his epistemological approach to the real world, and will present Harrington's theoretical foundations of neo-Marxian socialism. At the same time, this chapter will demonstrate Harrington's starting point where he rejects all the various kinds of "anti-socialist" socialism of the past and then articulates his neo-Marxian thinking for the new beginnings of American socialism. In doing this, it will briefly review the neo-Marxism of Harrington's predecessors like Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno, and will clarify his distinctive position in neo-Marxism, after describing what he learned from them and how different he is from them in reinterpreting Marx. And finally, it will describe Harrington's own neo-Marxian paradigm, a set of neo-Marxian analytic methods, which Harrington regards as a theoretical model that the future Marxists will be using in analyzing society.

For the purpose of avoiding the confusion of ideological terminologies, Chapter III will clarify the differences between European "social democracy" and Harrington's "democratic socialism." It will also describe how Harrington analyzes and defines the modern welfare capitalism of America from his neo-Marxian perspective. This chapter will explore Harrington's neo-Marxian paradigmatic analysis of the two areas of poverty in the 1960s and the "stagflation" crisis of the 1970s. Finally, this chapter will describe and examine Harrington's practical approach to neo-Marxian socialism through his various proposals, including his economic proposals designed to reform welfare capitalism. More specifically, it will present his enthusiasm to generate in the popular imagination a neo-Marxian view of socialism.

Chapter IV will briefly examine the theoretical aspects of the new class, which has had an important impact on Harrington's building of a democratic Left, as political force to support his neo-Marxian ideological guidelines in American politics. Some influential "new class" theorists in both non-Marxist and neo-Marxist camps will be compared in an effort to clarify Harrington's position. The chapter will then depict and analyze Harrington's political strategies for mobilizing the democratic Left. It will describe what Harrington has been doing in the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Chapter V will describe and examine an interesting and important theory of the state, which still remains controversial among

Marxists and is perhaps the most undeveloped area in Marxist Theory. This chapter will briefly review typical Marxist theories of the state and then present Harrington's effort to solve this controversial problem. It should be noted that Harrington's theory of the state is part of his epistemological imagination, which approaches the state (or society) according to his concept of "spiritual materialism."

Finally, in Chapter VI, I will summarize the nature and meaning of Harrington's democratic socialism and examine his contributions to Western Marxism (humanistic Marxism) and contemporary American radicalism. And I will conclude with my honest and dispassionate critiques of Harrington's works.

CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARRINGTON'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

As a leading neo-Marxian theorist in America, Michael Harrington has sought to create both in theory and in practice a political possibility of a genuine democracy in the American situation. For this purpose, not only has he been actively committed to various liberal and radical organizations but also energetically devoted himself to an academic life in order to generate the roots of socialism. If he had been committed only to his academic life apart from the political reality in America, his political thought would have turned toward a much more utopian cause. Perhaps his subtle sensitivity and understanding of the real world in America have guided him to a realistic and pragmatic position in today's American radicalism.

Before looking into Harrington's political thought, the first step to be done for the understanding of Harrington is to describe his social and political activities and his intellectual growth. In this discussion, we can figure out what the impact of his personal backgrounds on his political thought was. What educational and social backgrounds have influenced Harrington's political thought? In what kinds of radical organizations has he been involved through his life? Who has influenced his intellectual life? While answering these questions, what follows will briefly delineate his social and political activities in the first section and

his intellectual growth of political thought in the second section, in chronological terms.

HARRINGTON'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Michael Harrington was born in St. Louis, Missouri on February 24, 1928 to an Irish family of New Dealers. Marion Magid, who interviewed Harrington for the New York Herald Tribune in 1964, reported that Harrington was raised in a well-to-do middle-class suburb of St. Louis in an atmosphere of enlightened Roman Catholicism. Magid indicated that the publication of Harrington's first book, The Other America (1962) deserved the interview arranged by the Tribune. "If there was a political atmosphere to his childhood at all," said Magid, "it was the typical Democratic party loyalty of the Irish of St. Louis, reasoned by the spirit of Catholic good works."¹

After attending parochial school in St. Louis, Harrington pursued a prelaw course at Holy Cross College, a Jesuit institution in Worcester, Massachusetts. With his B.A. degree in 1947, Harrington enrolled in the Yale University Law School. Magid described the environmental influences of those two schools on young Harrington. At Holy Cross College, his mode of thinking and writing was "indelibly stamped by the Jesuit penchant for surgical analysis and adherence to Aristotelian categories of thought." At Yale he made tardy contact with the radicalism of the 1930s through bull

¹New York Herald Tribune, December 27, 1964.

sessions with older students who had returned to college after military service in World War II.²

Harrington gave up the study of law in 1948, after a year at Yale, and transferred to the University of Chicago to do graduate work in English literature. Upon receiving an M.A. degree in English literature in 1949, he entered social work in St. Louis. In 1951, he moved to New York City to join Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker, an organization of the Catholic radical movement that was founded in 1933 to emphasize radical Christian pacifism and anarchism, opposing such social activities as registration for the draft, civil defense drills and payment of income taxes that would be used to buy armaments, as well as advocating farm communes as an answer to family needs and unemployment. As Harrington said, his transition from the St. Louis middle-class to New York radicalism was a big event in his life.³ Harrington worked at the Catholic Worker's headquarters in New York City for a year; as a staff member of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, a settlement house serving bowery derelicts; and as an associate editor of the Catholic Worker, a monthly newspaper propagandizing the spirit of the Catholic Worker movement in 1951. These jobs gave him a valuable first-hand experience of poverty. As a result, his active involvement in Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker was a significant milestone of his life--his

²Ibid.

³Michael Harrington, Fragments of the Century (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 68.

first commitment to radicalism. He once described his life in the Catholic Worker as "the Bohemian-radical style" traveling as an itinerant agitator for the purpose of funding the poor.⁴

After leaving the Catholic Worker, Harrington joined the Young People's Socialist League, an organization of students and young working people which had a fraternal relationship with the Independent Socialist League until 1958, when the latter merged with the Socialist party of Norman Thomas, and then became an organizer and speaker for the League on college campuses. In 1954, he also joined the staff as a research assistant of the Fund for the Republic, an educational corporation affiliated with the University of California devoted to restoring the understanding and vitality of democratic principles by reexamining them in light of drastically new political, economic, social and technological conditions. In the mid and late 1950s a large proportion of his time was devoted to Fund projects, including the preparation of a report on black-listing in the American entertainment industry.⁵ In addition, in 1953 Harrington became the organizational secretary for the Workers' Defense League, a labor-oriented human rights organization conducting public education and legal campaigns on behalf of individuals and labor organizations. During the fifties Harrington was also a member in civil rights organizations such as the American

⁴Ibid., p. 171.

⁵Charles Moritz, ed., Current Biography: Yearbook (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1969), p. 197.

Civil Liberties Union. Finally, he joined the Socialist party in 1953 and was on its national executive committee from 1960-1968, serving the Party as its national chairman from 1968-1972, by succeeding the former chairman, Norman Thomas. He left the Party in 1972 because of the Party's split as will be described later.

During the sixties, Harrington gradually showed his interests in the issue of pure democracy in economic and cultural life. For example, in 1964 he was engaged in the civil rights movement of the A. Philip Randolph Institution, a nonmembership institution established to promote cooperation between labor and the black community. Because of his strong interest in an alliance of black and white working people in the interests of interracial justice, Harrington was more deeply involved in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil rights struggle in the sixties than he had been in the fifties. At that time he thought that "the civil rights movement was the most important social catalyst in the United States since the industrial unionism of the 1930s."⁶ In 1964, Harrington was elected chairman of the board of the League of Industrial Democracy (LID), an organization of social scientists, educators, labor union officials, journalists and students, established in 1905 to conduct education for increasing democracy in economic, political and cultural life in America and to sponsor special projects on workers' rights in Eastern Europe. During the sixties, the LID was supposed to become, according to Harrington, a center for discussion and

⁶Harrington, op. cit., p. 95.

debate where trade unionists, blacks, and intellectuals could meet and analyze events and programs for a new majority of the democratic Left.⁷ Harrington believed that there was no one group--not the unions, the poor, the intellectuals, nor the middle-class liberals and radicals--which could transform American society on its own.

The fifties and sixties kept Harrington's eyes focused upon pacifism. On the first anniversary of the Korean War in 1951, Harrington was sent to represent the Catholic Worker at an anti-war march in Central Park, Washington, D.C. where he met Norman Thomas, then national chairman of the Socialist party.⁸ His pacifist position in the fifties did not put him at odds with other socialists within the Socialist party until he became national chairman. But as Harrington succeeded to Norman Thomas and the Vietnam War was escalated in the 1960s, his anti-war faction precipitated a crisis of the Socialist party. The basic theme of his anti-war position in the late 1960s was that the program of the "Freedom Budget," a set of programs such as national health insurance, full employment, tax reform, public housing, and the other social investment, which was proposed by the Socialist party, would be obscured by waging the Vietnam War.⁹ A second theme was that Vietnam was an immoral

⁷Ibid., p. 198.

⁸Ibid., p. 68.

⁹Ibid., p. 204. In 1966, A. Philip Randolph presented the "Freedom Budget," and Max Shachtman named it.

conflict, because the Vietcong represented a progressive anti-Communism.¹⁰ To Harrington, however, the first theme was more important than the moral issue of the Vietnam War, since he always emphasized the elimination of poverty in America every time the debate of "guns-or-butter" occurred in the sixties.

Harrington once thought he could mobilize the New Left of the 1960s toward the coalition of a new democratic Left. He also believed that "the New Left was one of the most important, hopeful signs of the decade."¹¹ As a result, he closely communicated with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the organization that became one of the focal points of the New Left. He insisted that "what radicalism needed was a fresh start, a rethinking of perspectives that would avoid the old rhetoric, with its sectarian Europeanisms, and speak in the authentic vocabulary of America."¹² The SDS happened, however, to express an anti-ideological ideology, the dominant philosophy of the New Left, which he thought was simultaneously its strength and weakness in ideological grouping for a new democratic Left. There was among SDS leaders a dispute between those who emphasized political struggle to realign the existing party system in America and those who looked toward the organization of groups outside of established institutions. He tried but failed to persuade the latter group toward a cohesive body of New

¹⁰Ibid., p. 212.

¹¹Ibid., p. 132.

¹²Ibid., p. 141.

Left leaders on behalf of the former group. As he analyzed the history of the New Left, the dispute was to become the central axis of debate and of organizational splits in the late sixties.¹³ Harrington attributed the disintegration of the New Left to the fact that "the organization had burned all of its bridges to the mainstream of American labor and liberalism," since its anti-ideological ideology had been against all existing ideologies in America.¹⁴ The fact was, however, that the SDS was split into the Maoists of the Progressive Labor Party in the late 1960s, who were then most ultra-Leftists in America. Consequently, he confessed in 1972 that working with the SDS was a sad personal experience associated with his own middle-aging and some of his most spectacular stupidities.¹⁵ Furthermore, he criticized himself: "The conflict was . . . inevitable, and had I acted on the basis of better information, more maturity, and a great understanding of the differences at stake between him and SDS' leaders, that would only have postponed the day of reckoning."¹⁶

As previously noted, the crisis of the Socialist Party, of which Harrington was national chairman, drove his anti-war faction to a critical event at its third convention in 1972. Harrington

¹³Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 149-150.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 149. Parentheses are mine.

resigned as the national chairman of the Party, and his anti-war faction created in 1973 the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), a new socialist organization. The people of the DSOC believe that "the realization of the potential of mankind requires many important basic institutional changes, among which are the social ownership and democratic control of the decisive means of production and distribution."¹⁷ According to the resolution of the 1977 DSOC convention, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) was formed in 1982, by merger of the DSOC and the New American Movement (NAM), a democratic socialist organization that emphasized community organizing. Harrington was a co-chairman of the DSOC from 1973-1982, and has been a co-chairman of the DSA since 1982. He has devoted himself to establishing and strengthening the DSOC's and DSA's bridge to the mainstream of American labor and liberalism. That is the reason why he has attempted to make a new democratic Left by bridging existing liberal sector among the major parties and groups outside of established institutions like the poor, radical minorities, and intellectuals.

Harrington entered academic life by teaching political science at Queens College in 1972, before organizing the DSOC. As he described himself, until the early 1970s he had been a vagabond social philosopher and an itinerant radical agitator.¹⁸ During the period

¹⁷Denise S. Akey, ed., Encyclopedia of Associations, 16th ed., (Detroit, Michigan: Bral Research Co., 1981), p. 1028.

¹⁸Harrington, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

of the 1970s, however, Harrington showed his intellectual maturity by publishing valuable books: Socialism (1972), The Twilight of Capitalism (1976), and Decade of Decision (1980). In these books, he developed a newly defined concept of socialism by extending welfareism toward the maximum of liberal cause.

INTELLECTUAL GROWTH OF HARRINGTON'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

As described in the previous section, Harrington has been involved in such American radical movements as Catholic radicalism, labor movement, civil rights movements, pacifism, New Left, and socialism. Among these categories, the New Left movement most discouraged and dissatisfied Harrington. As he confessed, associating with the New Left in the sixties was a dishonorable part of his life. He actually left the Socialist party in 1972, though he said that he would remain a member in the Party, because the old socialist cadres not only endorsed the Vietnam War but also supported Nixon in the 1972 presidential election instead of George McGovern, a man of the Democratic left. In brief, he was a radical of a kind, but not a revolutionary. Though deeply involved in these radical movements, he never turned away from the mainstream of American labor and liberalism that has always been based on human free-will and the principles of liberal democracy. That is why he regretted that the New Left had been captured by ultra-Leftists in the late 1960s.

The chronological development of Harrington's political thought can be classified into three stages, at least as a matter of convenience: "emotional Marxism" in the 1950s, radical liberalism in the 1960s, and neo-Marxian democratic socialism in the 1970s.

As a Catholic radical and a member of the Young Socialist League, he claimed to have been emotionally but not intellectually involved in Marxism. That is not to say that he regretted that he had been deeply involved in these radical movements in the 1950s. When he first became a member of the Socialist party in 1953, he accepted the revolutionary Marxist position as it was derived from the Marx of the Communist Manifesto (1848). He thought, therefore, that any compromises with the bourgeoisie would only retard the coming surge of radical working-class consciousness.¹⁹ As a young Irish Catholic Marxist, Harrington simply maintained that "liberalism was most certainly not an adequate answer to the problems of the time."²⁰ Having learned "Talmudic Marxism" in New York, by which he meant orthodox Marxism, he scorned those who worked in the liberal wing of the Democratic party, and then expected the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness among the workers.²¹ At the same time, he accepted a popular thesis that there is no difference between the major parties in America. Hence his style of Talmudic

¹⁹Ibid., p. 177.

²⁰Ibid., p. 146.

²¹Ibid., pp. 89 and 146.

Marxism of the fifties forced him to believe in the possibility of a third radical party, the kind of labor party which has been seen in the European countries. In this sense, Harrington simply was a Talmudic Marxist without an intellectually deepened knowledge of Marxism. He described himself as follows:

I was, to be sure, always the middle-class stranger but I had never been . . . an objective academician, but always a comrade in the struggle.²²

As Harrington recounted his experiences of the fifties, his Jesuit education at Holy Cross College predisposed him to emotional Marxism when he joined the Catholic Worker which helped him to see working people and blacks, and to do research on poverty for at least seven years.²³ In this period, he kept in touch with Marxism through Max Shachtman, a lifelong American Marxist and an important figure of ultra-leftism in America as a founder of American Trotskyism.²⁴ In fact, in the 1950s Harrington understood Marxism through only Shachtman's revolutionary perspective.

As he said in 1972, the year 1958 was both a personal revelation for Harrington and a fateful turning point in his life in terms of his political theory and practice.²⁵ Through his various experiences in the 1950s, he came to perceptively understand the fact that Americans are ideologically conservative but liberal in

²²Ibid., p. 92.

²³Ibid., p. 14.

²⁴Ibid., p. 71.

²⁵Ibid., p. 91.

practice (i.e., against the expansion of government power in general but in favor of most of the services that government provides).²⁶ Hence he left Shachtman's revolutionary Marxism, and then began to accept the "mainstream of American liberalism" and the principles of democracy by turning to the anti-Communist Left in America. In other words, acknowledging that it is unrealistic to expect the American people to transform capitalism in the immediate future, Harrington set a horizon for the attainment of a program and movement that socialists and radicals can support but which can appeal to New Deal liberals as well. Thus he opposed the "thesis that liberalism represents the main enemy in America since its reforms retard the revolution."²⁷

Harrington insisted that poverty can be abolished in the welfare state prior to a revolutionary reconstruction of American society.²⁸ As a result, he actively participated in the Johnson administration's War on Poverty, serving as a consultant to the task force of the anti-poverty programs. He believed that his participation in the War on Poverty was "to choose the better against the bad in a finely calibrated balance, forgetting about the best which is, in any case, unattainable."²⁹

²⁶Ibid., Chapters 2 and 3.

²⁷Ibid., p. 91.

²⁸Ibid., p. 179.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 174-176.

During the sixties Harrington published his valuable books, The Other America: Poverty in the United States (1962), The Accidental Century (1965), and Toward a Democratic Left: A Radical Program for a New Majority (1968). These three books, which are his major works in this decade, described his perception of political reality in America and called for "radical liberalism." Having analyzed the reality of American politics, Harrington perceived dramatic changes in its class structure, namely, the likelihood of the disintegration of the New Deal coalition. He maintained that the source of the coalition's disintegration would result from stagnation, a relative loss of economic and social position among manual workers and a remarkable growth of professionals and technicians. Finally, he pictured the possible formation of a new democratic majority which, he thought, can support his radical liberalism: a new politics which can be carried out by the new majority. As Christopher Lasch put it, Harrington's Toward a Democratic Left can be read as a manifesto of the new movement toward radical liberalism.³⁰ Nonetheless, Lasch criticized Harrington's ideological position from the ultra-Leftist point of view, by saying that Harrington's radical liberalism is merely a logical extension of New Deal liberalism.³¹ At any rate, Harrington's ideological position continues to confound both the ultra-Leftists who were

³⁰Christopher Lasch, The Agony of the American Left (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 190.

³¹Ibid.

so eager to write Harrington off as a member of the establishment and those New Deal liberal intellectuals who thought that they had already tamed the young Irish Catholic Marxist of the fifties.³²

In addition, Harrington, with great boldness, suggested in The Accidental Century (1965) that what the United States needs is socialism. By this he did not mean simply the nationalization of the means of production or the simple concentration of political control over the economy. He argued that the modern belief that big business is a kind of estate of the realm that can be trusted to seek the general welfare as well as particular profits is an illusion. Specifically, he pointed out that the advanced capitalist countries, by integrating corporations and the state, would be moving toward another form of bureaucratic collectivism. Hence he predicted an inevitable trend that the future would not lead to a choice between capitalism, Communism, and socialism, but between bureaucratic collectivism, advantageous to both executives and commissars, and democratic collectivism.³³ In brief, he insisted that the trend would be inevitably directed toward democratic collectivism, through which an advanced industrial society can be set up on a true socialism. During the sixties, however, he seldom used the term socialism because he thought it might be identified with

³²David McReynolds, "Book Review of Harrington's The Accidental Century," Village Voice, 24: 5 (August 26, 1965); and Saul Maloff, "New Politics: Book Review of Harrington's Toward a Democratic Left," Newsweek (April 15, 1968), p. 104.

³³Harrington, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

totalitarian collectivism experienced in the Communist countries. Not only did he restrain his use of the word socialism during the sixties, but also he chose not to define his new concept of socialism since he was not yet prepared to theoretically approach socialism.

To Harrington, the seventies was a decade in which he intellectually matured as both a neo-Marxist and a theorist representing contemporary humane socialism in America. His most important works on socialism are Socialism (1972) and The Twilight of Capitalism (1976), both of which can be regarded as the monumental achievements in his intellectual life. As Gary Wills once stated, Harrington is "the great current example of a man who has retained the demanding socialist ideal without letting himself be [circumscribed] by crazies."³⁴

Harrington proffered a fresh reading of Marx, defending as realism what has been called determinism, and as moral paradigm what has been called ideology. To Harrington, Marx proposed an ideal for human freedom, by which man creates his world; Marx's objection to capitalism was moral, not merely utilitarian. In addition, Harrington's analysis, subtle and admiring, became at times hagiographic--as in the long apologia for an unfortunate phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat." According to Harrington, Marx meant not dictatorship when he said dictatorship, but the

³⁴Gary Wills, "The Book Review of Harrington's Socialism," The New York Times Book Review, 77: 18 (April 30, 1972), p. 4. Parentheses are mine.

fulfillment of pure democracy. Harrington flatly insisted that Marx regarded democracy as the essence of socialism, and that Marx and Engels were distinguished from all other radical theorists of their time precisely by their insistence upon the democratic character of socialism.³⁵ Regardless of what Marxian scholars may contest in Harrington's interpretation of the Marxian texts, his book, Socialism can be regarded as a fresh interpretation of Marx in terms of the humanistic and moral character of Marxism, which, he thinks, is based on the belief in the unity of the human race and man's potential to perfect himself by his own efforts.

In The Twilight of Capitalism (1976), Harrington undertook to rescue Marx from the vulgar interpretation of Marxists and non-Marxists alike, in a much more sophisticated manner than he had in Socialism (1972). Not only did he defend Marx against the charge of narrow materialism, by which the orthodox Marxists dialectically interpret human history, but also insisted that Marx's moral system included ethical and spiritual values. To Harrington, Marx's theory of social infrastructure and human history alike are not explained merely by economic determinism but by human free-will. That is why Harrington claims that the real Marx was a moralist, a humanist, a systems theorist in liberal terms, and a democratic socialist.³⁶ In the second half of The Twilight of Capitalism, he developed the inherent contradictions of capitalism in their modern

³⁵ Harrington, Socialism, Chapter One.

³⁶ See Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, Chapter 3.

setting. As John Kenneth Galbraith once said, it is in The Twilight of Capitalism that Harrington remained, and still remain, committed to the democratic faith, and believed that the contradictions can be resolved by the force of public opinion and popular power, that is, through a new majority of the democratic Left.³⁷ From Socialism to The Twilight of Capitalism, his concept of democratic socialism never changed, and his world view was astonishingly continuous, smooth, and unruptured.

It is obvious that the most important mentor who has influenced Harrington intellectually is Karl Marx, not the vulgarized Marx but the "real Marx." In brief, the vulgarized Marx is regarded as the mainstream of the orthodox Marxism in which Marx was claimed to be simply materialistic and revolutionary in his theory and practice of socialism. On the other hand, many critics of the orthodox Marxism have made theoretical efforts to excavate the "real Marx" in terms of humanism and liberal democracy alike. In his fascinating book review of Harrington's The Twilight of Capitalism, Ian Maitland said that "Harrington's Marx is an expurgated version, which is to say Marx is a social democrat."³⁸ At any rate, Harrington developed, defended, rescued, and applied the

³⁷ John Kenneth Galbraith, "Marx Defended, Rescued and Applied: The Book Review of Harrington's The Twilight of Capitalism," New York Times Book Review (May 23, 1976), p. 3.

³⁸ Ian Maitland, "How Is a Marxist Like a Penguin?: The Book Review of Harrington's The Twilight of Capitalism," National Review, 28:33 (September 3, 1976), p. 963.

"real Marx," the moral and humanistic Marx, to his democratic socialism in the 1970s.

Harrington's impressive scholarship, his exposition of Marx, his lucid discussion of totalitarian collectivism, and his astute observations about the failure of social democracy in Western Europe appeared to affiliate him with the left wing of the Democratic Party. He maintained that the most affective way for American socialists to act would be through affiliation with the Democratic Party. Furthermore, he believed that democratic socialism would somehow emerge as the sum-total of liberal reforms that a new majority of the democratic Left, including the left wing of the Democratic Party, could support. At this point, it seems that his democratic socialism in 1972 is not different from his radical liberalism in the 1960s. Even though he tried in the 1960s to go beyond the welfare state, he did not go too far from the mainstream of American liberalism, an ideology of incremental progress by liberal reforms.

The fact is, as Harrington pointed out, that the word socialism has become an oddly ignored or feared one in the United States; many shunned it without even knowing what it stood for, and many understood its meaning in their bones rather than their heads. As will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters, he clearly declared that his socialism is quite different from European social democracy because the latter has gradually become exponents of a kind of socialist capitalism, or bureaucratic socialism, especially in West Germany. In this sense, he demonstrated

that European social democracy is the same as welfare liberalism in America, which, as we will see in Chapter III, has been functionally based on "socialism for the rich," a notion of distorted welfareism.

In the meantime, one cannot ignore Harrington's background of Catholic radicalism, based on his Jesuit education. In fact, a communitarian character of Catholic radicalism, which advocates local farm communes, enormously influenced the young Harrington while both in school and in his days at the Catholic Worker. As he said, Harrington has long thought that his Jesuit education predisposed him to "the worst and best of Marx's thought."³⁹ Unfortunately, he abandoned his Catholic faith during the late 1960s, but he has so far continued to support Catholic radicalism in his political thought.⁴⁰

Having abandoned vulgar Marxism, Harrington was intellectually influenced by Norman Thomas, the premier American social democrat and the spokesman for a non-Marxist brand of socialism in America. Robert Hyfler asserted that Thomas's socialism offered itself as a credible alternative to both Communism and twentieth-century capitalism, and that finally it served to subordinate much of radical thinking to that of mainstream liberalism in America, that is, a pluralistic theory of the state.⁴¹ In this sense, George G.

³⁹Harrington, The Fragments of the Century, p. 14.

⁴⁰Ibid., Chapter One.

⁴¹Robert M. Hyfler, American Socialist Thought: From Debs to Harrington, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts (1980), p. 289.

Higgins insisted that Harrington is the successor to Norman Thomas as the leading theoretician of the American socialist movement because he preserves a sense of modesty and moderation in his theory of socialism.⁴²

In shaping strategies for building a democratic Left, including a new class which is a key component of radical liberalism, Harrington's ideas were also influenced by other theorists such as Thorstein Veblen, Daniel Bell, John K. Galbraith, André Gorz, Alain Touraine, and Serge Mallet, the last three of whom are contemporary French socialist intellectuals. As will be described in more detail in Chapter IV, all these theorists of a new class emphasize a newly emerging social class, whether or not in favor of radical alignment, in technologically-developed postindustrial societies. Although their technical terminologies for the component of a new class are slightly different from each other, Harrington has attempted to use their theoretical strength of a new class in his efforts to build a democratic Left.

As we will discuss in the next chapter, Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking, composed of idealist or humanist Marxism, is in part indebted to many European neo-Marxists, who have attempted to rescue Marxism from the philosophical crisis in orthodox Marxian perspective. His 1970s works include sophisticated references to such European Marxists as Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukács, Max

⁴²George G. Higgins, "Socialism: The Once and Future Politics," America, 127: 3 (August 5, 1972), p. 71.

Horkheimer, and Theodore W. Adorno. As a result, Harrington's exhaustive study of the "real Marx" in the neo-Marxian perspective has helped him not only develop his theory of socialism but also criticize both social democracy in European countries and totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism in Communist countries.

CONCLUSION

In sum, one can see that Harrington's experiences and active involvement in various liberal and radical organizations, plus his energetic intellectual activities, have eventually made him a leading neo-Marxian thinker in America. The development of Harrington's political thought can be chronologically classified into two phases: the radical liberalism of the 1960s and the humanist socialism of the 1970s, which, as he said, refers to "democratic collectivism." But his "emotional" Marxism of the 1950s is not significant for understanding his political thought, since as a Bohemian-style radical of the 1950s he did not contribute theoretically to Marxism. Consequently, his radical liberalism of the 1960s refers to his early political thought; his humanist socialism is believed to be his late political thought. In effect, however, there is no theoretical difference between these two phases in his political thought. Only a difference between them at a glance is that the early phase is less elaborated in the neo-Marxian direction than the later phase is.

Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking, which approaches the "real Marx" in humanistic and moral terms, is reflected in his new brand of socialism which, as he insists, is capable of adjusting itself to the American ideological situation. His socialism, often called democratic socialism or radical liberalism, which was strongly colored by his neo-Marxian thinking, can be characterized as a theoretical justification, or a logical extension, of his radical liberalism of the 1960s. In a sense, as far as his political thought as a whole is concerned, his democratic socialism is no less than radical liberalism as will be seen in Chapter III. The next chapter will focus upon Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking which is to generate a theory to justify his concept of socialism.

CHAPTER II

HARRINGTON'S NEO-MARXIAN SOCIALISM

-- HARRINGTON'S EPISTEMOLOGY --

This chapter presents Harrington's socialist ideas within the context of Western Marxism. His efforts to transcend the interpretative debates between Marxist intellectuals arguing for the young Marx and the old--the intellectual rupture of the two Marxs--are carefully synthesized into an authentic mature Marx as the totality of his whole life. Harrington calls his Marxist philosophical position spiritual materialism, or a unique blending of the Hegelian idealism of his youth and the scientific, economic-based writings of the old Marx. He therefore does not apply a rigorous "young-and-old-Marx" dichotomy in dealing with Marx's thought. Harrington's Marxism is understood as an eclectic approach to Marx that attempts to go beyond this dichotomy. Marxism, in his view, is not an established doctrine but an important starting point toward a future Marx. Harrington's intellectual position should be recognized as a creative force in neo-Marxism, and the various neo-Marxist forerunners, like Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno, have had an enormous influence upon Harrington's thought.

However, Harrington is not only a part of the academic world of neo-Marxism, but, as an activist, also tries to apply it to the conditions of American politics. His initial task is to eliminate from American minds the concept of the perverted socialism

experienced by the "anti-socialist" socialism of the Communist block nations. His final task is to substitute for this a democratic socialism.

In the first section of this chapter, we will present Harrington's arguments against all existing forms of socialism. This is the starting point in Harrington's search for the real Marx. And in the next three sections we will present Harrington's efforts to fill the ideological vacuum he has created within socialist thought with his own unique form of neo-Marxian thinking. More specifically, we will follow certain neo-Marxist concepts as they are transformed into Harrington's spiritual materialism. We will also see Harrington's unique position in neo-Marxian thought, i.e., his philosophical approach to the real Marx, or the mature Marx, and how he attempts to redefine socialism.

AN ANTI-"ANTI-SOCIALIST SOCIALISM"

Harrington starts by rejecting all of the existing forms of socialism. For the last two decades, he has concentrated on criticizing orthodox Communism, European social democracy, as well as Third World socialism. He has been enthusiastically redefining his own brand of "socialism" beyond all the experiments of socialism in the world, so as to adjust it to the American situation. He is a political analyst who believes that an economic abundance, as in the United States, can lead to a "real" socialist society, a

society which goes beyond all the forms of perverted socialism, that is, beyond "anti-socialist socialism."

Harrington assumes that European social democracy no longer has any connection with socialism. It is just another method of managing the capitalist economy. The European social democratic leaders have been an integral part of the capitalist system.¹ He also describes, for the most part, German social democratic philosophy as a degraded deviation from the original ideals of social democracy.

In a word, Harrington views European social democratic thought as "socialist capitalism."² In its original use, "socialist capitalism" goes back to a socialist version of capitalism accepted by Rudolf Wissell in his work in the Weimar Republic. Wissell's concept of councils closely resembled compulsory cartels, except that representatives of the workers and consumers were allowed to participate. According to him, mere nationalization of the means of production could not fundamentally improve the standard of living of the masses and might actually reduce it temporarily. The raising of the lower stratum of society depends on the enlargement of the social product.³ As a result, Wissell stood against the nationalization of the coal industry in the Socialization Commission

¹Harrington, Socialism, p. 215, and see Daniel Singer, Prelude to Revolution (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), pp. 277-78.

²Harrington, *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³*Ibid.*, p. 192.

set up by the Weimar Republic. Wissell's idea of a planned capitalism for national production, Harrington asserts, was accepted by the 1959 Godesberg Program of the German Social Democratic Party, then majority party in West Germany.⁴

To Harrington, the acceptance of Wissell's ideas by the German social democrats was a significant event in the development of European democracy, from the traditional policy of nationalization, whether by militant revolution or by gradual and democratic consensus, to its rejection in favor of the capitalist cause. Of course, the German socialists had long ago understood that nationalization was not socialist per se. Karl Kautsky, for example, regarded a simple nationalization as the bureaucratic exploitation of workers: "When the contemporary state nationalizes certain industries and functions, it does so not to limit capitalist exploitation but to expand and strengthen it."⁵ He even gave socialist capitalism a new name. He called it "state socialism," a strategy of government intervention into the economy, including the nationalization of certain industries, for the purpose of shoring up capitalism. In much the same way, Kautsky did not totally reject the idea of nationalization itself, and rather emphasized the socialist management of nationalization by the direct participation of the workers, not by a state bureaucracy. Whatever the consequences of Kautsky's road into socialism, the German social democrats under the leadership of

⁴Ibid., p. 193.

⁵Quoted from Harrington, Socialism, p. 199.

Willy Brandt adopted Keynesianism--i.e., rationalizing state intervention in the capitalist economy--in the Godesberg Program as did American welfare capitalism since World War II. In this respect, Harrington saw in the 1959 Godesberg Program nothing socialist. It is merely welfare capitalism, the American version of capitalism. The consequence of German "socialist capitalism," Harrington insists, finally gave rise to a mired economy with private and public sectors co-existing side by side. In other words, the Germany Left planned, and oriented the use of, capitalist economic growth.⁶ He writes: "Even though the theory and practice of socialist capitalism thus emerged as an honest response to a tortuous history, and even though it was a tremendous advance over vague theorizing about the withering away of the state, it is by no means adequate to the demands of the times."⁷

The weakness of the German workers' consciousness, Harrington observed, is due to the effect of socialist capitalism: "The masses have been drilled to always wait for the command from above. The people above are so absorbed in the administrative business of the enormous apparatus that they have lost all wider vision, all interest in anything outside movement."⁸ Consequently, the social democratic movements themselves have lost much of their élan and

⁶Ibid., p. 198.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 75.

the bureaucracies are therefore even more powerful. Thus Harrington concludes that it is quite possible that these events announce the "doom of the socialist hope," at least in the European social democratic movements.⁹

In much the same way, Harrington turns his attention to what has been doing wrong in the Communist world: fundamental failure and massive betrayal, of socialism. He clearly states that it is important to root out every bit of messianism from the socialist vision, to reject the notion of a secular redemption that, like the incarnation of Christ, claims to make all things new.¹⁰ The most basic failure of past socialists is, he argued, a kind of chiliastic definition, the result of which has always been totalitarianism. Nonetheless, he thinks that the rich history of socialist tragedy and error is as important as the record of its profundity.

Russian Communism is the most perverted form of socialism, which turned out in practice to be totalitarian and a messianic means of practicing the socialist vision. Specifically, he calls Stalinism "bureaucratic collectivism," the Soviet mode of production.¹¹ This so-called vulgar Marxism is, for the most part, due to the totalitarian character of the socialist vision which has permeated Russian Communism.

⁹Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹Ibid., p. 169.

Under Communism, the contradictions of capitalism are collectivized, not resolved. The principles of democracy, which, Harrington assumes, are essential to socialism, are totally destroyed. The Communist formula is well known: the state owns the means of production. But Stalin had found an effective substitute for the bourgeoisie, not the workers or the peasants or the European proletariat, but the Communist Party. Thus, a bureaucratic elite owns the means of production in practice. The interests of this elite are every bit as egoistic as those of corporations, and are imposed upon the system by totalitarian command. The anti-socialist socialism is thus consciously planned rather than being dictated by the "will" of the people.¹²

Harrington's critique of Russian Communism is, in part, based upon Antonio Gramsci's brilliant analysis of totalitarian Communism. In Socialism he quotes from Gramsci:

Totalitarian politics tends, precisely, (1) to work that members of the given party find in this one party alone all the satisfactions which they previously found in other organizations and thus break all their ties with alien cultural organisms; and (2) to destroy all other organizations and to incorporate them in a system in which the party alone is the regulator. . .

Gramsci continues,

This happens, (1) when the given party is the bearer of a new culture and it is a progressive development; (2) when the party wants to hold back another force, the bearer of a new culture, from becoming totalitarian in this way and it is an objectively reactionary, regressive development if reaction as always does not admit its identity and attempts to be the bearer of a new culture.¹³

¹²Ibid., p. 4.

¹³Quoted from Ibid., p. 176.

Harrington points out the fact that Gramsci's analysis was a condemnation of Communism as practiced in Russia. Under Russian Communism it is precisely the totalitarian monopoly of political power that allows the bureaucracy to extract the surplus from the producers and use it for its own ends. If the producers were allowed to participate in decisions, it would signal a revolutionary shift of control from the top to bottom.

Harrington concludes that Russian Communism is unquestionably a betrayal of radicalism; therefore this self-proclaimed Marxist society has provided the way to the anti-socialist variant of the future.¹⁴ At this point his crucial question is, Who owns the state? Or how can the people own the state? The people, he answers, can own the state in only one way: through the fullest and freest right to change its policies and personnel. Thus, in a nationalized economy, exclusion from political power is not something unfortunate that happens in a superstructure. It determines the social and economic base of the system itself, and it assures class power to those who own the state, for they will also own the means of production.¹⁵ In Russia, in the first half of the twentieth century the bourgeoisie was not in fact able to modernize and the Party-state carried out that function and, in the process, developed into a bureaucratic collectivist power. Whatever the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 185.

result of a nationalized economy, Harrington insists on its democratic management through worker participation in decision-making.

Harrington points out that Russian Communism subordinated the actions of some of the most revolutionary spirits of the Western working class to Moscow and thereby weakened the movement for radical change within the advanced capitalist countries. He rather thinks that the radical change within the advanced capitalist countries could not occur in the same way as in Russia because they are more advanced economically.¹⁶ It is obvious that he is an anti-Communist, that is, a staunch opponent of nationalization run by either the state or a regulatory party as in the Soviet Union.

Though totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism developed in the Russian situation, the event has global implications. This is quite obvious in the case of the Third World peoples who, like Russia, want to modernize, but cannot do so through capitalist means. In China and other nations of the Third World, for instance, there were similar development after World War II. It is certainly true that other nations need not follow in Russian footsteps. But, if the great barrier to socialism in Russia was the backwardness of the country, how could it be alleviated in such undeveloped countries as China and India that were even more backward? To this question, Harrington responds: they must expect the "audacious failure of the Marxian revolution" as in Russia.¹⁷ In

¹⁶Ibid., p. 155.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 168.

any event, though he provides no comprehensive picture of Third World socialism, Harrington criticizes the distorted form of Third World socialism, as seen in the totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism of China.

"The welfare state," Harrington also argues, "poses a similar problem in a radically different context" as in the United States. In his view, the welfare state in America resulted from the reform of capitalism, which was achieved largely because of the presence of the mass radical movement of the unions. The advances that were thus made were quite real and the result of a democratic struggle. They were the very opposite of "revolution from above" carried out by Stalin in Russia. Nonetheless, "the danger," he observes, "is that the welfare state is then equated with socialism itself," that is, a socialism for the rich.¹⁸ He abruptly concludes that in the advanced Western countries it is possible that there will be a transition not from capitalism to socialism but from capitalism to bureaucratic collectivism. It may even be relevant to the Western welfare state where an intensification of the integration of corporate and government power could end up in a "liberal bureaucratic collectivism", that is, a non-socialist corporate form of collectivism, instead of a totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism.¹⁹ As a result, the workers will lose their democratic rights under both liberal and totalitarian bureaucratic collectivisms.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 182 and 185.

Harrington's brief overview of the past experiments of socialism in German social democracy, Russian Communism, Third World socialism, and American welfarism illustrates what has happened politically in the name of socialism. He categorizes all of them in the concept of "anti-socialist socialism." Hence the future of existing socialism has no hope. If socialism were to be effectively turned into a rationale for new modes of exploitation, then there would be no hope of a just order of things.

In sum, Harrington's intentions are revealed in his analysis of the existing "anti-socialist socialisms." First, in most of his writings, he attempts to change the American attitude of "socialism-is-a-bad-word," which has deeply permeated American minds. He points out the fact that the majority of the American people are unwittingly reluctant to embrace or accept socialism even though they are already beneficiaries from the socialist policies of welfarism. Such attitudes, he argues, have been established for the most part as the result of their exposure to the monstrous crimes of the past "anti-socialist socialisms" in the world. Hence he hypothesizes that there is not much of a future for American socialism unless the American people are freed from their negative attitude to the extant "anti-socialist" socialisms.

Second, his persevering effort during the past decade has been to demarcate the line between his own version of socialism and all the various other "anti-socialist" socialisms. In fact, he dares to conceptualize his own socialism in contrast to all the experiments of socialism in the past, and even in American welfarism. A

clear understanding of Harrington's own conception of socialism, the notion that democracy is the essence of socialism, is a product of his neo-Marxian thinking.

HARRINGTON AND "WESTERN MARXISM"

--HARRINGTON'S "UNKNOWN MARX"--

After rejecting the "anti-socialist socialism," Harrington turns, paradoxically, to a "new Marx" or the "unknown Marx" in hermeneutical terms in order to develop his own brand of socialism. This involves the demystification of the old Marx which had been based on the theory of historical materialism. In German's words, the term "neo-Marxism" symbolizes contemporary Marxist theory, which hermeneutically rectifies Marx's own inconsistencies without muting the revolutionary call for socialist justice.²⁰ One of the intellectual movements of neo-Marxism is concerned with finding an authentic Marx by returning to the young Marx's work, particularly, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, issued in Russia in 1932, and The Grundrisse, the "raw outline" of Das Kapital written between 1857 and 1858, and published much later in Moscow in 1939.²¹ These two works place a special stress on the subjective and Hegelian idealistic elements of his thought.

²⁰Robert A. Gorman, Neo-Marxism: The Meaning of Modern Radicalism (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 15.

²¹For more discussion of the Young Marx's work, see Ibid., Chapter 1.

According to Harrington, Marx has been seen by most Marxists as the father of totalitarianism and as a materialistic simpleton who taught that economic interests neatly determine the entire course of society. As long as that falsification of the socialist past prevails, the graven images of Marx are among the greatest obstacles to the socialist future.²² To Harrington, the so-called Marxism was incomplete and rather open to the future; in the concept of a "young Marx," for example, the human face of Marx appears. Here Harrington agrees with C. Wright Mills' notion that "Marxism did not end but began with Marx."²³ Hence he claims that the "incompleteness of Marxism" should present itself in the future through Marxist efforts to excavate the unknown Marx.²⁴

For a better understanding of "Western Marxism," a few remarks should be included. The phrase "Western Marxism" was originally coined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a French Marxist, to denote something neo-Marxist.²⁵ According to Stanley Aronowitz, it is also

²²Harrington, Socialism, p. 6.

²³C. Wright Mills, The Marxists (New York: Dell, 1962), p. 97; and George Zeitlin, "The Plain Marxism of C. Wright Mills," in George Fischer, The Revival of American Socialism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 230.

²⁴Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 103.

²⁵Andrew Feenberg, Lukács, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), p. 2. In Adventures of the Dialectics Merleau-Ponty first introduced the phrase "Western Marxism" to describe the idealist camp of Marxism stemming from Lukács's History and Class Consciousness. For more discussion of the phrase, see Eugene Lunn, Marxism and Modernism (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982); George Lichtheim, From Marx

called a "new revisionism of Marxism" after Eduard Bernstein's revisionism.²⁶ Probably, it does not matter whether neo-Marxism is called "Western Marxism," "new revisionism," or "Marxian idealism." No matter what phrases are used by different Marxist intellectuals, they share a common perceptibility of the theoretical crisis within traditional orthodox Marxism, before and after World War I. To be sure, it seems that the theoretical crisis of Marxism came from the failure of the revolutionary praxis of the workers, insofar as the term "praxis" means the capacity of the working class to constitute itself through its political activity as an historical subject. The new Marxist intellectuals abandoned the orthodox Marxist doctrine of historical materialism and the vulgarized trend in Marxian politics, because, as they observed, the working class was no longer fated to become the determinate, self-conscious negation of capitalism. In Robert A. Gorman's words, Marxism is decentered in part because of history's reticence.²⁷

to Hegel (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971); Jack Lindsay, The Crisis in Marxism (Wiltshire, England: Moonraker Press, 1981); and Perry Anderson, Considerations of Western Marxism (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 25. Although he acknowledges that the phrase "Western Marxism" indicates no precise space or time, Anderson admits that a large number of writers were part of a "mutation" of Marxism, an entirely new intellectual configuration within the development of historical materialism.

²⁶ Stanley Aronowitz, The Crisis in Historical Materialism: Class, Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory (New York: Praeger, 1981), p. xvii.

²⁷ Robert A. Gorman, op. cit., p. ix.

A comprehensive analysis of the historical evolution of neo-Marxism or "Western Marxism" is not in the scope of this chapter.²⁸ However, to fully understand Harrington it is important to briefly sift through the theoretical configurations of a few of the more influential neo-Marxist forerunners. Harrington's exposure to, and intensive dialogues with, Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno, the names of whom are frequently invoked in his Socialism and The Twilight of Capitalism, seem to have played a significant role in developing his neo-Marxian thinking.

Gramsci's theory of "hegemony" played a significant role in the development of Marx's new face. This was an imminent critique of the entire scaffolding of historical materialism. Gramsci formulated the concept of hegemony to designate the decisively greater strength and complexity of bourgeois class rule in Western Europe. He designed it precisely to speculate about the political structures of capitalist power, and then intended to frame a picture of intellectual hegemony in the future, which would lead to the self-consciousness of the oppressed class. To him, this hegemonic superstructure was considered to have prevented any repetition of the Russian Revolution in the advanced countries. The hegemonic system of capitalist power was defined by the degree of consent it obtained

²⁸For a comprehensive analysis of neo-Marxism, see Robert A. Gorman, *Ibid.*; and Andrew Feenberg, *op. cit.* Feenberg simply classifies neo-Marxism into two major schools such as the Frankfurt school and the French school--a simple classification in terms of regional evolution of neo-Marxism. But, in his analysis of neo-Marxism, Gorman deals comprehensively with four schools (families) in a philosophical spectrum covering idealism, empiricism, experientialism, and pure critique.

from the popular masses.²⁹ He saw this development as breaking down the relatively simple division of infrastructure and superstructure. Gramsci's presentation of hegemony led him to the idea of the "historical bloc," an idea that the objective and the subjective forces combine to bring about a truly revolutionary situation: "The conception of the historical bloc, in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form--base and superstructure come together to form the bloc."³⁰ At this point, Gramsci stressed the full dialectical content of the situation, and used the term "historical bloc" to describe the unity between spirit and nature, infrastructure and superstructure. With this set of conceptions, enhancing the theoretical import of German idealism unlike traditional Marxists, Gramsci sought to find a theoretical explanation of the basic historical impasse--the defeat of the workers.

To Gramsci, the victory of the working class was impossible without a cultural victory, and for this it needed to evolve an intellectual stratum which could express the actual experiences of the masses with conviction and in comprehensible language. He believed that the working class was on the way to creating its own original culture, quite different from that of the bourgeoisie. It would destroy bourgeois myths and prejudices and set up for the first time truly universal spiritual values. It is not clear,

²⁹Perry Anderson, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

³⁰Quoted from C. Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 120.

however, from his arguments how far he expected cultural continuity to be broken by the proletarian revolution. But he insisted that the new culture must be quite different from the old. At any rate, an important point in Gramsci's argument is that the workers could only win if they achieved cultural hegemony before attaining political power. No oppressed class in history had yet succeeded in doing this and even the Communist revolution in Russia lacked this kind of cultural hegemony. The typical situation in history was that of cultural hegemony. The typical situation in history was that of a gulf between mass culture and the intellectuals. Hence Gramsci argued for the intellectuals' initiative in shaping cultural hegemony in favor of the oppressed class.³¹ For Harrington, Gramsci was daring enough to attack Das Kapital as a "book of the bourgeoisie" in less developed countries--that is, an argument for the evolutionary development of capitalism until it reached the maturity that socialism required.³²

In the same category as Gramsci's ideological position, Lukács began by criticizing a book that at the time functioned as a bible for dialectical materialism: Engel's Anti-Dühring (1878), the book to which most Western Marxist intellectuals ascribed the original source of vulgar Marxism. Engels was obviously concerned with what he himself called the "materialist conception of history" as

³¹Leszek Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origin, Growth, and Dissolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 241-42.

³²Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 347.

signifying that "the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought . . . not in the philosophy but in the economics of each particular epoch."³³ Lukács thought that Engels discarded Marxian dialectics. Marx's materialism, according to Lukács, is dialectical in the sense that it seeks to portray the interaction between theory and practice, or between conscious activity and the material preconditions of existence. With Marx's original ideas about dialectics, but against Engels's, Lukács refreshed Marxian dialectics with the concept of "totality," or "collective subject." His dialectical perspective went beyond dualism and thus placed the subject in a group. The subject was treated as a relative totality, in relation to the world which is conceived as process and totality.³⁴ To Lukács, the collective subject refers to the foundation of the subject-object identity, to a notion of the interdependence between the subject and the object as in the interrelation between production and market: the subject is in the object, the object in the subject and they can neither be separated nor opposed. For Lukács, the identity of the subject and the object, as well as the category of totality, constitutes the essence of Marx's thought, particularly that of the young Marx.

Lukács' thought seemed to be a radical alternative to the dominant Stalinist orthodoxy known as vulgar Marxism in his time.

³³Quoted from Anderson, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁴Quoted from Lucien Goldman, Lukács and Heidegger: Toward a New Philosophy, trans. by William Boethower (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 43.

His dialectical paradigm within the context of the collective subject influenced a whole generation of Western Marxists, affirming the primacy of working-class "praxis."³⁵ It could be of no service to authoritarian regimes, but only to a socialist culture of self-rule, or self-management with the awareness of the collective subject as well as working-class "praxis." It can be said that Lukács attempted to philosophically fulfill Marx's concept of praxis, or the notion of "human control" through which history becomes the process of man's self-creation.

For Harrington, the importance of Lukács' History and Class Consciousness was its rediscovery of the role of subjectivity in Marx. Yet he criticizes Lukács, noting that his "account of proletarian consciousness is Hegelian . . . in the sense that it constructs an ideal type of what the worker's mind should be like, one which Lukács himself admits does not correspond with the actual, empirical consciousness of the working class."³⁶ Yet, as we will soon see, Lukács' concepts of "collective subject" and the subject-object interdependence were to be directly absorbed into the foundation of Harrington's "mature Marx."

Although Lukács used the term "culture" relatively infrequently, his interpretation of Marxism is quite close to the

³⁵For more specific discussion on the philosophy of praxis, see Andrew Feenberg, op. cit., Chapter 1.

³⁶Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, pp. 346-47.

approach to culture taken by the Frankfurt school.³⁷ According to Andrew Feenberg, while Marx described conditions in the economic sphere as the economic crisis and breakdown of capitalism, Lukács reconstructed this as system's cultural crisis and breakdown. According to Lukács, society is constituted in the dialectic of subject and object, and so can never be fully grasped by a formal rational logic. He attempted to transcend this antinomy by treating the formal rational laws of the social world not as its ontological basis, but as a cultural system in interaction with the human beings who comprise that society. Thus he avoided a mechanistic social theory with which would derive revolution from simple dissatisfaction with the level of welfare that capitalism can deliver to its working class. Instead, he developed a broader crisis theory, once again adumbrating the later efforts of the Frankfurt school, whose eminent representatives are Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.³⁸

To those in the Frankfurt school, Marx was not just a materialist, and much more than an historical materialist. Today this requires no emphasis, but their separation of Marx from Engels was considered quite radical at the beginning of the school. The term "critical theory" employed by Horkheimer and Adorno to designate

³⁷Jack Lindsay, op. cit., p. 3. The term "Frankfurt school" has been used since the 1950s to denote an important German neo-Marxist movement, the history of which goes back to the early twenties and is associated with that of the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt--Institut für Sozialforschung.

³⁸Andrew Feenberg, op. cit., p. 67.

their system of beliefs served as an outward sign of an orientation which systematically discriminated between Marxism and what was going on in the Soviet Union.

Horkheimer's and Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944) contains some basic ideas which outline their system of beliefs, or what has come to be known as "critical theory."³⁹ According to them, the "dialectic" consisted in the fact that the movement which aimed at conquering nature and emancipating reason from the shackles of mythology had turned on its self. It had created a positivist, pragmatist, utilitarian ideology and, by reducing the world to its purely quantitative aspects, has annihilated meaning, barbarized the arts and sciences, and increasingly subjected mankind to reification, a phenomenon of man's enslavement to the commodity.⁴⁰ In this respect, they ascribed the dialectical source of reification to enlightenment (scientific thinking), but did not confine themselves simply to Marx's commodity fetishism. They were

³⁹Summarizing the characteristics of critical theory in terms of their philosophical approach, Kolakowski emphasizes its three aspects. First, independence vis-a-vis existing doctrines, including Marxism; second, the conviction that civilization was diseased and needed a radical transformation, not merely partial reform; and third, the belief that the analysis of existing society was itself an element of that society, a form of its self-awareness. In this context, critical theory is not confined to a specific theory in terms of modern scientific methodology, but to a whole set of beliefs, as well as criticism of existing societies, totalitarian Communist and capitalist (Kolakowski, op. cit., p. 372). In Gorman's words, critical theory admits that truth is basically unknowable as pure doctrine (Gorman, op. cit., p. 256).

⁴⁰Kolakowski, op. cit., p. 373.

thus able to broaden the sphere of dialectical explanation of reification over and above the critique of Lukács.

Their attack on scientific thinking--especially positivist thought--was centered on the concept of reification. Separating object from subject, science ascribed reality only to that which occurs more than once. This "repetition principle," critical theory insists, governs mythological thinking. In a word, scientific thinking, by excluding the subjective, is mythological thinking. It sought to contain the world within a system of categories, turning individual things and human beings into abstractions and thus creating the ideological foundations of modern totalitarianism. Science, the legacy of enlightenment in a broad sense, regards every object as self-identical. The idea that a thing may be what it is not yet is rejected as a relic of mythology.⁴¹ Science, which led to the development of technology and industrialism, treats human beings as repeatable and replaceable elements of an abstract system, and thus reifies human subjectivity. By restricting thought to "fact" which must then be arranged in an abstract system, science, in the name of enlightenment, sanctifies what is social injustice.

Horkheimer and Adorno asserted the claim of the Frankfurt school to be the only philosophy attacking reification. They accepted the idea of reification and the Marxist view that it results from the objectification of human beings into exchange-value.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 374.

However, they rejected the idea of the proletariat as the savior of humanity and did not believe that reification could be abolished simply by nationalizing the means of production. In a sense, they rejected the orthodox Marxist view that reification would cease when all factories are taken over by the state. While accepting Marx's position as to the exploitation and alienation of the proletariat, they did not identify with him in regard to the position of class-consciousness as an a priori norm. Some of their intellectual descendants represent an alternative to that in terms of a "new class," which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Harrington recalls Horkheimer's and Adorno's critical insights in the analysis of existing systems. In his view, the Frankfurt school treats Marxism not as a norm but as a starting point and an aid to the analysis and criticism of existing culture, totalitarian Communist and capitalist. Hence it has made free use of many non-Marxist sources of intellectual inspiration specifically from Hegelian idealism.⁴²

Generally speaking, a common theme of neo-Marxist theories, developed by Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno, is the goal of resolving the dialectical interrelation between subject and object. The unity of spirit and nature, or of infrastructure and superstructure, is transferred over into Harrington's epistemology in the theoretical task of generating spiritual materialism of the "mature Marx."

⁴²Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, pp. 351-53.

HARRINGTON'S MARX AS A DEMOCRAT

--A MATURE MARX--

Harrington's efforts to search for a "future Marx" are expressed in his statement: "Engels was not capable, like Marx, of establishing a unique and implacable synthesis. His writings . . . are contradictory and filled with references conducive to misunderstanding of Marxism. Both Marx and Engels contributed to the distortion of Marxism, the former on occasion, the latter more systematically."⁴³ Again, he emphasizes, "Marx made his own contribution to vulgar Marxism, and Engels helped to codify it."⁴⁴

Harrington offers the concept of a "mature Marx," in reference to his efforts to create something new from what was not previously comprehensible in Marx or even in Engels. He insists that Marxism exists beyond Marx and Engels. His intention is to take Marx in a new direction: "Marxism must be more chastened, . . . understanding that its humanism is not an inevitability, but simply the best possibility that mankind can struggle for."⁴⁵

Harrington's point of departure is thus the distinction between the young Marx and the old Marx. But he carefully approaches a "real" Marx through both Marxs for the purpose of establishing the framework for a "mature Marx." While most Western Marxists

⁴³Ibid., pp. 45-46.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 59.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 183.

have downplayed the old Marx's historical materialism and embraced the subjectivism of the young Marx, Harrington emphasizes the synthesis of the young and the old Marx in order to justify his argument for a "spiritual materialism." He rejects the young-and-old-Marx dichotomy in reading Marx's writings as a whole. Harrington's Marx is regarded as a mature Marx in which a humanistic young Marx evolved into what has been called the old Marx, without any rupture between the young and old Marxs. Robert Hyfler has said of Harrington: "To Harrington, the young Marx, including the collaborator on The Communist Manifesto, was an apocalyptical, eschatological chilliast, whose romantic search for an Hegelian unity in all of nature overrode his humanistic concerns for the working class, and fueled his militant, revolutionary zeal."⁴⁶ Harrington, in Socialism, puts the argument this way:

There are, to be sure, a few scholars who know who he was. But as far as most of the literature public is concerned, the Karl Marx who lived between 1850 and 1883 did not exist. That unknown Karl Marx is so at variance with the totalitarian, or the insurrectionary or the intransigent Marx of popular myth that the meaning of his mature years has either been ignored or distorted. He was, for instance, certainly revolutionary, but also a moderate, and that dialectical combination baffles most of the accepted readings of him.

Harrington holds that the mature Marx was moderate. In other words, the mature Marx was "inherently revisionist."⁴⁸ He

⁴⁶Robert Hyfler, op. cit., p. 389.

⁴⁷Harrington, Socialism, p. 55.

⁴⁸Harrington and Deborah Meir, Theory, Life and Politics (New York: Institute for Democratic Socialism, 1977), p. 6. Quoted from Hyfler, op. cit., p. 389.

continues to say: ". . . such an idea (of moderation) can indeed be found in The Communist Manifesto (1848), for it is a corollary of Marx's youthful error of supposing that society was fast polarizing into only two classes," that is, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.⁴⁹ But he argues that the mature Marx did not hold the view on the two polarizing classes and defined the class struggle in a far more subtle and complex fashion which can also serve as an excellent guide to the reality of the 1930s in America--and also the 1970s. In his famous inaugural address to the International Workingmen' Association, Marx, in Harrington's view, spoke of a campaign to restrict the working day to ten hours in England as "a struggle between the blind rule of supply and demand, which is the political economy of the middle class, and the social control of production through intelligence and foresight, which is the political economy of the working class."⁵⁰ As Harrington documents at length in his Socialism, the tactic of the Inaugural was central to the politics of Marx and Engels from the late 1850s to the time of their respective deaths.⁵¹

Harrington's mature Marx favors the workers in a democratic cause, which has been ignored by vulgar Marxism. In his view, the orthodox Marx was the father of totalitarianism and taught that the

⁴⁹Harrington, "Old World Class, New Working Class," Dissent, (Winter 1972), p. 153.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹See Harrington, Socialism, Chapter 4.

ideal society could only be achieved through a brutal dictatorship. This perception of Marx was against all civil liberties and had no use for bourgeois sentimentalities about truth and justice because he held that material, and particularly economic, self-interest is the secret of all ideals. The orthodox Communists interpreted Marx in this way so that he could provide a rationalization for their totalitarian practices. Thus Harrington's return to the original Marx is not simply a matter of scholarship. It is also a contemporary political act, an attempt to restore a genuine memory of Marx for the future.⁵² Marx is caught at the intersection of freedom and necessity, as the child of one age and the father of another. As he writes: "The god of the various Marxist churches is almost never been in the fullness of his errors, which obscures the humanity and depth of many of his truths."⁵³ Harrington concludes that the mature Marx regarded democracy as the essence of socialism. He sketches the real, mature, and future Marx in the light of democracy.

Translating an important paragraph from Marx's original text of Theses on Feuerbach (1845),⁵⁴ Harrington presents an even greater example of Marx's democratic vision that was at the heart of his philosophy: "The convergence of the changing of the

⁵²Ibid., p. 37.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴According to Harrington, these Theses were written by Marx in 1845 but were not published until after his death in 1883.

circumstances and human activity, or self-changing, can only be conceived and rationally understood as revolutionary praxis."⁵⁵ Here, he points out that in his editing of Theses 3, Engels dropped the reference to "self-change." Thus he puts the emphasis upon Marx's concept of praxis from a democratic perspective: "Men transform the circumstances that form them; socialism cannot be decreed for the masses, it must be won by them. It is a matter of people changing both themselves and their environment."⁵⁶

Harrington attacks Daniel Bell's conception of the young-and-old-Marx dichotomy. According to Bell,

A whole school of neo-Marxists . . . has gone back to the early doctrines of alienation in order to find the basis for a new, humanistic interpretation of Marx. To the extent that this is an effort to find a new, radical critique of society, the effort is an encourage one. But to the extent that it is a form of new myth-making in order to cling to the symbol of Marx, it is wrong. For while it is the early Marx, it is not the historical Marx. The historical Marx had in effect repudiated the idea of alienation.⁵⁷

But to Harrington, the commitment to democracy and self-emancipation of the working class in relation to solving the problems of alienation is central to all of Marx's writings, both young and mature. According to Harrington, the commitment to democracy dominates Marx's whole life. It can be found in The Communist Mani-

⁵⁵Harrington, Socialism, p. 40.

⁵⁶Ibid.,

⁵⁷Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology, (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 365.

festo and, above all, in Das Kapital, and not just in the early writings.⁵⁸

Harrington is faced the most controversial problem in his interpretation of Marx's famous notion of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," which the totalitarian Marxists have justified in favor of their political cause. He has argued against the ultra-Leftists who hold this notion dogmatically. In fact, the phrase has given a certain semantic legitimacy to the anti-socialist totalitarians who were to inscribe the slogan on their banners. But, the problem, he insists, is that Marx did not mean dictatorship when he said dictatorship. Even in Marx's Class Struggle (1850), the notion was used so as to be compatible, even identified, with democracy. "The constitutional republic," Marx wrote of the peasants, "is the dictatorship of their united exploiters; the social democratic real republic is the dictatorship of their allies."⁵⁹ Thus Harrington implies that in each case, it is possible to have a republic, and in the latter instance, a social democratic republic, which is also a dictatorship. Sidney Hook once clarified this point in his Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx (1933): "wherever we find a state we find a dictatorship."⁶⁰ To Harrington, "dictatorship" does not mean dictatorship but the

⁵⁸Harrington, Socialism, p. 42.

⁵⁹Quoted from Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁰Quoted from Ibid., and see Sidney Hook, Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx (New York: The John Day Co., 1933), p. 300.

fulfillment of democracy. The tragic problem, he says, is that the scholar can follow the subtlety of the Marxian analysis, but the activist in the street--and the dictator occupying the seat of power--tends to take the word at its most obvious, and brutal, meaning. It is in this way that Marxism has become identified with anti-democratic repression.⁶¹ Hence Harrington concludes that "Marx defined socialism in its very essence as a movement of the overwhelming majority which would smash a 'democratic' state apparatus that had been designed to exclude the people from participation."⁶²

Harrington argues that in the years leading up to 1850 Marx was a democrat in the sense of seeing the coming revolution as a democratic insurrection or a gigantic popular explosion. But, after 1850, he says, Marx had to revise his most basic strategic notions. The working-class movement was changing, it was organizing itself into unions, and there were possibilities of political action that could not have been even imagined earlier.⁶³ The mature Marx became even more democratic in the modern sense of the term, increasingly envisioning a nonviolent and electoral conquest of power. Consequently, Harrington sees the mature Marx as the first Marxian revisionist. If this is right, the young Marx would be opposed to what Harrington has so far argued for, namely Marx as

⁶¹Harrington, Socialism, p. 51.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 51-52.

⁶³Ibid., p. 53.

democrat. He writes:

Most important of all, in the 1850s Marx became the first Marxian revisionist. He analyzed the prevailing situations, developed a new strategy and in the process prepared the way for one of the most decisive events in the history of socialism: its identification with the labor movement.⁶⁴

In any case, Harrington insists that the democratic Marx is the unknown one, and seeks this unknown Marx in the life of the old Marx, who lived between 1850 and 1883. His studies indicate that, by 1864, Marx understood that an insurrection of the 1848 type was no longer feasible. Thus Marx devoted his life to linking the socialist ideal to the struggles of a labor movement. The Ten Hour Bill in England was for Marx no longer a "false step," but now a "triumph of the political economy of the working class."⁶⁵ Harrington also demonstrates that in the mature Marx the all-or-nothing radicalism had vanished, and the potential for democracy and the value of reform had taken its place.⁶⁶ In 1852 Marx had even argued that "the carrying of universal suffrage in England would therefore be a far more socialistic measure than anything which has been honoured with that name on the Continent. Its inevitable result . . . is the political supremacy of the working class."⁶⁷ Harrington is confident that Marx consistently emphasized the self-conscious emancipation of the proletariat at all

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 54.

⁶⁵Quoted from Ibid., p. 60.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Quoted from Ibid., p. 64.

times and would have seen the struggle of workers' parties for democratic freedoms as a crucial element in this process.⁶⁸ This kind of argument for the unknown Marx, however, might be reproached for having been somewhat naive about the potential of universal suffrage. This is because, in 1852 when Marx argued so, universal suffrage for the working class was an unknown practice that seemed like only an imaginary possibility for the distant future.

Another crucial point lies in Harrington's argument against the popular equation of socialism with a bureaucratic management of nationalization of the means of production, a formulation which, as he says, the so-called "anti-socialist" socialists advocated. For him, Bismarckian "state socialism," supported by Ferdinand Lassalle, a German socialist, is a better example of the bureaucratic management of nationalization than totalitarian Communism. Lassalle looked toward Bismarck and the Prussian royal house as possible allies in the socialist movement. He emphasized the reconciliation of "freedom and authority" and spoke of the "dictatorship of intelligence," attacking the bourgeois liberals for their individualism. The state must be "the unity of individuals in an ethical whole."⁶⁹ In any case, the Lassallean equation of socialism with nationalization of the means of production did enormous damage to the socialist movement in this century. It also helped to justify the confusion of the welfare state with socialism.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Quoted from Ibid., p. 66.

Although Harrington's evidence for the unknown Marx is not sufficient, an effort is made to justify the mature Marx based on the concept of democracy. Following passage succinctly articulates his argument for the mature Marx:

...the socialism defined by the unknown Marx between 1850 and his death in 1883 was political and democratic, refusing the chiliastic vision of Bakunin and the conspiracies of Blanqui. It was reformist with a revolutionary purpose, in that it saw an alliance with trade-union gradualism as a step toward the abolition of classes. It advocated the democratic ownership and control of large-scale means of production. But it was fearful that bureaucracy would usurp democratic power, and therefore fought tenaciously against the equation of socialism with state ownership, pure and simple. As a corollary to that position, Marx repudiated any political coalition of the Left and Right against bourgeois liberalism and advocated instead a united front with the liberal capitalists against the feudalists in the name of democracy. And Marxian socialism based itself not upon the good will of capitalists nor upon the destructive rage of the lumpenproletariat, but upon the democratic self-consciousness of the workers.⁷⁰

Again, according to Harrington, the essence of Marx's socialism is its democratic nature. Socialism is only possible in the name of Gramsci's "civil hegemony" of the working class and an identification with the labor movement.⁷¹ There is no path to the civil hegemony of the working class other than through the labor movement. However, Harrington's theory of the labor movement is not confined only to the traditionally limited concept

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 69-70.

⁷¹Ibid., Chapter 3.

of the working class, but to the more broadened concept articulated by other neo-Marxian theorists.

Strangely enough, the secret of the unknown Marx, to Harrington, is that he was too optimistic, too trusting in democracy. Needless to say, Harrington interprets the old Marx as the intellectual continuity of the young Marx, while arguing against the intellectual rupture between the young Marx and the old. Harrington's mature Marx is committed to a more refined democracy in a modern sense, which, as he insists, would result from the civil hegemony of the working class. In this context, the future Marx would be a variant of Harrington's mature Marx in line with the real Marx's democratic nature. Harrington argues similarly against a narrow view of Marx's commitment to economic determinism and sees Marx as an "anti-economist," a word coined by him.⁷² This argument is what follows.

MARX AS AN ANTI-ECONOMIST

In Harrington, an authentic Marx is found beyond the scope of scientific Marxism. Harrington's Marx is believed to have been an anti-economist. Marx is also described as the first man to have claimed that economics is, by its very definition, a bourgeois discipline. To Harrington, Marx's work is a critique of political economy in the most profound sense of the word, denying that its subject matter has the right to exist at all.⁷³ By "anti-economist"

⁷²See Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, Chapter 5.

⁷³Ibid., p. 104.

Harrington is referring to one of Marx's basic assumptions, namely, that economic phenomena cannot be independently explained. In contrast, capitalist economists themselves have looked at economics as an independent discipline. Like Marx, Harrington conceptualizes society as an organic whole in which the economic, political, sociological, and cultural realms interpenetrate, so that they can not be explained in and of themselves. There is no room for a completely independent discipline of economics or political science or sociology or aesthetics.⁷⁴

Harrington wishes to examine the organic whole from one particular perspective, as Marx himself did in Das Kapital, a comprehensive work of the mature Marx. He takes three of Marx's central themes--his concepts of the labor theory of value, of labor, and of capital. Although these three central themes do not cover the full outline of Marx's extraordinarily rich and complex analysis of capitalism, they are sufficiently fundamental so as to be accepted as representative of the thinking of the mature Marx.

The labor theory of value, in Harrington's words, is not the simplistic statement that most of Marx's critics and many of his disciples imagine. The simplistic statement shows that commodities exchange at prices proportional to the socially necessary labor time spent in their production--the "socially necessary" labor time being simply that which corresponds to the average efficiency of work in its particular industry. Here value is objectified, or

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 104-105.

materialized, as reified human labor.⁷⁵ In this context, surplus value--profit--comes only from the unpaid value of labor time. The capitalist with the least investment in machines and the greatest outlay in wages would get the greatest surplus. In Harrington's understanding of Marx, the capitalists from the capital-intensive industries would rush to invest the labor-intensive industries, and their competition would bid down the profits.⁷⁶ It seems that his understanding of Marx's labor theory of value is somewhat distorted, particularly on this point. In fact, according to Marx, the falling rate of profit results not from competition for the labor-intensive industries among the capitalists, but from the increasing tendency for less labor-intensive investment in machines due to technological development and its application to industries.⁷⁷

On the other hand, according to Harrington, Marx went further away from a model of simple commodity production--price equals the labor value spent in production. Actually Marx developed a much more complex statement. By a conscious initial simplification, which was actually made after the analysis had been completed, Marx isolated the decisive economic-social-political determinants of the capitalist system: that independent producers engage in unplanned

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 109-116.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 113-144.

⁷⁷Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. I, trans. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1912), pp. 235-255.

social production by means of a market.⁷⁸ From this highly abstract model, according to Harrington, Marx developed the necessity of crisis and alienation, and then applied his basic insights to a progressively more real world in which the simplifications were removed. Yet, Harrington seems to lack sufficient evidence to demonstrate his assertions here.

Marx's concept of abstract labor in the development of the modern factory system was described as a simple model, which appeared in the first chapter of Das Kapital, Vol. I: "The automation itself is the subject and the workers are only coordinated as the conscious organs of an organ without consciousness and subordinate to the same central power sources."⁷⁹ For Harrington, this simple model is complemented by Marx's emphasis on the concept of the modern factory system in The Critique of Political Economy, where the factory is viewed as "a vast automation, composed of various mechanisms and intellectual organs, acting in uninterrupted concert for the production of a common object, all of them (the workers) being subordinate to a self-regulating moving force."⁸⁰ Harrington places great emphasis upon Marx's concept of labor, the labor which becomes "abstract" under capitalism, which appears in Das Kapital, Vol. I: "Since living labor . . . is corporated into capital, it appears as an activity which belongs to capital, and as soon as the labor process begins, all the productivity of social

⁷⁸Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 119.

⁷⁹Quoted from *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁸⁰Quoted from *Ibid.* Parentheses are Harrington's.

labor presents itself as the productivity of capital."⁸¹ In this context, he argues that the analysis of labor in Das Kapital is an explanation of the phenomenon of alienation, which had concerned the young Marx. In fact, in its discussion of the liberation of the worker from alienation, this argument has been said to have humanized Marx.

Harrington points out that many academic economists failed to understand that Marx had anticipated his own point on the growing importance of productivity in the domain of capitalist labor. Their failure, he implies, depends on their ignorance of Marx in The Grundrisse. Following passage is the case in which he emphasizes Marx's complex themes in his labor theory of value:

To the degree that modern industry develops, the creation of actual wealth becomes less dependent upon labor time and the quantity of labor applied and more dependent upon the power of instruments which are set in motion during the labor period, a period that stands in no relationship to the immediate labor time which the production of these instruments costs. Now the creation of wealth seems rather to be dependent upon the general state of science and the progress of technology, or the application of science to production. (However), as soon as labor in an immediate form has ceased to be the great source of wealth, the labor time ceases, as it must, to be the measure of wealth.⁸²

As Marx developed this analysis in The Grundrisse, science and technology, instead of immediate labor, were the factors which cause productivity and wealth to rise. Thus Marx envisioned the end of labor time as the measure of value. He emphasized science and technology rather than labor time as the measure of value. But

⁸¹Quoted from Ibid., p. 121.

⁸²Quoted from Ibid., pp. 128-29. Parentheses are Harrington's.

Marx did not absolutely deny labor time as the measure of value. As Harrington insists, at no point did Marx think that there would be an automatic transition to socialism on the basis of technology alone.⁸³ The point is that Marx can be said to be an anti-economist, who tended to explain the labor theory of value in terms that transcend economics.

Marx also analyzed the "trinitarian formula" in Das Kapital, Vol. III. In this analysis there are three unrelated sources of wealth: capital, land, and labor.⁸⁴ The trinitarian formula assumes that these three factors contribute independently or separately to the creation of wealth and value in production. As they are brought together, their prices--profit for capital, rent for land, and wages for labor--measure what they bring to the final product. The price of the final product is then simply the sum of these three constituent elements. The trinitarian formula also assumed that capital is a homogeneous substance. Marx attacked the very notion of capital, which was so central to this conception. As Marx put it, these three elements were based on the "complete mystification of the capitalist mode of production, the transformation of social conditions into things, (and) the indiscriminate amalgamation of the material conditions of production with their historical and social forms."⁸⁵ In this respect, capital is not

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Marx, op. cit., Vol. III, Chapter 48: pp. 974-968.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 966. Parentheses are mine.

money (variable capital) or machinery (constant capital or "dead labor"), although both of these may, under certain specific conditions, serve as forms of capital. But it is invested in the purchase of labor power and thereby enables its owner to appropriate the surplus created by the labor, then it becomes money. Likewise, a machine is not capital when it is used by a peasant to meet his family's needs, but in the hands of a laborer working for agribusiness, it is. Thus capital is not a thing, but a dynamic relationship that determines a particular way of utilizing things.

Harrington's remarkable contribution of the development of a "unknown Marx" is an assiduous effort to prove that Marx was an anti-economist in the sense that the economic system cannot be explained without reference to society as an organic whole. Capitalism and even the capitalist mode of production cannot be accounted for only in economic terms.

Harrington clearly points out the limitations of Marx's method in approaching capitalism. He writes: "It must be freely admitted that Marx, on his side, did not fulfill his own program. Encyclopedic Titan that he was, he could not integrate all the social sciences into a rounded and comprehensible analysis of capitalism."⁸⁶ This is what Marx was doing in the nineteenth century. Even today no one can go beyond what Marx could not do. According to Harrington, "no one individual could possibly accomplish such a

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 108.

fusion. It is obviously a collective task and one that will, at the very best, approximate its ideals. For, as Marx himself understood, there is no final and finished truth about a mankind continuously immersed in time and its changes."⁸⁷

As a result, the concept of the "anti-economic" Marx, according to Harrington's neo-Marxian thinking, is projected to rescue the vulgar Marx, who is simply known as an economic determinist. This idea evolves more sophisticatedly into the notion of "spiritual materialism," which connotes an eclectic position mediating between the young Marx's idealism and the old Marx's materialism. Here Harrington uses the term "spiritualism" to mean idealism. As will be discussed in the next section, such a notion of "spiritual materialism" reveals the basic framework of Harrington's epistemology, and will provide an excellent guide to articulating a new Marx of the future.

"SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM" AND A MARXIST PARADIGM

Marxist idealism, the notion so closely associated with the Western Marxist concept of the young Marx, has little appeal for Harrington. The idealistic Marx, described by theorists like Erich Fromm, is too far removed from the materialist character of Marx. Harrington is also quite dissatisfied with the other extreme of

⁸⁷Ibid.

Marxism, such as orthodox Marxism emphasizing a unity of subject and object only within a material totality. Of course, Harrington grants that Marx has been known primarily as "a materialist in the vulgar sense of the word, who reduced all things to their lowest and most sordid common denominator."⁸⁸ So materialist Marxists, mainly committed to the old Marx, have mistakenly accepted that Marx viewed the world of "spirit" as a mere reflex of matter. It is in this interpretation of Marx that the infrastructure of society came to be conceived as a predominantly material structure--in general, an economic structure--which dominates the superstructure, that is, the idealistic relations between politics, culture, law, religion, literature, and all other immaterial elements in human history. In an event, this materialistic image of Marx has formed the mainstream in orthodox Marxian philosophy: that broad river of historical or dialectical materialism.

Here Harrington extracts from Marx's thoughts a "spiritual materialism," a dialectical accomplishment from the two Marxian traditions, in which the interrelationship between the infrastructure and the superstructure is found. As a result, Harrington tries to put an end to the popular oversimplified view of the rupture between the young Marx and the old, as well as to that of the dependence of the superstructure on the infrastructure.

For Harrington, an authentic Marx--or a real Marx on which the future Marx will be based--is a character projected out of both the

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 149.

young and the old Marx. "Both readings of Marx," he writes, "are wrong, though not equally. The first, the 'materialist,' is an outright travesty without the least basis in Marx's writings. The second, the 'spiritualist,' is an understandable reaction to the scientific interpretation of Marxism."⁸⁹ He points to Erich Fromm as an example of the extreme case for the spiritual Marx. According to Fromm: "Marx's philosophy was, in secular, nontheistic language, a new and radical step forward in the tradition of prophetic Messianism; it was aimed at the full realization of individualism, the very aim that has guided Western thinking from the Renaissance and the Reformation far into the nineteenth century."⁹⁰ To Harrington, Fromm has pushed the rehabilitation of Marx's philosophic and ethical concerns too far. Unlike Fromm, he insists that Marx was a basic and principled critic of Western individualism as it developed from the Renaissance and the Reformation into the nineteenth century.⁹¹

Harrington's claim to the authentic Marx is to be found in Marx the dialectician. According to Harrington, Marx was, in an eclectic sense, "a spiritual materialist," an audacious synthesizer of two philosophic traditions which had been at one another's

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Quoted from Ibid., and see Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (New York: Frederick Unger, 1961), p. 3.

⁹¹Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 150.

throat for hundreds of years--that of the spiritualist and the materialist.⁹² Harrington contends that Marx forged a new dialectical form in spiritual materialism, which is seen as a process in which spirit and matter are transcended in a new and higher synthesis in the neo-Marxian concept of totality.

Harrington's argument begins with an assertion that the mature Marx of Das Kapital cannot be understood apart from his continuity with the youthful writings of The Grundrisse and The 1844 Manuscripts. The mature Marx of Das Kapital did not turn his back on the metaphysical dreams of his youth. Harrington's whole approach to Marx hinges upon this notion of the continuity of the young and old Marx. In his debates and polemical discussions with other neo-Marxists, we can see the further development of Harrington's continuity thesis.

First of all, he takes issue with Louis Althusser, the French structuralist Marxist, whose central theme is that Marxism is not a humanism. Althusser's Marx was rather described as an anti-humanist in the Feuerbachian mode, especially as the scientific Marx in which human nature is formed by materialistic structure. In his structuralist interpretation of Marx, Althusser wrote:

The untenable thesis upheld by Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts was that history is the history of the process of alienation of a subject, the generic essence of man alienated in 'alienated labor.' But it was precisely this thesis that exploded. The result of this explosion was the evaporation of the notion of subject, human essence and alienation, which disappears, completely atomized, and the liberation of the concept of

⁹²Ibid.

process. . . without a subject, which is the basis of all the analyses in Das Kapital.⁹³

Hence, Althusser's real Marx was not an expression of the young Marx's philosophy, but its betrayal.⁹⁴ Man is not the preexisting subject who undergoes and shapes history; man is the social process of history. Man is part of an historical process, its result rather than its creator, and he occupies the place that is assigned him by the relations of production. So what is central is not man but that process.⁹⁵

Needless to say, Harrington is critical of Althusser's anti-humanist Marx. For Harrington, Althusser's structural Marxism is nothing but historical materialism based on the scientific Marx, presented in his vulgarized form. To Harrington, Althusser was no simple Stalinist, but his anti-humanism and his reading of texts from The 1844 Manuscripts were related to his critical support for a variety of Communist totalitarianism.

Given this rejection of Althusser, there is hardly any need to explain Harrington's sympathy for Erich Fromm's defense of the spiritual element in Marx's materialism. But for Harrington, it is dangerous to sentimentalize or overspiritualize Marx--though not as dangerous as turning him into a philosopher of totalitarianism. As Harrington points out, Fromm sees Marx as aiming at the full

⁹³Quoted from Ibid., p. 157, and see Louis Althusser, Reading Capital, trans. by Ben Brewster (London: NLB, 1970), p. 18.

⁹⁴Althusser, For Marx, Chapter 2; pp. 49-86.

⁹⁵Harrington, op cit., p. 158.

realization of individualism, the very aim which had guided Western thinking.⁹⁶ Fromm also emphasizes that . . . "Marx's aim was that of the spiritual emancipation of man, of his liberation from the chains of economic determination, of enabling him to find unity and harmony with his man and with nature."⁹⁷ These quotations, to Harrington, imply that an undialectical one-sidedness is visible in Fromm's reading of Marx. Marx indeed believed that men are "the authors and actors of their history," but added that they were also creatures of the history.⁹⁸ Hence Harrington attacks Fromm's understanding of Marx by saying that his interpretation of Marx is confined simply in a one-dimensional direction toward the individualist and humanistic Marx of The 1844 Manuscripts. Harrington believes that Fromm's understandable and even commendable desire to rescue Marx from the apogee of the vulgarized image, attempts, without justification, to replace the whole concept of the old Marx concerning historical materialism and totalitarianism, with a simplistic, one-sided inauthentic humanist surrogate.

Harrington quotes a passage from the 1857 Introduction to Das Kapital in order to justify his eclectic position between the young Marx and the old:

The deeper we go back in history, the more the individual, and therefore also the producing individual, appears as dependent, the member of a great whole, first

⁹⁶Quoted from Ibid., p. 160, and see Erich Fromm, op. cit., p. 3.

⁹⁷Fromm, Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 13.

of all quite naturally in the family and then in the expanded family of the tribe, later on in the communes that arise out of the opposition and fusing of the tribes. It is only in the nineteenth century, in the 'civil society,' that the various forms of social interrelationships are counterposed to the individual as mere means for his private ends, as an external necessity. However, the epoch which brings forth this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is precisely the one in which there are the most developed social . . . relationships.⁹⁹

Here, Harrington regards Marx as the prophet of consciously socialized man. Man for Marx, he says, is not a mere plaything of social structures, as Althusser thinks. But, then, neither is he primarily spirit, will, activity, as Fromm intimates. Harrington concludes that . . . "at a given historic moment man is both, and the intermix of freedom and necessity will vary in a complex way in a different societies."¹⁰⁰

In Harrington's understanding of Marx, it would be absurd to argue that there is no change, no growth in Marx's thought. There is not rupture between the young Marx and the old, but only a continuing developmental process. And for Harrington this development in Marx's thought is best understood as a movement toward spiritual materialism. However, he does not accept the argument that there is a seamless philosophy to be found in Marx, a spiritual materialism that inspired both his youth and his maturity. His argument, to repeat, is that in the writings of both the young and the mature Marx, it is possible to perceive an ongoing intellectual process

⁹⁹Quoted from Harrington, op. cit., p. 165.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 166.

whereby a philosophical position emerges that can best be described as spiritual materialism.

According to Harrington, the young Marx defined man as a "species being," which may be distinguished from all the rest of nature. It is the free conscious activity of man that differentiates the human species from other animals. Man, then, is a "species being," in a double sense: subjectively in that he is conscious of himself as part of a species, and objectively in that he transforms the world and increasingly lives in a second nature of his own making.¹⁰¹ In this context, Harrington sees Marx's view of man's nature as spiritual-materialist or a mixture of freedom and necessity. He insists that this view of man-in-the-world runs through all of Marx's important works, like The German Ideology (1846), Grundrisse, and Das Kapital, and that a central theme running through all his works cannot be understood without them. For example, in order to illustrate Marx's spiritual materialism from the perspective of the old Marx, he quotes the following important passage from Das Kapital, Vol. I:

Labor is first a process between man and nature in which man mediates, regulates and controls his interchange with nature through his own act. He is counterposed to the stuff of nature as a natural power. He sets in motion the natural forces that belong to his own body, arm and leg, head and hand, in order to appropriate the stuff of nature in a form that is useful for his own life. As he thus works upon and changes nature outside of him, at the same time he changes his own nature. He develops the powers slumbering within him and subjugates the play of their powers to his own domination. We are

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 168.

not here concerned with the first, instinctive, animal-like form of labor... We understand here labor in a form in which it belongs exclusively to men. A spider performs operations which resemble those of the weaver, and in the construction of its hive a bee shames the human architect. And yet, what distinguishes the very worst of architects from the very best of bees from the outset is that the architect builds the structure in his imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of the labor process there is a result which at the beginning only existed in the imagination of the workers, and thus in an ideal form. Not only does he accomplish a transformation of the form of nature; he also effectuates in nature his own purpose, which he is conscious of, and which determines the mode and manner of his action as a law to which his will must subordinate itself.¹⁰²

This passage, in Harrington's view, is obviously infused with the same vision as The 1844 Manuscripts: it is free activity and purposiveness that differentiates man from animals, and it is through labor that man creates his own essence. This, of course, is what Marx referred to as human praxis. However, in a capitalist society, man is alienated from his own production and through this alienation man becomes the creature of his historical necessity. For Marx, therefore, the transcendence of alienation through the reassertion of human praxis is the basic task of socialism.

In sum, Harrington insists that the Marxian conception of man is a scientific hypothesis about man's behavior. But he does not use the term "scientific" in the traditional positivistic sense. Harrington's conception of Marx holds that man in history and society is best understood by means of a dialectic that sees him as the simultaneous creature and creator of his circumstances.

¹⁰²Quoted from Ibid., p. 169, and see Marx, Das Kapital, Vol. I, Chapter 23; p. 192.

According to Harrington, the dialectical view--in specific, the view of the interdependency of spirit and matter--is a tool of analysis, and depends in considerable measure upon the skill and insightfulness of the person who enjoys it.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, Harrington obviously claims that, as a tool of social and economic analysis, the concept of man as a spiritual materialist is almost empty of meaning--that is, it only provides some very broad and basic guidelines.¹⁰⁴ The development of spiritual materialism was never completely achieved by Marx. But nevertheless, the Marxian vision of man is accurate, and the dialectic method must provide the firmest foundations for the future Marx. Harrington believes it is the task of the future Marxists to develop the dialectic method to perfection.

In developing an approach to spiritual materialism, Harrington suggests a Marxist paradigm for the analysis of society. When he speaks of a Marxist "paradigm," he does not want to suggest that there is an agreed-upon Marxist model of society which its proponents and opponents are busy testing, like a theory in natural science. In his view, the notion of paradigm or model is used much more modestly here, suggesting that there are some distinctively Marxist questions, and ways of answering them, and that both are pertinent to the understanding and shaping of the future in which we will live.¹⁰⁵ For Harrington, a Marxist paradigm is a modest,

¹⁰³Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 181.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 192.

even chastened, attempt to integrate some important Marxist methodological themes into a model approaching something we may call spiritual materialism.

Unlike Harrington, other Marxian scholars like T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel abandoned Marxist sociology. They argue that modern sociology is not the sociology of Marx any more.¹⁰⁶ Harrington thinks, however, that they were wrong. Academic sociology obviously has incorporated many Marxist insights and preoccupations into its discipline. He feels that today's functionalism, as well as systems theory, was descended from the concept of the organic whole, and that this is essentially a Marxian insight in the spiritual materialist sense. The subject-object "totality" exists within a dialectical process: neither the subject nor the object can exist as an independent variable in the organic whole; they are indeed functionally interdependent. Harrington argues, however, that the functionalist sociologists carefully omitted only the essential dialectical nature of the interdependence between the subject and the object, and through a scientific reading of Marx academic sociology has performed a "prefrontal lobotomy on Karl Marx."¹⁰⁷

In Harrington's view, the notion of a Marxist paradigm is found in Marx's own writings. Form and content are integrally

¹⁰⁶T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Ruben, Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 48.

¹⁰⁷Harrington, op. cit., pp. 185-86.

related to each other in the authentic Marx. The method adopted for the study of capitalism is, in considerable measure, determined by the very character of that society itself. In a Marxist perspective, it is impermissible to present a list of methodological propositions that are abstracted from the problems they are supposed to illuminate. Hence there is no such thing as a Marxist paradigm, unless one stays on a level so general that it is not particularly profound. Rather there are a series of actual and potential Marxist paradigms. As Harrington points out, such a paradigm is derived from Marx's own dissection of capitalism.¹⁰⁸

In a simple summarizing fashion, Harrington's Marxist paradigm and methodology consists of eight elements: (1) critical theory, (2) synthetic methodology, (3) the dialectic of necessity and freedom, (4) economics, (5) social evolution, (6) social classes, (7) technology, and (8) the crisis in capitalism.

(1) Critical Theory. "The Marxist paradigm is critical about its own definitions and data. Like other theories in the social sciences, it realizes that the facts are not given, that they must be selected on the basis of criteria of relevance and importance."¹⁰⁹ In his view, it is then a "critical" theory in the Kantian sense of the term--it probes its own concepts and terms, as well as those of its opponents; it seeks to articulate the unstated

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 190-91.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 192.

assumptions of an era and regards what is not stated as eloquent clues to what really defined that society.¹¹⁰ But Harrington does not adequately demonstrate how to select the data on the basis of criteria of importance. In any case, his point is that the data selected by the criteria are supposed to be used in explaining and criticizing capitalism or "anti-socialist" society.

(2) Synthetic Methodology. It makes no pretense at being value-free, but it may seek to be rigorously scientific in the positivist fashion. He believes more generally that it suggests that one's analytic view of society will vary according to one's social perspective. From the standpoint of the ruling class, stability is an obvious and overwhelming value; from the standpoint of the workers, or the minorities, this is not necessarily the case. In this kind of analysis, his Marxist paradigm may be either scientific or philosophical in approaching social problems.¹¹¹ As a result, it looks at a real world beyond the ruling class, by way of intellectual enrichment, that is, from the standpoint of an eclectic method of synthesizing philosophical and empirical scientific methods.

(3) The Dialectic of Necessity and Freedom. As for sexual equality, men and women are both creatures and creators for their society. In part, their actions are to be explained in terms of

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 191.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 195.

their avowed purposes and conscious intentions. But in part, they do only what can be done at a given moment in historic time. Thus there is a dialectic of necessity and freedom, and it constantly leads to consequences influenced by the given circumstances at least as much as by the individual actors.¹¹² In this context, the Marxist paradigm would suggest to analyze dialectical relations between human praxis through self-consciousness and human conditions.

(4) Economics. The economic element in the structure of society is not an independent variable. It should be perceived in the light of the reciprocal interaction, at the same time, of the political, social, and cultural superstructure. Harrington insists on "conscious" economic planning because it will be necessary for any post-capitalist society. He also insists that economic planning should depend on "democratic planning by and for the majority of the society" rather than on a "bureaucratic and exploitative collectivism."¹¹³ In any case, the economic element, for him, is not just another factor on a par with the social and cultural dimension as capitalist economists have seen it: he only sees the economic element as a significant, though not an independent, factor within the organic whole. His key point is that all of these aspects are seen to interpenetrate one another. As he points out, therefore, it is impossible to define any specific economic

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

concept with any precision in generalities without clarifying its relations to other aspects of society.¹¹⁴

(5) Social Evolution. The Marxian paradigm looks for contradictions as a key element in the social dynamic. This does not mean that there is some universal contradiction in nature and society.¹¹⁵ It does not even mean that contradictions must play a decisive role in every society. For example, capitalist society is structurally contradictory and the conflict between its increasingly social way of working together and its private mode of decision-making and allocation of resources is a basic fact of life. But Harrington insists that contradictions cannot be resolved through immediate revolution.¹¹⁶ An immediate revolution is likely to lead practically to totalitarian dictatorship run by the minority of the people as it happened in Russia. So the Marxist paradigm contains a theory of social evolution, which is the only way of resolving contradictions: it is in systemic change that contradictions are gradually resolved. As a result, the Marxian paradigm suggests to seek social evolution through systemic change, not immediate revolution.

(6) Social Classes. The economic takes social form in the shape of the classes which, under capitalism, are determined in the

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 196.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

production process.¹¹⁷ It is well known that the Marx's definition of social class can be reduced to some simple formula--that is, capitalists are owners of the means of production, and the workers are nonowners who toil for those who own the means of production. To the young Marx of The Communist Manifesto, the "distinctive feature" of the modern epoch was that "it has simplified class contradictions. The entire society more and more divides itself into two great, hostile camps, into two classes directly counterposed to one another; the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."¹¹⁸ But Harrington insists that, as Marx matured, he realized that this stark statement had to be modified; the simplistic notion of polarized social classes did not belong to the mature Marx. Hence the class notion of Harrington's Marxian paradigm consists of a new middle stratum between capitalists and workers. The task of the future Marxists is to develop the theory of social class in various forms, which reflect actual social conditions.

(7) Technology. Harrington's Marxism views technology as an extremely important variable within the organic whole. Technology is not, however, a determining factor for a social system as a whole.¹¹⁹ It is important to analyze the way in which technological change interacts with the structures which give it its basic direction, but it is the structure that is central.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 197.

¹¹⁸Quoted from Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 199.

(8) The Crisis in Capitalism. There are distinctions between Marxian possibilities, symptoms, and causes of capitalist crisis. But these careful distinctions, he says, have been ignored by almost all non-Marxists and vulgar Marxists as well.¹²⁰ In particular, vulgar Marxists used to picture the capitalist system as on the verge of collapse at each and every moment because they thought that capitalism always contained a built-in tendency toward crisis. They overlooked the fact that Marx was a theorist who insisted upon periodic capitalist prosperity, as well as periodic capitalist crisis.¹²¹ For example, as far as crisis was concerned, its possibilities were not actualized at every moment in the history of the capitalist system. As Harrington indicates, Marx discerned cycles of recovery, boom, and recovery which took place over a number of years. It was thus necessary to explain why at a certain point, and not at another, the possibilities of crisis became real. Then the symptoms and causes of crisis would be fundamentally analyzed. This is one of the tasks for the future Marxists to explain in the context of the Marxist paradigm, as well as in the name of spiritual materialism.

Harrington believes that these eight elements can provide an analytic framework, which is unlike those of both the mainstream academic disciplines in the capitalist societies and the vulgarized disciplines in Marxist countries. There is in Harrington a

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 200.

¹²¹Ibid.

coherent and Marxist approach to the analysis of the social world, integrating subject matters which are normally treated as separate branches of knowledge about society in the name of spiritual materialism. As he points out, this paradigm based on spiritual materialism is worthless unless it forms a "careful, original and empirical study of new and unprecedented realities."¹²² It is needless to say that the theoretical virtuosity of Harrington's neo-Marxist predecessors, as well as that of the unknown Marx, has been extremely important to his Marxian paradigm.

CONCLUSION

In his deductive approach to socialism through neo-Marxian thinking, Harrington starts by rejecting all forms of existing "anti-socialist" socialism, because he believes that they are all distortions of Marx's original meaning of socialism. He observes that they are perverted forms of socialism which have sacrificed democracy as they have embraced totalitarianism and bureaucratic collectivism. Thus he turns to the authentic Marx in order to fill this theoretical vacuum and to articulate his neo-Marxian concept of socialism, where genuine democracy is felt to be the essence of socialism.

The theoretical foundations of Harrington's thought lies in European neo-Marxism, often called "Western Marxism." Harrington owes much to the theoretical insights of pioneering European

¹²²Ibid., p. 201.

neo-Marxists like Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno. In particular, he has absorbed their common theme of the interdependence between the infrastructure (the economic base) and the superstructure (the sociocultural appendage) into his epistemology. This expresses itself in his notion of spiritual materialism.

Harrington's neo-Marxian position can perhaps best be understood as a reaction to the oversimplified dichotomization of the young Marx and the old, or the theory of the intellectual rupture between the two Marxs. His unique position in neo-Marxism rests upon his conception of the mature Marx's spiritual materialism, which he develops out of a theoretical synthesis of the two Marxs. In other words, he carefully integrates both the young Marx and the old into the concept of the mature, or authentic, Marx as a democratic and an anti-economist socialist. In this respect, Harrington's epistemology is based not on philosophically opposing reductionisms like idealism and materialism, but upon a transcendent synthesis of both. Specifically, his spiritual materialism approaches truth and the real world as a totality, through the dialectical interdependence between subject and object, form and essence, as well as between infrastructure and superstructure in the Marxist sense. But in spiritual materialist terms, Marxism is not a complete doctrine, but ongoing one, as Harrington insists that Marxism did not end but began with Marx. In Harrington, there is therefore a future Marx to be sought.

As an American neo-Marxist, Harrington has always been committed to a position in the middle of the road between idealist and

materialist Marxisms. As the notion of spiritual materialism indicates, this is an eclectic position between the young Marx's idealism and the old Marx's historical materialism, a unique position in the so-called Western Marxism. In this sense, unlike orthodox Marxists as well as neo-Marxists, Harrington is creative, purely eclectic Marxist, but in the neo-Marxist tradition. As a result, he finds in the mature Marx's concept of democracy a theoretical bridge across the intellectual rupture between the young Marx and the old. Thus the mature Marx's views on democracy pave the way for Harrington's democratic socialism, that is, Harrington's neo-Marxian socialism, which expresses itself in his economic analysis and various proposals as will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

HARRINGTON'S APPROACH TO DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

--RADICAL LIBERALISM--

In this chapter, we will look into the dynamic fabric of Harrington's thought about democratic socialism which, as far as his proposals are concerned, appears as radical liberalism, a revived American liberalism. While to the eyes of the American conservatives Harrington's thought is perceived as a variant of socialism, to the eyes of the American liberals and socialists it is viewed as radical liberalism in the American sense, that aims at the expansion of welfare capitalism in a more radical direction. Any any rate, we can see in Harrington the interwoven threads of socialism and New Deal-style American liberalism, which appear as a disguised form of radical liberalism or democratic socialism.

This ideological mesh is woven subtly into his various proposals for transcending both the failures of welfare capitalism in the United States and the "distorted" socialism of the European social democracies, as well as the totalitarian Communism of the Soviet Union. It is worth noting that the principles which underlie his proposals for democratic socialism represent his neo-Marxian concept of socialism.

In the first section, we will clarify the terminological confusion between democratic socialism and social democracy, and see what Harrington means by democratic socialism. And in the second section, we will see how Harrington tries to transcend the limits

of the traditional (liberal) theories of poverty, which have defined poverty only in socioeconomic terms. We will examine Harrington's theory of poverty which explains the culture of poverty in the affluent society of the 1960s by using sociocultural variables in neo-Marxian perspective and, as a result, exposes the paradox of the American welfare state. After that, we will discuss his analysis of the economic crisis of the 1970s from his neo-Marxian perspective. Finally, the last section will deal with Harrington's various proposals for democratic socialism, which result from his economic analysis of the paradox of the American welfare state.

"DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM"

When reading Harrington's writings, one encounters some confusing terminology. Particularly troublesome are the European term "social democracy" and what Harrington speaks of as "democratic socialism."¹ It is evident that Harrington is committed to democratic socialism as he describes himself as "democratic socialist."² He is critical of European "social democracy," which he has

¹The terms "social democracy" and "democratic socialism" have been known to be on common ground in their terminological expression. But the difference of their theoretical definition is seen in Harrington's argument: the former is based on bureaucratic collectivism rationalized by Western-style liberal democracy while the latter emphasizes democratic collectivism. See Harrington, Socialism, Chapter 1.

²Harrington, "Soaking the Poor," Commonwealth, 97:3 (Oct. 20, 1972), p. 57.

characterized as a "distorted" form of socialism that has moved in the direction of the perverted welfare capitalism of America.³ In describing his own view of democratic socialism, he has in mind a socialism that is not dependent upon the bureaucratic management of the means of production through the nationalization of basic industries. Harrington's democratic socialism is founded upon the principle of democratization of the corporate power structure through policies which expand the power of the producer in the work place. Harrington's Marxism would be put to work creating a "democratic collectivism" aimed at liberating the working class.⁴

To repeat, as the phrase "democratic socialism" indicates, Harrington's concept of socialism emphasizes not the political (rational-legal) meaning of democracy as in the European social democracies, but the democratic decision-making rights of the workers in production. In this sense, his democratic socialism is something new and distinct from the European concept of social democracy. Harrington fully recognizes the fallacy of equating social planning with bureaucratic planning. He is aware that bringing industries into state ownership--nationalization--may simply mean the emergence of a more powerful bureaucracy, in a word, a kind of totalitarianism. It goes without saying that this concept of socialism, as he describes in his spiritual materialism, derives from his neo-Marxian thinking, insisting that Marx's socialism was

³Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," Dissent, 17:3 (May-June 1970), p. 254.

⁴Harrington, Socialism, Chapter 1.

fundamentally based on democracy and humanism; the embodiment of Harrington's Marxist principle that democracy is the essence of socialism.

It is important to understand that Harrington's vision of the socialist society is an ideal type. He describes his future socialist world like this:

Invidious competition is no longer programmed into life by the necessity of a struggle for scarce resources; cooperation, fraternity and equality become natural. In such a world man's social productivity will reach such heights that compulsory work will no longer be necessary. And as more and more things are provided free, money, that universal equivalent by means of which necessities are rationed, will disappear.⁵

Again, socialism, to Harrington,

is not simply a program for socializing investments, ownership and redistributing wealth, important as all those goals are. It retains the notion of a truly new order of things and it asserts this through the vision of seeking in the distant but conceivable future to abolish compulsory work and the rationing system of money as far as is humanly possible.⁶

To be sure, his model of socialist vision is similar to vulgarized Marx's Kingdom of Freedom without a practical revolution by the proletariat. In the Kingdom of Freedom, not only will compulsory work and money be abolished, but also all other human conditions will disappear.⁷ In very brief outline, the Kingdom of Freedom is what socialism--or, more precisely, communism--ultimately is. But,

⁵Ibid., p. 344.

⁶Ibid., p. 372.

⁷Ibid., pp. 367-68.

Harrington feels, it will never come to pass in its ideal form, and that vision is, in part at least, an expression of a dangerous messianic socialism.⁸

Contrary to Marx's model of the socialist vision, Harrington's is not applied to all the human conditions; it is confined to only the abolition of such economic conditions as compulsory work and money. Marx's vision was reduced to super abundance itself, tending toward a noncompeting, workless, and moneyless society with the state fading away, after all alienation is abolished. But Harrington's model does not call for a classless society with the state fading away, nor does it require revolution to put the socialist vision into practice, as in the orthodox Marxist model.

Paradoxically, although he never abandons the vision of socialism, Harrington often expresses it in pessimistic terms. In the first place, he does not insist that there is a Platonic essence of socialism that can serve as a panacea for all problems.⁹ In addition, he argues that it is important to be realistic about the limitations of socialism before attempting to transcend some of its present limits. Socialism proposes a solution, not to all human ills, but to those based upon the economic, social, and political conditions of life. In this sense, socialism, to Harrington, is not the final redemption.¹⁰ Hence he does not imply that history

⁸Ibid., p. 370.

⁹Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," p. 289.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 281.

will one day enter paradise. He believes only that, even in the particulars of this or that conflict within a socialist society, human self-determining freedom or praxis can generate each increment of progress, if the progress is related to the vision of a qualitative change, as well as to the vision of a quantitative change, in the human conditions of economic life.¹¹ Consequently, one of Harrington's basic assumptions is that socialism does not imply an ultimate state of human existence in which all conflicts are resolved; conflicts will remain unresolved even in socialism.

At this point, his starting point is the twin demands made upon man by visionary and realistic tasks. Utopias are practical, he argues, since without a dream man's practical efforts are not directed to a unified goal. Yet, paradoxically, the utopia must be kept distant in order to be practical. In an historical context, pretending that the utopia has been realized, or that it can be achieved by one last desperate push (the so-called revolution), has been but the facade and the rationalization for tyranny all through this century. The despotic states that call themselves socialist are betrayers of socialism, and as Garry Wills reminds us: "it takes an ascetic of the high ideal like Harrington to denounce them with just the right prophetic anger."¹² Hence he gives more attention to the practical and realistic tasks of socialism than to the

¹¹Ibid., p. 280.

¹²Garry Wills, "A Book Review of Harrington's Socialism," The New York Times Book Review, 77:18 (April 30, 1972), p. 1.

utopian vision. And it is in this sense that Harrington uses the term democratic socialism.

In making socialism possible, Harrington analyzes the two most serious challenges to it: that global abundance is impossible, and that there is no class of people, or group of classes, impelled to seek such basic transformation of the social structure.¹³ These are challenges that must be overcome as the preconditions of socialism. He writes: ". . . the good society cannot be willed into being by prophets or holy men or philosophers, but requires a certain level of economic development and, above all, the conscious activity of the millions before it can come true."¹⁴ The latter of the preconditions has been well known among most socialists and will be discussed in the next chapter, but the former evokes a disturbing controversy. Needless to say, Harrington thinks only a rich society can achieve socialism--and then that work and money must totally disappear before socialism can display its full, resplendent garments. He suggests immediate and positive programs in general that can make abundance a real possibility: through technological innovation, population limitation, and a change in consumer tastes it is still possible to work toward a world so collectively wealthy that it can provide a decent life to all human beings.

Richard H. Tawney, a social democrat, has put some qualifications on Harrington's preconditions: "A poor society cannot be too

¹³Harrington, Socialism, pp. 345-46.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 35.

poor to find a right order of life, nor a rich society too rich to have need to seek it."¹⁵ Here a grave problem falls into Harrington's lap: Is socialism appealing only when there is backwardness? But Harrington is unperturbed. He counters that the masses are more inclined to be radical when their standard of living is on the upswing rather than when it is at rock bottom. Hence his assumption is that affluence may provoke the workers to political struggle as much as poverty.¹⁶ But in America there is little evidence that worker militancy rose with the standard of living. By clinging too rigidly to these two preconditions for socialism, Harrington seems to underestimate the force of nationalism. But the fact is that nationalism may function as a substitute for one or both of Harrington's preconditions.

Harrington is mortally fearful of the necessity of totalitarianism to effect revolutionary change in the Third World, rejecting the "apocalyptic vision of creative destruction" with his insistence upon his own preconditions for socialism.¹⁷ His dilemma is that the preconditions for socialism (i.e., economic abundance) cannot be applied to the poor countries in the Third World. Hence there emerges from Harrington a hopeless picture of the underdeveloped world fixed in virtually endless poverty. For America and the

¹⁵Quoted from Ross Terrill, "Toward a New Society," Atlantic Monthly, 230:4 (October 1972), p. 126.

¹⁶Harrington, Socialism, p. 355.

¹⁷See Harrington, The Vast Majority: A Journey to the World's Poor (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

developed world, however, he believes there is hope, even optimism for socialism. Harrington seems to believe that the best hope for socialism in the Third World lies in a prior victory of socialism in the developed world.

Harrington has always been interested in socialism at least at the domestic level. He observes the peculiarly American obsession that national economic planning (or socialism) is inherently totalitarianism: the more general fear in the American public that any attempt to embark upon a socialist course necessarily involves the creation of a dull-witted, unresponsive, and powerful bureaucracy.¹⁸ For this reason, his task of modifying a false understanding of socialism has preceded his dealing with the development of class consciousness of a democratic Left. As a nonpartisan democratic socialist since the 1972 split of the Socialist Party, Harrington pays serious attention to liberal organizations such as Americans for Democratic Action and New Democratic Coalition, which were considered to be socialist in all respects save one--they did not use the term socialism in their names or their policy statements. But, like socialists, they stood for the redistribution of wealth, for government intervention on behalf of the poor, minorities and working people, and for the extension of public ownership of production.¹⁹ These liberal--or radical--organizations urged

¹⁸Harrington, The Accidental Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 289.

¹⁹Harrington, "Say What you Mean--Socialism," The Nation, 218:20 (May 18, 1974), p. 649.

essentially democratic socialist programs, but they steadfastly refused any socialist identification. For Harrington, this is perceived as a paradox in American politics. The obvious and compelling answer to this paradox is politics, as he writes:

In America, with the exception of a few unusual constituencies, the socialist label is a hindrance in mainstream electoral politics. Socialism is associated in the popular mind with totalitarianism, foreign ideology, (and) atheism. These associations are not true, but unfortunately truth, particularly complicated truth, is no defense in a political struggle.²⁰

Much more to the point, he argues that the use of the term "socialist" does not make any difference. So it is important for Harrington to change the notorious label of socialism in the popular mind to something more palliative to the American public and closer to what he calls democratic socialism. At the same time, his endless efforts are generated toward pushing those liberal organizations in the direction of his democratic socialism. He is obviously pragmatic in his approach to socialism in adjusting it to the American situation.

His pragmatic and realistic argument for a socialism appealing to the American situation begins to make more sense when viewed within a liberal framework. From this perspective, liberalism and socialism converge in the name of democracy, especially in his various proposals for revitalizing welfare liberalism and humanizing the bureaucratization of existing socialist management under

²⁰Ibid. Parentheses are mine.

nationalization, toward the democratic management of the public sector. In this context, it is no wonder that he has identified his own vision of democratic socialism with a "revived liberalism."²¹ Other commentators, like Christopher Lasch, John Judis, Gar Alperovitz, and Jeff Faux, also called his position a "radical liberalism."²² He may see socialism as an ideal for social justice, but he speaks of, and acts on, a radical liberalism, which, in the end, is what his democratic socialism ultimately represents. At the very least, Harrington's democratic socialism seems to be a Marxist shadow reflecting on the wall of American radical liberalism. He believes that it could be adjusted to American politics where the people are conservative in ideology but liberal in practice (i.e., against a big government in general but for most of the services that government provides).

For Harrington, radical liberalism seems to be a polemic designed to stiffen the backbone of welfare liberalism by reminding Americans of the simple errors and foolishness of the conservative program and of liberal obligation to continue the evolution of progressive thought and action toward a more democratic and just society. As an important intellectual figure of the American Left

²¹Harrington, "Soaking the Poor," p. 58.

²²See Christopher Lasch, "The New Politics: 1968 and After," The New York Review of Books, 11:1 (July 11, 1968); Christopher Lasch, "Populism, Socialism, and McGovernism," The New York Review of Books, 19:1 (July 30, 1972); John Judis, "New Agenda for Liberalism," Commonweal, 107:9 (May 9, 1980); and Gar Alperovitz and Jeff Faux, "A Book Review of Harrington's Decade of Decision," The New Republic, 182:19 (May 10, 1980).

and an activist in every major liberal cause of the past two decades, Harrington is eminently qualified for the task. He argues that only a revived liberalism that goes beyond New Deal reforms can achieve social justice and pull America out of the economic crisis in the 1970s. Specifically he also argues that the possibility of a revived liberalism lies in the unification of the working class and the middle class, a "progressive" coalition of the democratic Left. Consequently, his revived liberalism focuses on the contradiction between uncontrolled corporate decisions about where to locate resources, and the need to plan for local community economic stability. Harrington believes that this contradiction can be resolved only through a revived liberalism expressed as democratic socialism.²³

HARRINGTON'S ANALYSIS OF WELFARE CAPITALISM

IN NEO-MARXIAN PERSPECTIVE

--POVERTY AND "STAGFLATION"--

For Harrington, despite the fact that many of the capitalist characteristics of the American system have been modified in the direction of socialism through the increments of various welfare reform policies, the welfare state remains still capitalist. This is a basic assumption in Harrington's economic analysis. Harrington's neo-Marxian paradigm--and spiritual materialism--guides him toward a sophisticated analysis of modern welfare

²³See Harrington, Decade of Decision, Chapter 3.

capitalism, which then provides him with various proposals for democratic socialism in America. In effect, focusing on the paradox of the modern welfare state in America, Harrington more precisely examines the poverty phenomenon of the 1960s and the joint corporate-governmental complex resulting in the energy and stagflation crises of the 1970s.

In The Other America (1962), Harrington analyzes the poverty phenomenon which had persisted under the so-called welfare state of America, or stubborn paradox of the continuing problems of the poor in the affluent society of the 1960s. For Harrington, the paradox of the New Deal's social legislation and the resulting welfare state is that mass poverty continued to exist, and yet remained invisible politically, even though the America of the 1960s was prosperous and possessed the capacity to eliminate poverty.

In the Economics of Poverty (1965), Burton A. Weisbrod, a liberal economist at the University of Wisconsin, was indignant at the American paradox: "It is paradoxical that, as the economy expanded and our ability to cope with poverty soared in the decades following World War II, general recognition of poverty's existence simultaneously waned."²⁴ As he indicated, it was Harrington who shed light upon the issue of the paradox in the early 1960s. Stephan Thernstrom also wrote about Harrington: "In the early 1960s, Americans suddenly rediscovered poverty, and attention again turned

²⁴Burton A. Weisbrod, ed., The Economics of Poverty: An American Paradox (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 1.

to the unhappy lot of those eking out an existence in the 'other America.'²⁵ To be sure, he implied that Harrington was a path-breaker in rediscovering and refreshing the issue of poverty in contemporary America. As a result, Harrington's basic concern of poverty, analyzing the "other America," or the dark side of affluent America, pushed the theoretical discussion of poverty among liberal and left-wing intellectuals in a much more radical direction.

After Harrington, a massive volume of research on poverty in America appeared between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s. In The Definition and Measurement of Poverty (1978), Sharon M. Oster and her associates collected and reviewed 929 articles or books on poverty.²⁶ According to this research, most liberal intellectuals defined the poor as all those whose annual income falls below the subsistence level in economic terms. Hence they defined poverty in terms of a specific income level based on calculations of the cost of goods necessary for minimal subsistence in the United States. In other words, poverty had been defined as the lack of resources

²⁵Stephan Thernstrom, "Poverty in Historical Perspective," in Daniel P. Moynihan, ed., On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 161. The same discussion as Thernstrom's appeared in Paul Jacobs, "America's Schizophrenic View of the Poor," in Jeremy Larner and Irving Howe, eds., Poverty: Views from the Left (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1968), p. 52.

²⁶See Sharon M. Oster, Elizabeth E. Lake, and Conchita Gene Oksman, The Definition and Measurement of Poverty, 2 vols. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978).

relative to needs.²⁷ It is hard for liberal analysts to determine an objective standard of subsistence. But the method of determining the subsistence level has been utilized as a realistic account of the human need for actual welfare programs in the United States. On the other hand, most liberal theorists of poverty felt that the poor could share the values and aspirations of the affluent society, and that if they could be provided with decent jobs and other resources, the poor would cease to suffer from poverty.

Harrington's definitions of poverty not only transcend a specific phenomenon of poverty in economic terms but also are highly dramatic and dynamic in sociocultural terms. He writes in a key passage: "Poverty should be defined psychologically in terms of those whose place in the society is such that they are internal exiles who, almost inevitably, develop attitudes of defeat and pessimism and who are therefore excluded from taking advantage of new opportunities."²⁸ Again, he emphasizes that "to be poor is not

²⁷Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 4. For other sources of such a definition, see: Martin David, "Welfare Income and Budget Needs," Review of Economics and Statistics, 41:4 (November, 1959); James N. Morgan, "The Anatomy of Income Distribution," Review of Economics and Statistics, 44 (1962); Gerald Rosenthal, "Identifying the Poor: Economic Measures of Poverty," in Daniel P. Moynihan, op. cit.; Robert Levine, "Evaluating the War on Poverty," in J. Sundquist, ed., On Fighting Poverty: Perspectives from Experience (New York: Basic Books, 1969); Riad M. Tabbarah, "The Adequacy of Income: A Social Dimension in Economic Development," Journal of Developmental Studies, 8 (April, 1969); and Harold Watts, "An Economic Definition of Poverty," in Daniel P. Moynihan, ed., op. cit.

²⁸Harrington, The Other America: Poverty in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 179.

simply to be deprived of the material things of this world."²⁹ It is in the definition of sociocultural poverty that Harrington contributed to the theoretical articulation of poverty in the early 1960s. In this regard, he intensifies a generalization about the direct relationship between the experience of poverty and the emotional disturbance which he calls the "twisted spirit," or the "depression of human spirit," which is psychologically internalized by the poor.³⁰ As a result, Harrington's notion of the culture of poverty is described as a set of poor people's attitudes such as fatalism, pessimism, depressionism, feelings of futility, lack of belongingness (alienation), lack of trust in others, and lack of motivation. He indicates: "The poor are not like everyone else, they are a different kind of people. They think and feel differently: they look upon a different America than the middle class looks upon."³¹

Furthermore, Harrington's sociocultural theory of poverty explains the vicious circle of poverty, or the notion of the inheritance-of-poverty, a concept which Otis Dudley Duncan has labelled the "persistence of poverty."³² This provides a generalization that, as Harrington asserts, "the children of the poor will become

²⁹Ibid., p. 122.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 121-138.

³¹Ibid., p. 138.

³²Otis Dudley Duncan, "Inheritance of Poverty or Inheritance of Race?" in Daniel P. Moynihan, ed. op. cit., p. 263.

the parents of the next generation of the culture of poverty."³³ Harrington places great stress on this generalization, saying that "there are people in the affluent society who are poor because they are poor."³⁴

Harrington's theory of inheritance-of-poverty was empirically verified by some liberal and socialist analysts of poverty. James N. Morgan and his associates found that a great number of the heads of poor families had moved into less skilled jobs than their father had.³⁵ In his case study of the inhabitants living in ghettos in the early 1960s, Stephan Thernstrom, a left-wing historical analyst, testified to the permanent poverty of the twentieth century and found that poverty is inheritable over time, by using longitudinal data from Boston and Newburyport, New York.³⁶

In the last two decades, poverty has often been explained with four independent variables: unemployment, lack of schooling, non-white race, and rurality. These four variables, still known as powerful explanatory ones, have been said to be related closely to lower incomes, which, according to most liberal theorists, leads to

³³Harrington, op. cit., p. 187.

³⁴Ibid., p. 160.

³⁵James N. Morgan, Martin H. David, Wilbur J. Cohen, and Harvey E. Brazier, Income and Welfare in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), pp. 210-15.

³⁶See Stephan Thernstrom, op. cit., pp. 160-186.

poverty.³⁷ But Harrington's sociocultural theory of poverty provides a useful corrective to the overemphasis of socioeconomic variables by which liberal theorists have traditionally used to explain poverty. Specifically, Harrington dynamically uses not only socioeconomic variables but also sociocultural variables such as political apathy, infant mortality, psychiatric illness (twisted spirit), pessimism (i.e., fatalism or depressionism), and alienation, all of which represent part of the culture of poverty.³⁸

More importantly, in explaining the culture of poverty Harrington attacks the Freudian theory of poverty, controversial theory that the poor are healthier in spirit than the rich.³⁹ He holds that the truth is almost exactly opposite to the Freudian myth in the United States. Specifically, he cites an empirical verification of the relationship between poverty and psychiatric illness from Hollingshead's study, a research project conducted in

³⁷For the explanation of poverty with the combination of the four socioeconomic variables, see: Robert Lampman, "Approaches to the Reduction of Poverty," American Economic Review, LV (May, 1965); The Council of Economic Advisers, "The Problem of Poverty in America," in Burton A. Weisbrod, ed., The Economics of Poverty (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965); James N. Morgan, Five Thousand Families--Patterns of Economic Progress, Vol. 1 (Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1974); James N. Morgan et al., Income and Welfare in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962); Deprivation in the U.S. (Washington, D.C.: Conference on Economic Progress, 1962); and Leon H. Keyserling, Progress or Poverty (Washington, D.C.: Conference on Economic Progress, 1964).

³⁸Harrington, op. cit., pp. 39, 56, 71, 80, 100, 122-23, 130, 134, and 160.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 121-22.

New Haven, Connecticut in 1958.⁴⁰ Focusing on the relationship of social class to mental illness and its treatment, Hollingshead concluded that the poor are significantly more susceptible to mental illness. Harrington adds that not only the rate but also the intensity of mental illness are much greater for the poor than the figures calculated by Hollingshead and his associate indicated.⁴¹ Hence he concludes that the Freudian myth is no longer true in America.

This conclusion, along with his other ideas on poverty (its cultural and cyclic nature) leads Harrington to the inevitable conclusion that the United States has "two nations": the affluent America and the other America. He writes in a key passage:

The United States in the sixties contains an affluent society within its borders. Millions and tens of millions enjoy the highest standard of life the world has ever known. . . at the same time, the United States contains an undeveloped nation, a culture of poverty. Its inhabitants do not suffer the extreme privation of the peasants of Asia or the tribesmen of Africa, yet the mechanism of the misery is similar.⁴²

This is the paradox of poverty, a paradox of the welfare state in the affluent society like America where welfare policies have been legislated since the New Deal. Thus Harrington defines welfare liberalism in America as a "corporate socialism for the rich," a perverted form of the welfare state in which unsuccessful

⁴⁰See August B. Hollingshead and F. C. Redlich, Social Class and Mental Illness (New York: Jon Wiley and Sons, 1958).

⁴¹Harrington, op. cit., p. 124.

⁴²Ibid., p. 158.

corporations and corporate farms have been subsidized by the federal government.⁴³ On the contrary, American welfare liberalism is based on "free enterprise for the poor."⁴⁴ Hence, as he insists, American welfare liberalism is biased in favor of the rich, such that huge corporation farms, for example, are the main beneficiaries of the farm programs, while the poor farmers gained practically nothing from the farm programs. Again, he emphasizes this point: "The welfare state is not built for the desperate, but for those who are already capable of helping themselves."⁴⁵

Harrington believes that the paradox of poverty in the United States cannot be abolished within the limits of today's welfare liberalism. For ending the paradox of poverty, he calls for a "third New Deal," a structural change in the second New Deal of today.⁴⁶ Harrington generates his notion of the third New Deal from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s chronological classification of the New Deal by which its characteristics have changed since its inception in the early 1930s.⁴⁷ According to Schlesinger, the first New Deal was supported by significant sectors of American business.

⁴³Ibid., p. 161.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Harrington, "The Politics of Poverty," in Irving Howe, ed., The Radical Papers (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 135.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 125.

This was the business-dominated planning of the National Recovery Administration (NRA). It was a period in which the Chamber of Commerce was talking about a planned economy where the private sector would do the planning. By the end of Roosevelt's first term the first New Deal was breaking up. Parts of the labor movement were violently opposed to the National Recovery Act before the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. Then Roosevelt turned toward the left, and with the Social Security Act of 1935, the second New Deal began to appear as the source of social welfarism in America. As Harrington asserts, the second New Deal was "the New Deal of the liberal nostalgia and, more importantly, the source of welfare theory and anti-poverty wisdom."⁴⁸ But he insists that the second New Deal has distorted the form of American welfarism up to the present time, because of conservative pressure against welfarism within the Democratic Party. This is why Harrington calls for the third New Deal which requires a radical, but not revolutionary, restructuring of the welfare state of today.

At this point, Harrington clarifies what the third New Deal would be ideologically. He maintains that "a third New Deal would pose radical questions about the nation's economy and social structure, which could signify both a culmination of liberalism and a most important point of departure of radicalism."⁴⁹ So-called radical liberalism is what he means by the third New Deal. As will

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 139.

be discussed in the next section, his idea of the third New Deal will be much more elaborated in his proposals for democratic socialism.

The central theme of "corporate socialism" is consistent with his later publications such as Toward a Democratic Left (1968), Socialism (1972), The Twilight of Capitalism (1976), and Decade of Decision (1980). To be sure, his economic analysis in the 1970s becomes more and more sophisticated and sensitive to the economic crisis in the 1970s. In his economic analysis, the independent role of the state to control corporations is still seen as the function of a New Deal government at least in its initial stage. In classical Keynesian terms, it is the function of government, acting independently, to ensure a balance by means of a fine tuning of the several components of the economic structure. In Harrington's view, however, it is no longer the case that the government can act independently, since repeatedly the history of the New Deal economy in America shows that the interests and priorities of what he calls a corporate collectivism override those of government. He puts forth the concept of anti-socialist reforms, government policies in the modern welfare state which, while coinciding with progressive demands, are implemented as a means of starving off, rather than insuring, a socialist reconstruction of society.⁵⁰ In this regard, corporate power dominates government,

⁵⁰Harrington, Socialism, p. 5, and The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 205.

which increasingly loses its independence from the corporations.⁵¹ This is what he calls "corporate liberalism."⁵² Harrington argues that welfare capitalism, in America, is equal to corporate liberalism. Finally, he observes that the priority of corporate values concerning both corporate socialism and corporate liberalism has generated the economic crisis that has plagued America since the early 1970s. This is the economic phenomenon of stagflation--a "situation in simultaneous joblessness and inflation," in which chronic unemployment and high prices paradoxically reinforce one another.⁵³

It is well known that, as early as John Stuart Mill, the liberal tradition in England began to see the limitations of the free market in insuring human liberty and economic stability. The Keynesian economists of this century recognized that it was proper for government to intervene in the economy in order to preserve and maintain its capitalist nature. Harrington traces this development in New Deal-style government in America, pointing out the way in

⁵¹See Theodore J. Lowi, The End of Liberalism: Ideology, Policy, and the Crisis of Public Authority (New York: Norton, 1969).

⁵²The phrase "corporate liberalism" was originally used by Gabriel Kolko and James Weinstein, both of whom have been known as ultra-Leftists in America. The concept of "corporate liberalism" has been since then called a Kolko-Weinstein thesis in economic analysis of welfare capitalism, and equals, for the most part, Lowi's "interest-group liberalism."

⁵³Harrington, "Social Retreat and Economic Stagnation," Dissent, 26:2 (Spring 1979), p. 131.

which a Keynesian theory exists as a corrective to Adam Smith's economic system, rather than as an attempt to transcend it.⁵⁴

Harrington's assessment of the welfare state is essentially negative. He observes that in the welfare state,

the corporations have progressively socialized the economy, basing production on science and the most intricate web of human cooperation. Yet, for all the changes in capitalist attitudes, decision-making and appropriation have remained private even when they are exercised by corporate managers rather than owners.⁵⁵

The welfare state is understood as providing some benefits for all, but as primarily favoring the rich. Even though it functions to produce a very high living standard, the social consequences of this achievement are so appalling as to spoil much of it.

All through his writings, Harrington unravels the complexities of the state capitalist system, by equating it to corporate socialism, in which a *prima facie* case for viewing private corporate interests as synonymous with the public good dominates collective decision-making. Underclass interests, when considered, must be mediated through those policies compatible with corporate priorities.⁵⁶ Thus he explicitly rejects Daniel Bell's thesis that capitalist priorities are subordinated to the public good in postindustrial societies. He assures us that ". . . the normal tendencies of the welfare state. . . is to follow the old capitalist priorities

⁵⁴Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, pp. 33-56.

⁵⁵Harrington, Socialism, p. 270.

⁵⁶Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, Chapters 8 and 9; Toward a Democratic Left, pp. 3-141; and Socialism, Chapter. 11

in a new sophisticated way."⁵⁷ Government planners, to Harrington, are unable to intervene directly for the public good, and must rather attempt to assist corporate interests in a manner compatible with their policy objectives. The Keynesian liberalism of state intervention in the welfare state has vanished; Lowi's "interest-group liberalism" takes its place.⁵⁸

In the middle seventies, every European capitalist country found itself in a crisis more serious than any that had occurred since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Even in the United States, still the strongest capitalist power in the world, people began to speculate publicly on whether a simultaneous depression-inflation might not rend the very fabric of democracy itself. They did not think that these events had anything to do with the capitalist economy. For the established economists, conservative and liberal, the crisis seemed to be the product of external and fortuitous events--of the cartel of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which had quadrupled the price of oil during 1973 and 1974, of the increasing demand for food on the world market, and so on. One could hardly blame capitalism for the crisis. Furthermore, the free enterprise ideologues of conservative and even liberal causes, who used to regard state intervention as left-wing or "creeping socialism," ascribed the crisis of stagflation to the governmental spending programs for social as well as military needs. This became known as the "facile theory" of government

⁵⁷Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, pp. 222-23.

⁵⁸See Theodore J. Lowi, op. cit.

and is the argument used by Seymour Melman, a prominent liberal economist in the seventies, to explain the Cold War. He asserts that America is seen as necessarily dependent on the Cold War for domestic survival, but paradoxically the necessary military expenditures lead to stagflation.⁵⁹ For Harrington, however, the military dimension is less important than the federal subsidy to the corporations. He does not think that the arms sector and social spending are the key to understanding the crisis, or that a reduction in defense and social spending is the way to solve all the economic doldrums.⁶⁰ He argues that "it was and is the structure of capitalist society that turned the historical accidents of the 1970s into calamitous necessities."⁶¹

No one need be a Marxist to understand that there is some connection between America's domestic structure and its vulnerability to the energy crisis of the seventies. Joint corporate-governmental policy is a simple example that shows how the welfare state follows capitalist priorities. Oil companies are gigantic; four of them are among the ten largest industrial corporations in America, seven rank in the fifteen largest multinationals in the world.⁶² As Harrington reasserts, the bias of the welfare state toward oil corporations, let alone any other form of big business, is the

⁵⁹See Seymour Melman, The Permanent War Economy: American Capitalism in Decline (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).

⁶⁰Harrington, Decade of Decision, p. 32.

⁶¹Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, p. 206.

⁶²Ibid., p. 236.

consequence of its capitalist structure which favors the common good through profitable activity, and stubbornly ignores the conspiracies of the board room.

One can see here a capitalist argument for the theory that the common good of the United States is served by maximizing the private interest of the oil corporations. If profit rates were higher, there would be more investment, more work and less unemployment. That, to Harrington, makes excellent antisocial sense in an economy in which the dominant producing institutions are corporate. The way in which the industry forced Washington to accept this logic was political--that is, by effectively threatening a wartime strike especially during World War II if its demands were not met. With the Cold War the argument that the government and industry interests were one and the same took on even greater significance. For convincing the evidence, Harrington describes the case in point, which is the "special deal that allowed oil companies to avoid tax--and provided them with an incentive to misallocate resources."⁶³ Hence, in one of the most important areas of American society, the production of energy, the government, in a relatively open fashion, followed the priorities of oil corporations with disastrously antisocial results, "spending billions in public dollars to render the nation so vulnerable to the OPEC cartel of the seventies."⁶⁴ It is clear, he asserts, that over the past few decades

⁶³Ibid., p. 242.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 264.

government policy, which has seen an increase in the public subsidy to oil companies and agribusiness as well, has cost the American people hundreds of billions of dollars. This phenomenon is a clear example of corporate socialism for the rich. In return, "the nation was given a criminally wasteful, economically and militarily vulnerable, energy economy"⁶⁵

Modern welfare capitalism, to repeat, is more and more collectivist, that is, it increasingly makes its economic decisions politically. The economic and political health of government thus becomes dependent on investment decisions made in private boardrooms. In Harrington's view, those decisions are critical determinants of the Gross National Product, the level of employment, and indeed of the government's own revenues. Since the health of the entire economy is seen to depend on the will of those who control investment, a "trickling-down" theory, a conservative theory that private investment generates employment and then increases the standard of living, becomes the ideology of modern capitalism. Hence the political representatives of the rich demand, in the name of the common good, that further tax privileges for more investment should be conferred on the wealthy, while government spending for everyone else is curtailed.

In this context, the syndrome of corporate socialism for the rich is considered to have generated the stagflation crisis of the seventies as an unprecedented structural crisis, and to have

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 256.

reinforced the maldistribution of wealth as well. As long as corporations are conceded the power to make the basic investment decisions of the society, government will be their servant. It appears that Harrington's analysis of modern welfare capitalism sees a blending of corporate socialism, corporate liberalism, and corporate collectivism in the way in which government helps corporations by financially subsidizing them, and they, in turn, control government and investment. To Harrington, this is the most important secret in the society of the contemporary crisis in modern welfare capitalism. Harrington is now left with the task of defining the policies and procedures that will take us beyond the problems inherent to welfare capitalism.

PROPOSALS FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

--HARRINGTON'S ECONOMIC SYSTEM--

In resolving the stagflation crisis, and humanizing contemporary corporate collectivism, the perverted form of a genuine welfare spirit, Harrington opens up a very wide range of responses. These responses represent his humanistic and moral sensibilities, tending toward generating "a society that is not capitalist or socialist but something in between, with elements of both."⁶⁶ His fundamental question is: What measures, moving beyond welfare capitalism, would be taken on the far side of liberal reform, yet fall well short of utopia? He urges the answer to this question to be

⁶⁶Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," Dissent, 25:4 (Fall 1978), p. 440.

realistic in a pragmatic fashion--in the middle distance between welfare capitalism and socialism. It is much more "socialistic" even though it will not, of necessity, be socialist.⁶⁷

Modern welfare capitalism is no longer capable, simply through the systematic correction of built-in social inequalities by appropriate public action of transcending what Harrington calls the structural crisis of the seventies. He observes that there are basic reasons why the reform of the welfare state will not solve the most urgent problems in the stagflation crisis. First, the class structure of capitalist society vitiates, or subverts, almost every effort toward social justice; second, private, corporate power cannot tolerate comprehensive, democratic planning; and third, even if these first two obstacles to providing every citizen a decent house, income, and job were overcome, the system still has an inherent tendency to make affluence self-destructive.⁶⁸ Hence, Harrington pays special attention to corporate power, which, he insists, needs periodic recessions but is no longer forced to respond to them by simply lowering prices and wages. He also perceives that in the United States there is neither political support nor administrative feasibility for the sudden decisive nationalization of an entire economy.⁶⁹ As a result, his fundamental

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 442 and Decade of Decision, p. 321.

⁶⁸Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," p. 241.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 262.

resolution is reduced to the democratization of the corporate power--and of corporate bureaucratic collectivism.

Harrington's distinction between state ownership (nationalization) and social, or public, ownership (socialization) needs further elaboration. The former vests effective control in a political bureaucracy, and the latter does not.⁷⁰ Moreover, there is a strategy for achieving social ownership that does not involve a sudden, apocalyptic leap but rather employs structural reforms. For that strategy, he borrows from John K. Galbraith the concept of "functionless stockholder," a notion in which capitalist stockholder no longer directly control over stock ownership. In other words, this concept refers to a trend toward the separation of ownership and control, and its bearing on social ownership.⁷¹ He also echoes conservative Frederick A. Hayek's comments: "So long as the management is supposed to serve the interests of the stockholders it is reasonable to leave the control of its actions to the stockholders. But if the management is supposed to serve wider public interest, it becomes a logical consequence of this conception that the appointed representatives of the public interests should control the management."⁷² But, to Harrington, a practical concern continues to plague his thinking, and that is that the recent experience of the European social democrats still confirms

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 259.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 259.

⁷²Quoted from Ibid., p. 260.

the tendency of the corporations to dominate, rather than obey, the government that is supposed to control them. Nonetheless, to the extent that government remains independent of corporate power, the possibility of an extension of social ownership through the straightforward proposal of "functionless stockholder" remains.

For another strategy of socialization, Harrington carefully gives attention to Gunnar Adler-Karlson, a Swedish socialist, whose notion of "euthanasia of the rentiers" sees socialization as part of a historic process--rather than a drastic leap--toward new forms of property. The point is to partially "socialize the functions of property while leaving the title to it temporarily undisturbed."⁷³ He also refers to John Maynard Keynes' description of the self-socializing tendencies of capitalism as the euthanasia of the rentiers especially in the trend of the separation of ownership and control. To Harrington, this is regarded as a modest proposal for a socialization technique in which unearned income should be gradually and progressively abolished in favor of social justice.

Finally, Harrington advocates a limit on profit. He takes France in 1970 as an example, in which the Radical party under the urging of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber adopted a policy for "the hereditary transmission of property in the means of production."⁷⁴ Servan-Schreiber advocated a confiscatory tax on the stock holdings of very wealthy individuals. In addition, Harrington points to a

⁷³Ibid., pp. 259-260.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 262.

quite similar idea proposed by Douglas Jay of the British Labour party, which would make a government investment bank the recipient of the stock paid as death duty.⁷⁵ But he doubts how effective such measures would be in the American situation.

All in all, it seems that none of these ideas for the extension of socialization would fundamentally transform power relations within capitalist society. But if they were part of a comprehensive policy which seeks to progressively limit the rights of property in the means of production, they could encourage and direct the extension of socialization. Harrington's proposals for gradual socialization are not anything new or creative. In fact, his ideas are not derived from any abstract principle but from the actual experiences of the European social democrats over half a century. He observes that the question of exactly how ownership is to be socialized is an area of difficulty even in the socialist experiences. Vague metaphors--the state will seize or take over the means of production--provide no guide for political action in a complex, technological economy. Since their classical liberal tradition was based on the protection of private property, socialization will probably always remain a vague metaphor to Americans. Harrington prefers to discuss the democratization of corporate power in a much more realistic fashion. He tries to euphemize the word "socialization" in the name of democracy. Hence he does not "see socialization as an act, a law, or a charter, but as a process

⁷⁵Ibid.

in which democratic forces will have to struggle during an entire historic period to give real content to their legal rights."⁷⁶

The notion of the "democratization of corporate power" is projected into the concept of "twenty-first-century collectivism" which, according to Harrington, will come about, necessarily but not inevitably, in the interest of democracy, that is, as democratic collectivism.⁷⁷ Harrington emphasizes the need for structural reform in corporate power and then an expansion of the function of public corporations based on democratic planning in every basic industry.

Harrington's democratic collectivism is, in the first instance, a proposal of a national planning process in which all the people would have an effective right to participate. But this is not the same as that based on bureaucratic centralization in the Communist countries like the Soviet Union. For what Harrington calls national planning is based on non-bureaucratic decentralization. He also does not mean to imply that the hearings in Congressional committees and government commissions concerning economic policies lead necessarily to a national planning, in the name of democratic procedure in America. In the United States everyone has the right to present his or her views on various issues. Congressional committees and government commissions descend on an area and a stream of witnesses are heard. As he observes, "these hearings

⁷⁶Harrington, "What Socialist Would Do in America--If They Could," pp. 447-48.

⁷⁷Harrington, Socialism, p. 4.

are dominated by well-financed and tightly organized lobbies that, more likely than not, are already tied in with the bureaucracy. Independent challenges of the bureaucracy's proposals are handicapped by lack of access to relevant data and knowhow. The hearings become travesties of the democratic procedure."⁷⁸

In one of his most extended discussions of what national planning would be, Harrington calls for an effective "tripartism," or a joint decision-making machine in which government, capital, and labor participate at the national and local levels (or government, labor, consumer at large). If government or corporate power has an effective monopoly on the machinery and personnel of the planning process, then the formal right to challenge the plan becomes almost empty of content as in the cases of the European social democratic countries or even in the French non-socialist government before Mitterand. The workers are legally guaranteed representation at every level in these countries. But unlike business and government, they do not have the expert staff, the computers, and the knowledge technology, which are important in a modern society. Hence, despite the fact that planning resulting from tripartism is an important instrument in the assertion of popular control over the investment process, there is no effective provision for democratic participation in the existing cases of tripartism in the European countries. For this reason, he emphasizes the strength of workers' effective participation in realistic terms.

⁷⁸Harrington, "Full Employment and Social Investment," Dissent, 25:1 (Winter 1978), p. 130.

Though there is difficulty in the practical operation of tripartism, the idea of tripartism--sometimes known as a corporatism in America⁷⁹--has a clear reason for the democratic control of investment process. There are, according to Harrington, reasons why the democratic control of investment is needed. First of all, a radical liberal strategy is necessary to make the elected government of the people independent of the economic veto power of a corporate minority. The reason for making democratic control of investment a central demand is that structural challenges to and changes in the private control of investment are the preconditions for the political possibility of making full employment the nation's decisive priority. Another reason is that government economic policy on behalf of corporate power promotes inequality even though a "trickling-down" theory by the corporate minority may increase slightly the standard of living for the rest. Private investment decisions are based on where private profit is most readily maximized. Corporate investors cannot be counted on to arrest social needs such as decent housing, public transportation, and adequate health maintenance--in short, to substitute public needs for private ends. For all the modifications of welfare capitalism, private decisions designed to maximize profit still guide public policy and then determine the collective fate of society. That is why Harrington puts major emphasis on the democratic control of the

⁷⁹See Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation (Beverly Hill: SAGE Publications, 1979).

investment process--that is, "democratic national planning" through the dynamic channel of tripartism. The first priority of what he calls the democratization of corporate power through tripartism lies in increasing the quality of worker's life, such as the elimination of alienation, rather than in increasing his standard of living in quantity, for which the traditional socialism claimed.

Recalling American and European experiences, Harrington elaborates his ideas on democratic control of the investment process in more realistic terms. He begins by accusing the "anti-socialist" socialists of equating non-profit property with centralized, bureaucratic, national ownership of the entire economy. On the other hand, he blames American conservatives and liberals for having committed themselves to an irrational prejudice against all non-profit enterprise. Harrington believes in a vast expansion of the non-profit sectors of government, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which he thinks have been successful models of democratic control of corporate power in America.⁸⁰ For instance, he stresses TVA's decentralized management in decision-making.⁸¹

In the United States, he believes, TVA provides a concrete demonstration of the way in which regional democratic planning can

⁸⁰Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," pp. 263 and 442; Socialism, p. 300; "Economic Planning--Promises and Pitfalls," Dissent, 22:4 (Fall 1975), pp. 316-17; "Our Proposals for the Crisis," Dissent, 22:2 (Spring 1975); "Jobs for All," Commonweal, 103:3 (January 30, 1976), p. 77; "Two Cheers for Socialism," Harper's Magazine, 253:1517 (October 1976), p. 74; and "Full Employment and Social Investment," Dissent, 25:1 (Winter 1978), p. 133.

⁸¹Harrington, "Full Employment and Social Investment," p. 130.

have positive results. Per capita income in the Valley--which includes parts of seven states--rose from 44 percent of the national average in 1933, when TVA began, to 79 percent in 1976.⁸² TVA is now the largest utility in America. But at the same time the Authority has been suffused with corporate values. For example, in the early fifties it moved from hydroelectric power toward steam and nuclear power, and over the years has underwritten strip mining in Appalachia by burning low quality coal. Public corporate values seem to mirror the values of private corporations. For the purpose of controlling such private corporation's values within TVA, Harrington insists that the Authority should be subject to more popular, democratic control in the way that the TVA community chooses its board members directly by election instead of political appointment by the federal government.⁸³

Harrington also suggests that non-profit managerial techniques can, and should, be applied to newly developing technologies like solar energy. He writes:

Using the lessons of TVA, the Northeast should be developed, on a non-profit basis, as the solar energy center of the nation. This would mean jobs in an area of heavy unemployment by the development of a solar technology that could be operated at the community level. And it might provide an opportunity for the emergence of cooperative property as part of the solution to the crisis.⁸⁴

⁸²Ibid., p. 133.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

This logic evidently indicates that a TVA model can also be applied gradually to major corporations or technological research institutions subsidized by the federal government, and to his proposed federal gas and oil corporation as well. The expansion of the non-profit sector would undermine the rationale for the maldistribution of wealth. The only serious claim that the corporate rich can assert is that their concentrations of money are necessary to the investment process. But Harrington believes that "as that process progressively comes more and more under democratic control, that faulty rationale loses even the semblance of a justification."⁸⁵

How, then, would Americans pay for these enterprises? The pension system and the "Meidner Plan" in Sweden are Harrington's most persuasive responses to this question. In Sweden, the pension system is the prime source of investment funds for the housing industry. As he indicates, however, pension funds tend to be invested according to the standard corporate priorities in the United States. According to Harrington, 40 percent of all corporate debt capital and 25 percent of all corporate equity capital are, as of 1978, owned by public employee retirement funds.⁸⁶ He recalls Peter Drucker, a conservative economist, who claims that "pension socialism" exists in America because those monies are already so important to the investment process.⁸⁷ But the problem is, to

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 134.

⁸⁷Ibid.

Harrington, that the owners of these pension funds have a totally passive relationship to them. Drucker's argument defends a bastion of the capitalist ethic. There is no reason why these funds cannot be used for such social needs as housing, transportation, and health, when those industries are under democratic control.

Harrington observes that the Swedish labor movement has sought to extend that concept to all of industry. According to the "Meidner Plan," every corporation is required to place a portion of its profits, in the form of shares in the company, in an employee-controlled mutual funds with an elected board of directors.⁸⁸ At the end of a specified time period, worker-controlled mutual funds are to become the majority stockholder and the workers' representatives will make all basic policy decisions. For Harrington, the "Meidner Plan" is considered a Swedish version of syndicalism, minus revolution, which tends, in practical terms, to become close to an ideal type of the welfare state.⁸⁹ Harrington feels the

⁸⁸Ibid.,; and "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," p. 450. More specifically, the Swedish Meidner Plan is not a traditional stock-sharing device where the individual workers get shares in lieu of certain wage increases; it is a proposal for the social sharing of productivity gains. It aims at equalizing pretax income by bargaining for relatively larger wage increases to lower-income workers--known as "solidaristic wage policy." Progressive taxation, combined with social services directed toward the neediest sectors of the population, equalizes living standards after taxes. On the other hand, taxation of wealth and provision for broader ownership of capital attack the unequal ownership of industrial property.

⁸⁹Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," p. 444.

ideas of the "Meidner Plan" would have a powerful persuasion for the democratic control of the investment process in America.

According to Harrington, there are various other possibilities for the sources of such social investment funds, and they are within the constraints of a socialist commitment to wealth and income redistribution. This could be accomplished by (1) the revival of old American institutions like the Post Office savings system,⁹⁰ (2) an intensively progressive tax reform against unearned incomes,⁹¹ and (3) the elimination of some of the outrageous waste inherent in American capitalism. Advertisement spending in business today, for example, could be turned into a source of savings for social investment under democratic control.⁹² The non-profit sectors of the economy (like the federal gas and oil corporation) could be created and increasingly expanded through such sources of social investment.

Harrington seems to face a controversial problem in dealing with the ethics underlying a non-profit economic alternative to welfare capitalism. How will the choices made in the democratic planning process actually be implemented? In approaching this problem, he first hypothesizes different motivations for working to fulfill the democratic plan and puts them together so that they can be synthesized within the economic system. The first motivation

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 450.

⁹¹Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," p. 269; and Decade of Decision, p. 171.

⁹²Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," p. 451.

for encouraging the democratic plan is "individual gain"--that is, wage differentials in accord with competition.⁹³ The wage structure will be infinitely more progressive than it is within capitalism, through a progressive tax reform. Yet, there would be differentials related to skill and output and these would be tolerated, precisely as an incentive for individuals and enterprises to produce more efficiently.⁹⁴ Moreover, the differentials between enterprises, even though carefully limited, would be the basis for some competition between them.

The second major motivation is moral. It would obviously be preferable if moral incentives alone guaranteed efficient cooperation with the planned priorities. This is absolutely essential in implementing the democratic plan within Harrington's economic system. This argument, however, is not self-evident as he observes that in the United States moral incentives have played a significant role only during wartime. In any case, his economic system is based on the combination of liberal and socialist ethics: competition and cooperation. A serious debate might take place around this position, because an optimal point in the combination of competition and cooperation is not likely to materialize readily in practice.

Harrington's theoretical economic system as a whole comes to a "fundamental divide, one that marks off socialism from all variants

⁹³Ibid., p. 445.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 446.

of capitalist reform."⁹⁵ He assumes that there will be three main types of economic organization forming the economic system as a whole: socially owned (non-profit sector), privately owned large enterprises, and cooperatives. Harrington feels that no one of these could dominate the others and the whole economic system as well. He also assumes that there would be a stratum of privately owned small businesses, but these would function primarily in the area of the consumer market and would not be likely to place a decisive role in fulfilling the society's democratic priorities for production.⁹⁶ In all three of the major sectors, Harrington proposes "elected worker representation at every level, institutionalizing many local, face-to-face controls on authority as is possible."⁹⁷ But, by the phrase "local, face-to-face controls," he does not mean workers' control as an exclusively blue-collar one as in the Yugoslavian workers' councils. He observes that it is possible, as the Yugoslav experience shows, for worker-controlled enterprises to develop a collective egotism. For instance, he admits, the Yugoslavs have found it difficult to convince the more affluent collectives to invest their surplus in high-risk underdeveloped areas.⁹⁸ The workers' control in the "workers' council"

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 447.

⁹⁸Ibid.

is not a panacea because it lacks democratic political checks on the part of the society as a whole. Consequently, his idea of democratic control in every economic organization lies in effective worker representation on the boards of directors at every level.

In Harrington's economic system, the goods and services of these three sectors would be distributed in two ways. First, free goods and services would be collectively paid for by various levels of government. Second, the traditional market mechanism would be employed in areas where consumers would choose, and pay for, their goods and services. Harrington predicts that if a progressive tax policy enormously reduced the discrepancies in income, and if public control of the private corporation was to severely limit or even abolish monopoly pricing, then markets would really begin to function. They would, he argues, operate within the broad limits of the democratic plan, and alongside the free sector, in order to communicate the desires of the people, not the demands of the corporate executives.⁹⁹ For the most part, goods and services for the free markets would, of course, be produced in the private as well as cooperative sectors. All in all, Harrington's distributive mechanism asserts itself in this eclectic position, somewhere between the free market system and socialist distribution.

We now encounter Harrington's packet of specific proposals which appeared in his writings during the last decade. Most of

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 449-50.

these proposals are closely related to the proposals for the democratization of corporate power we have discussed above, but some of them focus on solving the economic crisis of the 1970s. In a brief sketch, Harrington suggests some urgent and possible proposals, at least in terms of the departure of the democratic control of the investment process.¹⁰⁰ As he puts it, these urgent programs "could be undertaken by sophisticated and modern reactionaries incorporating the best of liberalism in a movement that goes beyond the welfare state."¹⁰¹

First, the companies that are major suppliers of the government should not be subsidized, but socialized. Furthermore, where corporations and/or banks get into difficulty, the government should consider nationalizing, but not bureaucratizing them. He recalls Galbraith's proposal for the nationalization of major military industries. He calls upon these enterprises to become decentralized non-profit corporations like TVA.

Second, the United States should establish a federal gas and oil corporation, which should be given privileged rights to develop new energy technology such as solar energy, in the public interest and for the public purposes. He also recalls Adlai Stevenson's

¹⁰⁰The following list of urgent proposals comes from his articles: "Our Proposals for the Crisis," Dissent, 22:2 (Spring 1975), pp. 103-104; "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," Dissent, 25:4 (Fall 1978), pp. 451-52; and "Social Retreat and Economic Stagnation," Dissent, 26:2 (Spring 1979), p. 134.

¹⁰¹Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America," p. 451.

proposal for a public corporation devoted to a national energy policy. Harrington proposes to extend this kind of national policy to social needs such as transportation, health, and housing.

Third, employees and public representatives should be placed on the boards of directors of all major industrial and financial corporations with instructions to inform the public of the bias of pricing, technology, plant locations, and other policies of these corporations. He also calls for a radical increase in democratic decision-making by primary workers in factories and offices, but he does not demand that all these industrial corporations become socialized.

Fourth, a sweeping progressive tax reform should be instituted, aiming at a redistribution of income, wealth, and, in particular, at the gradual abolishment of the unearned income of rentiers and the untaxed wealth of successive generations of the rich.

Fifth, the federal government should support a vast expansion of producer and consumer cooperatives, including funds for community corporations like TVA.

Sixth, a national planning mechanism should be established both as a part of the office of the Presidency and as an office under the control of the Congress--namely, the Office of Future. It should, for example, come up with a ten-year plan for transportation and energy in the United States. It does not require the public ownership of the heights of the economy as a precondition, but it would only work in the people's interest if the plan could

be enforced by the way of a vastly enlarged democratic participation in investment decisions. In this context, he strongly rejects Felix Rohatyn's proposal in 1978 for national planning along the lines of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) of 1951-57. For Harrington views it as a moderately liberal, or conservative, planning. The RFC would be in the authentic tones of an "American Gaullism,"¹⁰² in which the government would become an "investor of last resort," that is, a bureaucratic form of nationalization. For the RFC would buy stock in companies and banks that are in trouble.¹⁰³

The main theme of these six points is that economic power must be democratized throughout American society and that the age of corporate power, of an industrial feudalism in which tiny elites make fundamental and intolerable social choices on the basis of private profit, must now be brought to a close. As he admits, "some of these proposals are more difficult--for example, a more progressive tax reform--to imagine in the near future than others, yet none of them requires a commitment to socialism and most have been approved in principle by the major institutions of the mass of the democratic Left."¹⁰⁴ In spite of difficulties in his proposals for democratic socialism, Harrington has a possible dream, saying that "time is running out on the very American creed of utopian

¹⁰²Harrington, "Our Proposals for the Crisis," p. 103.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁰⁴Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," p. 452.

pragmatism, i.e., the religious conviction that all problems can be solved in the middle of the road by a process of bumbling along."¹⁰⁵ Therefore, in the details he sketched out above there is not only a rational response to immediate issues of the 1970s, but also the intimation of some tentative steps in the direction of a new civilization.

CONCLUSION

In his neo-Marxian perspective, Harrington observes that modern welfare capitalism, defined as both corporate socialism (i.e., "socialism for the rich") and corporate liberalism (i.e., interest-group liberalism, or domination of bureaucratic corporate power), remains a liberal but bureaucratic collectivism. He explains that the poverty phenomenon in the affluent society of the 1960s resulted from the structural characteristics of corporate liberalism in America. He therefore insists that the welfare state lost credit for the original welfare spirit. For Harrington, this is the paradox of the American welfare state.

To be sure, Harrington transcends the limits of the traditional (liberal) theories of poverty that explained only the independent socioeconomic variables like unemployment, educational, ethnic, and regional (rural) factors causing poverty below the subsistence level in economic terms. Thus he expands explanatory variables of poverty into sociocultural variables such as fatalism,

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

pessimism, depression, alienation, and lack of motivation. In this sense, Harrington seems to be the first to offer a creative interpretation of poverty by discussing the interdependence between the independent variable (poverty operationalized as the low income level) and the dependent variables (the sociocultural traits of poverty, or the "culture of poverty"). This is how Harrington has added to the description of the vicious circle of poverty (i.e., poverty breeds poverty in a "curiously dialectical" fashion).

More importantly, Harrington explains that the syndrome of corporate liberalism and corporate socialism has led to the stagflation of crisis of the 1970s, an economic crisis endemic to the welfare capitalist societies. Harrington's response to these trends and to this economic crisis is to put forth what he calls a humanistic socialism. Within the context of the American situation, he emphasizes the importance of moderately reducing corporate power and then reinforcing the democratic control of investment by means of tripartism. In this sense, Harrington's democratic socialism, as he insists, is quite different from the bureaucratic form of the European social democracy.

As a modern reactionary against "anti-socialist" socialisms, Harrington is always fearful that bureaucracy may usurp democratic power. He therefore fights against the equation of socialism with state ownership (i.e., nationalization of the means of production). He feels that both state ownership and bureaucratic management, as

well as corporate power under welfare capitalism, should be humanized under democratic control. For this purpose, Harrington has proposed moderate proposals as starting point for democratic control of investment, which both liberals and socialists could support. For example, he accepts the idea of tripartism, where the representatives of government, labor, and the consumer at large participate in investment decision-making. While this is a relatively radical proposal, it can be housed within the existing system of the welfare state. But he rejects the Yugoslavian version of syndicalism, where only the workers' councils exercise democratic control at the workplace level. Similarly, Harrington's concept of tripartism calls for only moderate structural change in the welfare state. In effect, Harrington's idea of tripartism shares for the most part the idea of "corporatism" articulated by the left wing of American liberals in the 1970s, where the political cooperation between capital, labor, and the state was stressed.¹⁰⁶ As Philippe C. Schmitter indicates, it should be recalled that in Spain, Italy, and the other Fascist countries, corporatism easily deteriorated into state control of labor and capital, especially in controlling prices and incomes.

For the purpose of expanding democratic control through means other than tripartism, Harrington has also called for the creation of non-profit corporations like TVA based on decentralized management. His key idea is that newly emerging regional-based

¹⁰⁶Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporation?" in Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., op. cit., p. 9.

corporations, like the solar energy industry, should be set up as non-profit organizations where democratic control remains in the hands of the local community. And yet, even in the case of the non-profit organization, he does not exclude the managerial principle of co-determination through tripartism.

In fact, since the Socialist Scholars Conference began in 1964, all Harrington's efforts have been aimed at revitalizing American socialism in a neo-Marxian humanistic direction. Literally, he is no longer a socialist in the traditional sense of the term but a socialist disguised as a radical liberal and a genuine democrat. Hence the substance of his argument for the democratic control of investment is, for the most part, more accurately described as liberal in the American sense of the term. In any strict sense, this is not a socialist position, but an eclectic argument somewhere between welfare liberalism and socialism. The best examples of this are his proposals for democratic control and his description of the economic system as the co-existence of three main types of economic organization forming the economic system in a society (i.e., socially owned non-profit sector, privately owned large enterprises, and cooperatives). In a sense, Harrington takes a position that leans toward the extreme left in the liberal ideology of America's Democratic Party. But he wishes to push this vision in the direction of his own version of socialism. Therefore, Harrington's socialism (Harringtonianism) is probably more appropriately termed radical liberalism.

In his Marxian paradigmatic analysis of welfare capitalism and in his policy proposals, Harrington focuses primarily upon economic questions. He almost completely ignores the cultural and personal dimensions, or the superstructure of welfare capitalism. And he has not completely demonstrated, in a dialectical fashion, the totalization process between infrastructure and superstructure as we have discussed in his economic analysis. But, as he asserts, "economic programs are only a means to the noneconomic end of human liberation."¹⁰⁷ In this context, it can be said that his spiritual materialism is still open to a noneconomic analysis and to policy debates aimed at going beyond the welfare state, especially the second welfare state of today. By implication, one can perceive the democratic control of investment as a political program that he presents in response to the reality of American politics, which focusses on mobilizing the forces of a democratic Left. This is what we will pursue in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," p. 451.

CHAPTER IV

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN HARRINGTON'S STRATEGY

Harrington believes that things can be changed radically, but peacefully, for the better. He does not invoke a deus ex machine--dictatorship of man, of the new class, of technocrats--to effect democratic change. He insists, and this is perhaps the most endearing aspect of his position, that any durable improvements in the American system must be effected through local participatory democracy, especially the exercise of democratic control over corporate power.

Harrington's assumptions are a variation on the standard liberal view of the welfare state. He feels that the American system is essentially good, but is frustrated politically by the strategically placed power of a conservative coalition in Congress (which Harrington calls the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition). The liberal's role--at least, the coalition of the moderate wing and the radical (or left) liberal wing within the Democratic Party--is to overpower the conservative coalition and guide the system toward the democratic fulfillment of its potential. Harrington argues that the forces of humanitarian progress must work together to transform the system. The sum total of these forces is what he refers to the democratic Left. This is a progressive coalition for a new majority, which, Harrington believes, can liberalize and strengthen the so-called traditional Roosevelt coalition (often

called the New Deal coalition) in a more radical direction, and then carry out his own radical programs as discussed in the previous chapter. Thus the main programmatic thrust of Harrington's argument is that the best strategy for the democratic Left is to seek to control the Democratic Party in such a way as to exclude its right wing permanently, as opposed to creating a democratic socialist party as a third party. For Harrington, the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, for better or for worse, is the home of the mass Left in America.

As a new element in American politics, Harrington's theory and practice on strategy deserves careful attention in this chapter. Harrington's theoretical attention to the new class (often called the new working class) seems to give an important clue to the political support for his proposals through the formation of the democratic Left, even though the theories of the new class seem to remain controversial among its theorists. In the first section I will review various theories of the new class and Harrington's response to them. In doing so, I will deal as briefly as possible with at least the three different viewpoints concerning the new class: the pioneering theories of Veblen, Galbraith, Bell, and Mills; the "new politics" theories of Kristol, Podhoretz, Kemble, and Muravchik; and the neo-Marxist theories of Marcuse, Gorz, Touraine, and Mallet. This review is very significant in understanding how Harrington builds the democratic Left, a new coalition of the mass Left in America, which includes the new class as its

important exponent. The second section will deal with Harrington's hypothetical theory of the new class, as well as his argument for coalition politics for the democratic Left. It will also discuss Harrington's strategic concerns for developing the democratic Left, in relation to the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), in which he has been actively involved as national chairman.

THE THEORIES OF THE NEW CLASS

The term "new class" has begun to appear with ever-increasing frequency in discussions of the contemporary American scene. Both in the West--especially in America--and the Communist world the identification of the new class has been largely associated with the social class (or strata) managing the means of production without its ownership, or with the college-educated in general. In the Communist world, Milovan Djilas once described the Communist elite (of Yugoslavia) as a new class that had emerged from the proletariat and possessed political control over the means of production.¹ Similarly, in America most of new class theorists preferred to broadly label the new class as the social strata of the middle class and associated it with the educated workers who

¹See Milovan Djilas, The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System (New York: Praeger, 1957).

are economically well off, but do not possess or control the means of production.²

Though they broadly identified the new class by using various technical terms, Thorstein Veblen, John K. Galbraith, and C. Wright Mills, each of them known as a pioneering theorist of the new class in America, contributed to the articulations of new class theories and brought its theoretical insight to those interested in it. Their theoretical concerns are associated with various notions, such as Veblen's "new elite of engineers and technicians," Galbraith's "technostructure" (educational-scientific estate), and Mills' "white collar."³ Daniel Bell's famous notion of "new men" (the "knowledge class" and the "professional and technical intelligentsia") is also associated with this type of theorizing.⁴

In the first flush of excitement after the Russian Revolution, Thorstein Veblen wrote The Engineers and the Price System (1921), perhaps the first book in America to articulate what had been called the new working class since its publication. He felt that a syndicalist revolution would be possible in America. In his

²See B. Bruce-Briggs, ed., The New Class? (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979).

³See Thorstein Veblen, The Engineers and the Price System (New York: Viking Press, 1921); John K. Galbraith, The New Industrial State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967); and C. Wright Mills, The White Collar: The American Middle Class (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954).

⁴See Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (New York: Collier Books, 1961) and The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

book, Veblen added "A Memorandum on a Practicable Soviet of Technicians," which laid out the argument for the revolutionary potential of the production engineers as the indispensable "general staff of the industrial system."⁵ Here he restricted his analysis largely to the engineers and technicians, not all the elements that other theorists had identified as the new class. Harrington criticizes Veblen's view here as "bourgeois socialism," because he feels that Veblen regarded the new class as the general staff of the industrial system including only engineers and technicians.⁶

But Galbraith and Bell respectively expanded Veblen's limited definition to include all highly paid managerial workers or administrators, that is, the whole set of the "white-collar class" of the "educated workers" as C. Wright Mills and Herbert Gintis broadly labelled the new class.⁷ In a more complicated fashion, Galbraith divided this new class into two elite groups: "the technostructure" of corporate managers and their apologists, hangers-on, and henchmen in government, and the "educational and scientific estate of scientists and academics called into being by the technostructure's need for trained talent."⁸ In any event, the theorists discussed above commonly saw the qualification of the new

⁵See Thorstein Veblen, op. cit., Chapter 6 (p. 138).

⁶See Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, pp. 208-235.

⁷See C. Wright Mills, op. cit., Introduction; and Herbert Gintis, "The New Working Class and Revolutionary Youth," Socialist Revolution, 1: 3 (May-June 1970), pp. 13-43.

⁸See Galbraith, The New Industrial State, Chapter 6.

class as higher education for highly-skilled professional jobs, and largely identified the new class as the economic strata of the middle class within the working class as a whole, which do not possess the means of production.

In a theoretical context, the character of the new class is as significant as its identification. As Harrington insists, Galbraith and Bell perceived the new class as an independent class or strata that pursued its own goals in a pluralistic and post-industrial society, while Veblen viewed it as being dependent on the old class with a potential for revolutionary leadership in the orthodox Marxist sense. Particularly, Mills used the idea of "the middle class" (the white-collar workers), a class which he said could not be an autonomous independent class, but would eventually have to support either the working class or the business community. He clearly pointed out this view as follows:

Insofar as political strength rests upon organized economic power, the white-collar workers can only derive their strength from "business" or from "labor." Within the whole structure of power, they are dependent variables. Estimates of their political tendencies, therefore, must rest upon larger predictions of the manager and outcomes of the struggles of business and labor.⁹

During the 1970s, an academic debate arose over the phenomenon of "new politics," a politics by the new class. What has been theoretically significant in this subject was the focus on the political attitudes of what had been called the new class. The identification of the new class, defined by "new politics"

⁹C. Wright Mills, op. cit., p. 352.

theorists, are quite similar to that by the pioneering theorists of the new class like Veblen, Galbraith, Bell, and Mills. Irving Kristol has characterized it as the "intelligentsia and the college-educated."¹⁰ The content is virtually the same, but the emphasis is placed upon the academic qualities of the members of this new class.

Especially after the 1972 presidential election, "new politics" theorists began to challenge the long-standing theories of the American labor movement, that is, labor conservatism and the "end of ideology" theories.¹¹ The term "new class," though never a

¹⁰Irving Kristol, "About Equality," Commentary, 54:5 (November 1972), p. 42.

¹¹According to labor historian John R. Commons, the American worker was job-oriented rather than class-conscious like his European counterpart in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reasserting the Commons' job-conscious theory, Selig Perlman insisted that the only acceptable consciousness was a limited objective of wage and job control (Perlman, The Theory of the Labor Movement, p. 169). This labor movement theory has been most influential among American labor theorists since the last major conference on the subject was held by the Industrial Relations Research Association at the University of Wisconsin in December 1950, and since then this theory group has been called the Wisconsin school. This conservative theory by the Wisconsin school led, though not directly, to the emergence of the "end-of-ideology" theory group in the 1960s, including Seymour M. Lipset and Daniel Bell, both of whom guided the tendency of the Wisconsin school in an even more conservative direction. For the discussion on the theory of labor conservatism, see: John R. Commons, ed., The History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932, Vols. II (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935); Selig Perlman, Theory of Labor Movement (New York: Augustus Kelley, 1949); Irving Louis Horowitz, John C. Legget, and Martin Oppenheimer, eds., The American Working Class (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), and for the discussion on the theory of "end-of-ideology," see: Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Base of Politics, expanded ed., (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) and "Some Future Comments on The End of Ideology," The American Political Science Review, 60:1 (March 1966); and Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).

precisely defined concept, was in general accepted as a broad label, referring to a dynamic complex that contains educated job-holders, intellectuals, students, and the academic community. The term, to repeat, was similar to Galbraith's notion of technostructure and Mills' concept of the white-collar worker, which these authors had used to describe the bureaucratic complex, private and public, that runs but does not own the huge corporations that dominate the private sector.

However, by the 1972s the term "new class" had begun to appear with ever-increasing frequency to discuss issues raised in the 1950s and 1960s by scholars in the tradition of Mills and Galbraith. Its usage expresses the view that a new important class, or a new dominant class, has recently emerged and is somehow a key ingredient in the understanding of contemporary American politics. Yet its American usage was largely politically motivated. In this context, the phenomena called the new class was inevitably related to a new politics, and the nomination of George McGovern as Democratic presidential candidate in 1972 by and large climaxed five years of activity under these slogans. It was certainly high time some of this criticism found its way to the public since, according to Irving Kristol, the moral pretensions of the new politics, meaning that "cause-oriented coalition of oppressed minorities, idealistic students and conscious-stricken professionals and housewives, went remarkably unchallenged through most of its career."¹²

¹²Irving Kristol, "The New Class," The Wall Street Journal (December 1972), p. 12.

The driving force behind the new politics came from what radical intellectuals labelled the new class. According to Irving Kristol, this new class was a "middle-class stratum free of the materialism of the commercial bourgeoisie, pretty well off, but morally dissatisfied with American society."¹³ Well-educated, white-collared, employed in technology, or the professions, this group made up a "conscience constituency."¹⁴ Its crusades for integration or black power, increased democracy and abortion reform, world peace through defense cuts and lessened foreign involvement, might have appeared incoherent or contradictory, but they were all pursued with moral fervor and an indignation.

But to some long-standing critics of this phenomenon, the claim to moral purity, which distinguished so much of the rhetoric of the new politics, was simply the mask for a very intense drive for power. Norman Podhoretz, Commentary editor, referred to this movement as a kind of "liberal putschism."¹⁵ Moreover, an article by Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik documented the role of Democratic Party reforms in furthering the primary campaign of George McGovern, characterizing this as "new politics liberalism" in the Democratic Party.¹⁶

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Norman Podhoretz, "Laureate of the New Class," Commentary, 54:6 (December 1972), p. 4.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁶Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik, "The New Politics and the Democrats," Commentary, 54:6 (December 1972), p. 83.

This point was striking and profound, but it left a number of questions unanswered. In fact, many of these new politics people were not exactly powerless to begin with. Was it not somewhat overstating the case to refer to the vaguely defined and diverse elements as a "class," new or not? That argument is obviously based on the orthodox Marxist idea of class, such as the proletariat or bourgeoisie, but where is the central vital interest of the "new politics" theorists that would give the new class a comparable degree of unity?

Like Kristol, Podhoretz agreed that this group had two distinctive features, a livelihood based on its high degree of education and a "disdain for commerce."¹⁷ According to him, the great expansion of higher education has swollen the ranks of this group, creating a mass intelligentsia. Hence the agitation for poverty programs or consumer unions might not have helped the poor or the consumer, but would provide employment for college and law school graduates who probably do not like corporations.

Irving Kristol stated this point more broadly: "The simple truth is that the professional classes of our modern bureaucratized societies are engaged in a class struggle with the business community for status and power."¹⁸ He seemed to argue that these professional classes have benefitted from the increasing power and size of the public sector of the economy, primarily in social

¹⁷Podhoretz, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁸Irving Kristol, "About Equality," p. 43.

services like education. In this view, the growth of the public sector has produced a stratum of the middle class with a different set of interests from the traditional commercial middle class. Podhoretz's notion of "liberal putschism" might extend this interpretation to say that the frictions between these two groups have given rise to the new politics--that is, the status-oriented politics of the new class against the traditional commercial middle class.

Like most interpretations, this classification is likely to overlook many shades of opinion among both groups. Furthermore, the competition and interchange between professional and business worlds, if conducted with less moralism, could be a fresh and vigorous element in American politics. But these theories were a start, and perhaps a helpful start, toward explaining this phenomenon, even if the full story remained to be told. The 1972 presidential election gave the broader voting public a chance to express the opinion of the new class, but the result was clear enough so that the new class remained only an abstract phenomenon, not a reality in politics. The same story recurred in the 1984 Democratic Party presidential primary, as the Democratic presidential contestant Gary Hart appealed to the groups equivalent to the 1972 phenomenon. The new class has remained, but its political effectiveness as a movement supporting the Gary Hart phenomenon perhaps failed in 1984.

Surprisingly enough, the coalition of the New Right (or the radical conservative movement in America), with its good standing within the Republican Party, has emerged in the 1980s as the nation's most persuasive political force. They have convinced a majority of the American people that government itself has remained the real source of the nation's economic malaise. Arguing against welfare-state liberalism based on big government, New Rightist philosophy probably obtained significant support from the new class and even from ex-liberals (known as neo-conservatives). The New Right has clearly gained control of the Republican Party, a fact soon confirmed by New Right Republican Ronald Reagan's 1980 and 1984 nominations and successful subsequent elections. Nonetheless, the mere fact that the conservative majority coalition came together to elect Ronald Reagan does not guarantee that its components will not separate again--just as they came together in 1972 to elect Richard Nixon overwhelmingly, then separated again in the Ford-Carter race of 1976. To be sure, the Reagan phenomenon has brought about serious frustration within the American Left, and particularly within Harrington's democratic Left.

However, it is too early to say that Ronald Reagan guaranteed the Republican Party the long-term vehicle of the conservative majority coalition that elected him, because coalition politics in America is extremely unpredictable. It is possible, as Harrington implies, that at some future point when effective organization can absorb all the elements of the new class, or when the new class

with a comparable degree of unity is lined up with a democratic Left through a coalition of the old and new classes, the new class phenomenon may again become a reality in American politics.

It seems that "new politics" theorists discussed above have contributed to a theoretical richness of the discussion on the new class, including not only the economic strata but also the social strata, such as students, environmentalists, active women for the ERA's cause, pacifists, participatory democrats, and oppressed minorities. The notion of a "conscience constituency" tended to emphasize a morally conscious majority which can unify all the elements of the new class by these theorists went too far and seemed to remain much more ambiguous.

Neo-Marxist theorists prefer to use the term "new working class" instead of the term "new class." No matter what term is used, they tend to view it as the working class. As long as they analyze it in advanced capitalist society, there is nothing different from the identification of the new class defined by the pioneering theorists discussed above. However, there is among neo-Marxists a major controversy over the political role of the new class.

For Marcuse, whose One Dimensional Man (1964) was perhaps the most celebrated work challenging the orthodox Marxist concept of class, the question of whether the working class (including the new class) is now an agent of historical change was ambiguous, because bourgeoisie and proletariat in post-industrial capitalist society

were perceived to be lined up with one dimensional man sharing the same bourgeois culture. Marcuse perceived the domination of manual labor by intellectual labor (the new class) in a technologically rationalized society: the repressive, but successful, development of capitalist society. According to Marcuse, technological rationalization conspires to render the workers a dependent variable in the new technologically configured totality.¹⁹ But it seems doubtful that Marcuse's new class would be independent of corporate power for the cause of the working class as a whole. Thus Marcuse sought a new proletariat from among the poor and the excluded, shifting his allegiance from the Marxian proletarians to the Bakuninist lumpenproletarians.²⁰ Consequently, he endorsed the activist students of the 1960s and 1970s, and racial minorities, as the subject of historical change.

For the most powerful development of the concept of the new working class into a political principle of socialist strategy, the introduction of three French neo-Marxist works to American intellectuals was considerably significant: André Gorz's Strategy for Labor (1964), Alain Touraine's The May Movement, Revolt and Reform (1971), and Serge Mallet's The New Working Class (1975). They argued that the introduction of knowledge as the new hegemonic force in the reproduction of capital and the relations of production has deprived the old working class of its power, and brought

¹⁹Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), Chapter 1.

²⁰Harrington, Socialism, pp. 352-53.

into existence a new working class which possesses knowledge but does not share in the possession of the means of production or the control of the labor process.

Gorz, a famous theorist of democratic socialism in France, analyzed the French labor movement prior to the 1968 crisis, especially self-determination movements by the new class (for which he used the term "new proletarians") in the high-technological industries in France. Thus he concluded that the revolt of the new class could not be prevented, even if the revolt took "the silent form of powerless neurosis."²¹ Pointing out the increasing tension between corporate power and the new class in these industries,²² he provided a theoretical insight, as well as an analytical framework for the empirical studies of the new class by Touraine and Mallet.

For the empirical justification of the role of the new working class, Touraine's and Mallet's separate surveys on the French crisis in 1968 showed the possibility of its radicalization and perhaps contributed to the theoretical development of the new working class as the subject of historical change.²³ They demonstrated that, in modern industry, white-collar and technically qualified groups

²¹ André Gorz, Strategy for Labor: A Radical Proposal (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), trans. by Martin A. Nicolaus and Victoria Ortiz, p. 107.

²² Ibid., pp. 103 and 113.

²³ See: Serge Mallet, The New Working Class (Bristol, England: Spokesman Books, 1975), trans. by Andrée and Bob Shepherd; Alain Touraine, The May Movement, Revolt and Reform: May 1968--the Student Rebellion and Worker's Strikes--the Birth of a Social Movement (New York: Random House, 1971), trans. by Leonard F. X. Mayhew.

often had a leading role to play in pioneering demands of a socialist character. The demands of this new class have pushed for increasing workers' control and have advanced a hegemonic view of the workers's role, at least within the perspective of company policy-making in the oil and electronics industries in France. This new class also played a decisive role in the 1968 crisis. Again, their simple thesis is that the engineers and technicians are a new working class, in part replacing the old, with a potential for revolutionary leadership and the ability to play a role far beyond their numbers. The fact that the new class is better paid does not make it a new "aristocracy of labor," but in fact provides a model for the other workers. It is fair, therefore, to claim that their empirical studies generated a theory of the new class that identifies its potential for revolutionary leadership.

French neo-Marxian theorists discussed above preferred to use the term "new working class," instead of the term "new class," in the orthodox Marxist viewpoint of the working class. But they are correct in repudiating the orthodox Marxist conception of the class struggle--in which the industrial working class (the old working class) makes historical change. Over all, while Marcuse viewed the new class as the phenomenon of working-class embourgeoisement (labor conservatism), Gorz, Touraine, and Mallet perceived the radical tendency of the new class with a leading role in the class struggle. However, Touraine's and Mallet's theories, though somewhat rigorous, seem to lack generalization because they represented the evidences of the 1968 crisis only in France.

We encounter here one of the profound confusions in using Marx's term "proletariat." At this point, Harrington wants to clarify what Marx meant by the term "proletariat." For Harrington, Marx's term "proletariat" was not identical with the masses of poor people, and certainly not the lumpenproletariat, who had lost the ability to function in human terms in society. The classical proletariat (an orthodox Marxist category) consisted of factory workers (industrial workers) whose class-consciousness was inevitably created by the conditions of their work. But orthodox Marxism downplayed the differentiation of the working class. Is the proletariat, or the working class, all those who work for wages and salaries? If so, this argument would be distorted beyond all recognition. Orthodox Marxists obscured the issue, arguing that the inevitable economic crises of capitalism would force a revolutionary conflict in which the working class would win and would create conditions where the lower levels of the bourgeoisie would be swallowed up by an ever-widening proletariat. In this sense, Harrington criticizes the orthodox Marxist error of supposing that society was fast polarizing into only two classes, that is, into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, drawing the battle lines between workers and capitalists which would inevitably lead to violence and revolution. But according to Harrington, the mature Marx did not hold this view and defined the class struggle in a more subtle and complex fashion which can also serve as an excellent guide to the new working class.²⁴

²⁴Harrington, "Old Working Class, New Working Class," Dissent, 19:1 (Winter 1972), p. 152.

For Harrington, the new class is classified more specifically into four categories in terms of the new social strata. First, there are those directly engaged in the development of technology, most of them classed as professional and technical workers. Second, there are the educated workers in the service industry, a category that includes school teachers and nurses. Third, there are a number of more nebulous categories including students, artists, and workers in communications as a cultural vanguard. Finally, there are traditional professionals like lawyers and medical doctors.²⁵ Most of these people within these social categories resemble Mills' white-collar class as a new middle class. Harrington has simply combined into one theory all of the various elements identified by the other new class theorists.

In addition, Harrington related the liberals identified as the vanguard of the new class to the "conscience constituency," who were campaigning for the candidacy of Senator George McGovern in 1972.²⁶ He owed much to David T. Bazelon, who once identified the liberals as the left-wing of the new class, and considered them as its most class consciousness element. To Bazelon, the liberals were the vanguard of the new class. He also associated the growth

²⁵Ibid., pp. 160-61.

²⁶Harrington, "The New Class and the Left," in B. Bruce-Briggs, ed., The New Class? (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 123-138.

of the new class with the professional and technical sector of the labor force.²⁷

Harrington observes that under present conditions the new class is dominated by corporate values that oppose, or at least would severely limit, any restriction on the company's freedom of action.²⁸ The new strata on which he focuses is not based upon property or employment in the private corporation. This new strata work in public, or semipublic, sectors (education, health, social services, defense and defense-related industries, and aerospace), and they are therefore dependent on federal political decisions for their economic well-being.²⁹

He continues to emphasize that post-industrial tendencies would lead to the emergence of some kind of a bureaucratic collectivism, perhaps with a democratic facade. The new class would thereby triumph not in the name of socialism ("a democratic communitarianism with considerable decentralization and self-management") but from the workings of corporate collectivism. Then he predicts that America would back into the future thoughtlessly, in precisely the manner that would maximize the possibilities of an elite system. Similarly, non-owning managers and technicians play a much more significant role in the later stages of capitalism than

²⁷See David T. Bazelon, Power in America: The Politics of the New Class (New York: The New American Library, 1967).

²⁸Harrington, "Old Working Class, New Working Class," p. 157 and Decade of Decision, p. 311.

²⁹Harrington, "Old Working Class, New Working Class," p. 159.

they did in the early stages. Yet the outcomes of the society continue to benefit primarily the possessors of the greatest wealth. To this extent, he concludes in The Twilight of Capitalism that the talented and educated are tolerated in the "technostructure," only so long as they act to maximize the priorities of those who own.³⁰ Thus, "late capitalism, not socialism, is the precursor of an authoritarian society under the rule of the new class."³¹

According to Harrington, all of this should not be taken as implying extreme optimism about a future in which a still dynamic old working class will join the organized new working class to make a better society. But Harrington points out that there was a new shift in the American labor movement in the 1970s, a tendency toward corporatism--worker participation in decision-making within the corporations--in the new working class and in the old working class as well. To this extent, he concludes that there was at least possibility that the progressive tendencies in these two working classes, old and new, could provide the basis for a new political coalition in America dedicated to social and democratic planning.³²

Bruce-Briggs has suggested that we have theories, economic or otherwise, of how these new class phenomena are related, but most

³⁰See Harrington, The Twilight of Capitalism, Chapter 12.

³¹Harrington, "The New Class and the Left," pp. 125-26.

³²Harrington, "Old Working Class, New Working Class," p. 161.

of them cannot be proved in any rigorous sense, and are so highly politicized that agreement cannot be expected. While not entirely new, the idea of the new class is not yet fully established. Bruce-Briggs and even Gorz insisted that various groups within the new class are incredibly fragmented and at one another's throats.³³ For Harrington, the conflict of the new class with the old working class, as well as with corporate power, is always profoundly ambiguous. This new class refuses to make decisions on the political terrain. On the one hand, the new class is progressive in its conflicts with corporate power, as in the 1968 crisis in the oil and electronics industries in France, but, on the other hand, the new class is conservative in its conflicts with the old working class. But Harrington's faith is that the new class might conceivably share a common cause with the old working class against the common threat of economic growth or a foreign competition. The new class is a minority today, but will be an important exponent of tomorrow's new progressive majority under the democratic Left.

HARRINGTON'S STRATEGY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT--

THE DSOC AND THE DSA--

Most of new class theorists in America have expressed pessimistic view on the new class, while some French neo-marxists have tended to be more optimistic as to its radical potential. In his analysis of the new class, Daniel Bell observed that the phrase

³³B. Bruce-Briggs, "Conclusion: Notes Toward a Delineation of the New Class," in B. Bruce-Briggs, op. cit., p. 215; and André Gorz, op. cit., p. 132.

"new class" is simply a radical conceit, and little more.³⁴ Though hopeful for the emergence of a new radicalism initiated by the new class, Harrington shares the pessimism with his contemporaries, but he believes that political changes can make the new class drift toward a new radicalism in America.

Harrington's analysis of the new class is very complex. The new class is not inevitably or inherently on the Left or the Right. It has tendencies toward both liberal elitism as well as toward a democratic alliance with working people (the industrial working class) and the poor. His basic concern is that which of these tendencies will prevail is not a question that can be settled theoretically: It will be decided politically.³⁵

Could the new class be a part of a Left coalition? Harrington's response to this question is vague because, like Marcuse, he feels that the new class could be one agency in a worldwide movement toward collectivization that might well be elitist and authoritarian.³⁶ He does not simply say that the new class could be a participant in a genuinely democratic Left, or a progressive coalition replacing the New Deal coalition which he feels has often been distorted by the economic progress since World War II. But he does argue that it must be a participant in the

³⁴Daniel Bell, "Labor in the Post-Industrial Society," Dissent, 19:1 (Winter 1972), p. 183.

³⁵Harrington, "The New Class and the Left," p. 134.

³⁶Ibid., p. 137.

democratic Left "if there is any hope that such a Left will provide nonauthoritarian responses to the inevitable collectivism of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries."³⁷

Arguing for the optimistic emergence of the radicalization of the new class, Harrington elaborates an integrated set of theoretical hypotheses (conceivable expectations in the future) that are not verified in a rigorous fashion. His fundamental hypothesis is that affluence may provoke the workers to political struggle as much as poverty, for the more well-off people become, the more radical they tend to be.³⁸ He argues that the masses are more inclined to be radical when their standard of living is on the upswing rather than when it is at rock bottom. The conventional argument, buttressed by historical experiences, is that the less privileged orders should be the least enthusiastic about the status quo, while the better-off tend to be conservative. But today, it appears, according to Harrington, that these attitudes are largely reversed. The working people and even the poor, however defined, have conventional ideals, are bourgeois, and strive for a large slice of the pie, while individuals who are dissatisfied with the existing order, are alienated, and hold radical views regarding economic organization and cultural values are most likely both highly paid and highly regarded. The new class is therefore likely to seek to improve the quality of life, instead of economic quantity.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Harrington, Socialism, p. 355.

Harrington borrows from David T. Bazelon a similar hypothesis that increasing education means greater political involvement. The more educated a group, the greater is its sensitivity to ethical questions in politics.³⁹ He recalls that Bazelon considered the various reform movements of the 1960s as political expressions of the new class. Harrington accepts Bazelon's correlation between high educational attainment and libertarian views on civil liberties, capital punishment, open occupancy, and the war in Vietnam.⁴⁰ But Harrington concludes that, as far as such issues are concerned, this emergent stratum is likely to differ considerably from the old working class attitudes. He believes that if the crisis of advanced society can be resolved only through radical innovation, there is a growing group among the new class that could become conscious of this fact and decide to act upon it politically. Harrington insists that it has already provided part of the mass basis for the McCarthy and Robert Kennedy campaigns of 1968 and for the movement to end the war in Vietnam.⁴¹ But, to Harrington, this stratum of the new class is not the single, natural majority in American politics.

Based on these hypotheses, Harrington develops a radical theory regarding a progressively coalescing majority, a hypothesis that the new class could discover an identity of interest with the

³⁹Harrington, Toward Democratic Left, pp. 268-69; and see David T. Bazelon, Power in America: The Politics of the New Class (New York: The New American Library, 1967), Chapter 13.

⁴⁰Harrington, *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁴¹Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," p. 276.

old working class under specific circumstances.⁴² This hypothesis implies that a massive objective basis for class politics in America could be actualized by political movements and economic events. In so far as the new class finds itself facing the problems of a stagflation, that class has a self-interest in pursuing a common cause with the working class in a campaign for full employment through planned social investments.⁴³

According to Harrington, a progressive coalition is not an inevitability, but a necessity based on an open-ended majority. His theory of a progressive coalition rests upon the question of whether enough people become aware of it and political movements organize to further it. In the same way, as a new coalition emerged in the thirties for the New Deal, it could emerge in the future in the name of a democratic Left. Harrington argues that the possibility of a radical liberalism lies in the unification of the old working class and the new class. In his words, "it is at least possible that a political movement in the eighties could take the solid, long-established operational liberalism of this country as the point of departure for practical reforms and ideological education."⁴⁴

⁴²Harrington, Decade of Decision, p. 299.

⁴³Ibid., p. 309.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 291. Especially, Harrington makes use of Free's and Cantril's term "operational liberalism," in which they discounted the fact that America was simply becoming more conservative. The majority of Americans remain conservative at the ideological level in the sense that they continue to accept the traditional ideology which advocated the curbing of federal power. Yet, at the

Specifically, as elaborated in his Toward a Democratic Left, Harrington's democratic Left contains the old working class, the new class, the poor, minorities, and students, while the New Deal coalition includes labor, big-city immigrant machines (the poor and ethnic groups), Dixiecrats, blacks, and liberals.⁴⁵ In The Next America (1981), Harrington adds the issue-oriented groups, such as women, environmentalists, and those of anti-nuclear movement (or peace activists), to the democratic Left.⁴⁶

The convergence of the old working and new classes is a crucial element of a new political majority in the democratic Left. In Toward a Democratic Left, Harrington observes that the New Deal coalition within the Democratic Party has disintegrated since World War II, in part due to the trade union's intermittent endorsement of Republican presidential candidates in elections, and to the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition, an unhappy coalition between the Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats who have often leaned to the right wing of the Democratic Party, opposing its social programs.⁴⁷ For Harrington, it is necessary that the

practical level of governmental operations, there has been an apparently inexorable trend in a liberal direction since the days of the New Deal. See Lloyd A. Free and Hadley Cantril, The Political Beliefs of Americans: A Study of Public Opinion (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1967), pp. 5-6 and 31-32.

⁴⁵ See Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, Chapter 10, and for New Deal coalition, see Ibid., p. 253.

⁴⁶ Harrington, The Next America: The Decline and Rise of the United States (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), p. 136.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 280.

democratic Left should be a progressive coalition designed to realign the New Deal coalition and to restructure the Democratic Party. That is to say, it is necessary to go as far beyond F.D.R. as Roosevelt had gone beyond Herbert Hoover.

Because of the peculiarities of the American political situation, Harrington insists, it is probable that a radical political change will not happen radically. That is to say, if the necessary new party does come, it will not result from the sudden emergence of a full-blown third force (the democratic Left), but through conflict within the present party structure.⁴⁸ Most importantly, a strategic theme is found, through most of his work, that there is no immediate prospect that a new majority of the democratic Left will join a socialist party.

The starting point of Harrington's strategy for the democratic Left is an attempt to provide a party realignment within the Democratic Party. It is not an attempt to create a third party for the democratic Left, and it is not a proposal for a tightly disciplined party on the old European model for the labor or socialist parties.⁴⁹ Harrington emphasizes the left wing of the Democratic Party as a cradle of American radicalism. All that can be done, he says, is to create a very modest socialist presence within the Democrats. Any possibility for mass socialist consciousness must

⁴⁸Harrington, Accidental Century, pp. 301-302.

⁴⁹Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, p. 246.

emerge out of the present liberal consciousness.⁵⁰ As he also emphasizes, "it is simply a recognition of the fact that, to solve problems which the government passively records, there must be radical departures and a political movement capable of initiating them."⁵¹ Thus Harrington's best strategy for the democratic Left is to seek to win the Democratic Party in such a way as to permanently exclude its right wing.⁵² He optimistically observes that even in the 1960s the development toward realignment was expressing itself mainly within the Democratic Party, where its left and right wings had been engaged in a bitter struggle for some time, especially around the reform movement of delegate selection in the Democratic Party.⁵³ But, for Harrington, it is quite possible that a new party would bear an old label: the Democratic Party, not a socialist party. He makes clear his views on this strategy as follows:

We believe that the left wing of realism is today found in the Democratic Party. It is there that the mass forces of social change are assembled; it is there that the possibility exists for creating a new first party in America.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Harrington, "Say What you Mean--Socialism," The Nation, 218:20 (May 18, 1974), p. 649.

⁵¹Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, p. 246.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 273-74.

⁵³See Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik, "The New Politics and the Democrats," pp. 78-79.

⁵⁴Harrington, "The Shape of Our Politics," The Democratic Left (March 1973), p. 3.

With an eventual unity forging a natural majority within the Democratic Party, the democratic Left will move beyond the New Deal toward a program of planned social investments. Harrington insists that there must be a dynamic political movement in order to force the welfare state to promote the general welfare.⁵⁵

Harrington does not ignore the criticism of his theory on a new majority coalition. He observes that there is no easy resolution to an eventual unity of the democratic Left because he assumes that the democratic Left is not a single, natural majority but a potential majority.⁵⁶ As in any coalition, there are tensions and even open conflicts among its various constituent elements. In a broad sense, his expectation for the political formation of the democratic Left is based on a simple hypothesis that the daily concerns of working people and the poor would merge with the values of the college-educated in a new majority party. But he feels that "there are many ways in which there is an undramatic, and even tedious, strategy" in American politics.⁵⁷

Specifically, Harrington observes that non-economic issues will be a particularly important source of internal antagonism in the democratic Left. When it comes to civil liberties, aesthetics, capital punishment and the like, profound differences divide the poor and the workers from the new-class liberals and radicals. In

⁵⁵Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, p. 246.

⁵⁶Harrington, Decade of Decision, p. 291.

⁵⁷Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, p. 270.

general, as previously indicated, the more educated a group, the greater is its sensitivity to ethical questions in politics. For instance, it is the case for Harrington, that people whose work and/or neighborhood are rough do not instinctively defend the speaking rights of a hated opponent.⁵⁸

Even more important, in terms of the strategy of the democratic Left, there are potential conflicts in the area of foreign policy. On disarmament, as on civil liberties, almost all of the polls describe a decline in positive sentiment as one descends the educational scale.⁵⁹ For this reason, a mass party of the democratic Left, whether within or outside the Democratic Party, cannot be initially organized in response to international issues where there is a maximum potential for discord among its various constituencies. This controversial issue has often recurred in both European and American socialist camps during two world wars.

Similarly, Harrington feels that powerful irrational forces--for example, race hatred among the people--could drive the same groups toward an internecine struggle for scarce goods in which each of them will lose.⁶⁰ As he notes, there will almost certainly be disputes within the democratic Left on these tactical questions. The various social groupings involved have different attitudes and

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 271.

⁵⁹See Barry B. Hughes, The Domestic Context of American Foreign Policy (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1978), Chapter 2.

⁶⁰Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, p. 262.

passions and, moreover, there are often grounds for honest differences in the complexities of the moment.⁶¹ Yet, his expectation is that, however vigorous the internal debates of the democratic Left may be, the coalition for the unity of the democratic Left is the only eventual hope within the Democratic Party.

We now come to the strategic underpinnings of Harrington's democratic Left in the immediate future. He has been committed to a political movement for ideological education associated with democratic socialism, under the banner of which the democratic Left could be formed as "an official group inside the Democratic Party."⁶² For this reason, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) was founded under the leadership of Harrington in 1973, when he led the antiwar faction out of the old Socialist Party. Harrington intended the DSOC to be most concerned with moving toward realignment and a new liberalized Democratic Party.

The DSOC consists of individuals who believe that the realization of the potential of mankind requires many important basic institutional changes, among which are the social ownership and democratic control of the decisive means of production and distribution. It had been dedicated to building a society at the service of human needs and to creating a foreign policy for all the peoples

⁶¹Ibid., p. 274.

⁶²John Judis, "Democratic Socialists Move Left," In These Times (Feb. 28--March 6, 1979), p. 4.

of the world. It has also worked to protect and expand civil liberties, and encouraged democratic social planning.⁶³

As far as an extensive agenda is concerned, the DSOC has stood behind the unanimous commitment of the 1976 Democratic convention and the repeated promise of its presidential candidates, a promise of creating a job for every worker in America.⁶⁴ The best way to accomplish the goal, the DSOC believed, was by increasing public service employment at the federal, state, municipal levels and in neighborhood and community-based, non-profit cooperative programs.⁶⁵ And yet, the DSOC most emphatically did not propose to federalize all of the public work in America. Indeed, it stressed that one of the most important areas for the creation of new jobs is within the framework of neighborhood and community programs. It was in this sense that the Rural Electrification Administration had demonstrated that money from the federal government could be used to underwrite and encourage the creativity of the grass roots. So the choice before the DSOC is neither "free enterprise" nor "statism."

In addition to the creation of new jobs, DSOC's basic industrial policies came from Harrington's radical-liberal programs as

⁶³See Denise S. Akey, ed., Encyclopedia of Association, Vol. I, 16th ed. (Detroit, Michigan: Book Tower, 1981), p. 1028.

⁶⁴Harrington, "Socialists Examine the Two Souls of Liberalism," The Democratic Left, 5:3 (March 1977), p. 6. The DSOC agreed with the AFL-CIO that Carter should immediately move to redeem his promise by a \$30 billion economic program which would reduce joblessness by 2 million.

⁶⁵Ibid.

discussed in the previous chapter. The DSOC did not trust in the corporation-dominated market to make the right allocation of resources. As a result, the DSOC has been fighting for decentralized industrial policies and structural change as follow:

1. The creation of a publicly-owned gas and oil corporation.
2. Credit allocation, requiring all banks to provide a percentage of their loans for specified social purposes.
3. A tax credit only available for those investments which promote the goals of public policy, e.g., for companies that hire minorities or women, which move into depressed regions and urban areas.
4. Public and employee representation on the boards of directors of all major corporations so that basic decisions on pricing, technology, plant location, etc. are made in the open.⁶⁶

As it clearly proclaimed, DSOC's agenda is not socialist even through it moves in that direction. Almost every proposal indicated above was contained in the 1976 Democratic platform or, like tax reform, was vigorously endorsed by Carter during the campaign.⁶⁷ Thus DSOC's first step was to mobilize the Carter

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 7.

majority and the non-voters in a democratic Left coalition of trade unionists, minorities, feminists, and political and social activists. The DSOC then believed that it was possible to make collectivization democratic and communitarian. That is how the DSOC defines "socialism" today. Thus the DSOC made no messianic claims about the future, and one of its hopes was that the people, in the course of winning control of their society, would find new meanings in their individual lives.

What concerns us most here are the strategic aspects of what the DSOC has been doing. An important part of DSOC's strategy has been to build the democratic Left, defined in Harrington's fashion as a reform coalition in the Democratic Party that backs liberal programs and candidates. The DSOC also has pledged to do battle with Republicans in final elections, as it did in the 1976 presidential race. However, in the 1980 presidential election, the DSOC broke this pledge because it was disillusioned with Carter's position as "an Eisenhower Democrat."⁶⁸ Ironically, as Ronald Radosh pointed out, one result of the DSOC might be the very united front with the Communists that Harrington's older associates have sought to avoid for so many years. This is so because Harrington's electoral strategy of working within the Democratic Party is similar to that of the American Communists--except that the Communists persist

⁶⁸ John Judis, "Democratic Socialists Move Left," p. 5.

in hiding their socialist views.⁶⁹ Realizing that the world has moved away from the 1930s, Harrington seemed open to some degree of unity, in the name of the democratic Left, with those Communists who are clearly liberal reformers. But there has so far been no evidence that Harrington and the DSOC have tried to merge with the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

In two years since the 1977 convention in Chicago, the DSOC has grown from 2,000 to 7,000 members. It participated effectively at the Democratic Party mid-term conventions. But DSOC' membership is still relatively small and its influence over regular and administration Democrats is waning rather than waxing.⁷⁰ With the 1980 election approaching the DSOC found itself somewhat frustrated and isolated. One question that occupied the DSOC was what to do about the "Eisenhower Democrat" Carter. Thus the DSOC inspired Senator Edward Kennedy to step forward to challenge the renegade Carter.

At the 1977 convention, a "left caucus" was organized within the DSOC. It incorporated the local activists' complaints, and also added some new ones: particularly that the DSOC was not sufficiently stressing its socialist side. "We have tended to blur the distinction between mass work and creating a socialist presence," a national board member of the DSOC, Bogdan Denitch,

⁶⁹Ronald Radosh, "The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee," Socialist Revolution, 3:4 (July-August 1973), p. 86.

⁷⁰John Judis, op. cit., p. 4.

told a left caucus meeting at the convention.⁷¹ The left caucus members also joined other convention delegates who were urging that the DSOC explore a merger with the New American Movement (NAM), a democratic socialist organization founded in 1971, that emphasized community organizing rather than electoral strategy for the Democratic candidates.

The resolutions passed by the 1977 convention contained left caucus proposals for education and local organizing. DSOC members were urged to run explicitly as socialists in serious Democratic Party primary campaigns. And the proposal to explore a NAM merger was also overwhelmingly approved.⁷² According to the resolution of the 1977 DSOC convention, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), of which Harrington is co-chairman, was formed in 1982, by a merger of the DSOC and the NAM. No change in ideological position between the DSOC and the NAM can be found, but DSA's strategy was functionally enlarged. In this sense, the DSA is no less than a simple merger of the two organizations. The DSA simply took over the roles of both organizations by joining with the liberal-labor wing of the Democratic Party and by emphasizing community organizing. That is, it is committed to the creation of a democratic Left through a strategic effort to unify the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and the progressive forces outside the

⁷¹Ibid., p. 5.

⁷²Ibid.

Democratic Party, like religious, labor, civil rights, community, feminist, and anti-nuclear movements.⁷³

Like the DSOC, the DSA depends upon liberal institutions and ideology--on the existing unions, the Democratic Party, and other liberal organizations. And like the DSOC, it rejects any effort to build a mass socialist party as a third party in the United States. It is clear that Harrington intended to create an organization broader in scope than the old Socialist Party (now the Socialist-Democratic Federation) from whose ranks he had split in 1972. Harrington gave up waging a factional fight within SDF's ranks precisely in the hope that such factionalism forced him to move toward the creation of a new majority under the slogan of the democratic Left, apart from the strategy of the old Socialist Party.

Perhaps it is much too early to say that all the progressive forces in America have been integrated into the DSA. It seems that, as far as an effective strategy for the democratic Left is concerned, the DSA under the leadership of Harrington did not provide a clear blueprint that can absorb all the progressive elements into the DSA or even into the Democratic Party. It may be almost an ideal that they can be unified under the Democratic Party. Furthermore, it is possible that Harrington's DSA may face serious frustration whenever a Democratic candidate becomes "an

⁷³See The Democratic Socialists of America, The New Socialists: An Official Pamphlet (1984).

Eisenhower Democrat" as Carter had. But Harrington has a dream that in the long run the people of the DSA would create a new majority when the democratic Left eventually enters into the next phase of American politics.

CONCLUSION

In the first section, we have reviewed the theories of the new class put forth in the pioneering theories of Veblen, Galbraith, Bell, and Mills; the "new politics" theories of Kristol, Podhoretz, Kemble, and Muravchik; and the neo-Marxian theories of Marcuse, Gorz, Touraine, and Mallet. Most of them, though not all of them, assumed that the new class can play a significant role in historical change by replacing the old industrial working class that had been said to become associated with labor conservatism. They all repudiated the orthodox Marxist conception of the class struggle, a notion that the industrial working class makes historical change. Though they used different jargons for the new class, their notions were largely associated with the social-economic class (or strata, in a narrower sense) managing the means of production without its ownership, or with the college-educated engaging in professional jobs.

Even though they have contributed to the theoretical development of the new class, especially in terms of the identification of the new class and the analysis of its ideological position, it seems clear that theories about the political attitudes of the new

class remain controversial. We can see four different types in theorizing about the position of the new class. First, Marcuse was distrustful of the new class because of its "embourgeoisement," just as Louis Boudin predicted a few decade ago that it would tend toward state socialism (or bureacratization).⁷⁴ Secondly, Veblen, Gorz, and Mallet insisted, in contrast, that the new class generates a radical potential and is an important determinant of historical change. Especially, Touraine and Mallet's empirical studies of the 1968 crisis in France verified Gorz's hypothesis of the new class radicalization within industry. Thirdly, C. Wright Mills perceived the "double game" of the new class which mediates between corporate power (capitalists) and the working class. Particularly, he concluded that the new class would eventually have to support either the working class or the business community. Last, Galbraith, Bell, and perhaps the "new politics" theorists, among others, viewed the new class as an autonomous independent class (or strata). As they insisted, the new class was characterized as pursuing its own goals in a pluralistic and post-industrial society.

Perhaps it is difficult to determine which of these theories best explains the position of the new class as a whole. Each of these theories may be right or wrong in the living reality of the new class. There is also a difficult problem in the fact that the new class itself, as most theorists point out, cannot be perceived

⁷⁴Christopher Lasch, "The New Politics: 1968 and After," The New York Review of Books, 11:1 (July 11, 1968), p. 4.

simply as a unified class or strata because there are heterogeneous interest groups within the new class. For example, as Gorz once indicated, there is a tension between corporate executives and research scientists in the business community, even though they are both included in the new class.

Harrington has argued that the mature Marx had defined the class struggle in a more subtle and complex fashion which can serve as an excellent guide to the new working class. Furthermore, his neo-Marxian thinking provided him with the extension of the identification of the new class to socio-political (or liberal) issue-oriented groups (environmentalists, antiwar people, activist women power attached to ERA's movement, etc.). Especially, invoking French neo-Marxist theory of the new class, Harrington's version of the new class was seen as a social force with radical potential. He hypothesized that the new class had an unconscious radical impulse, that under certain conditions could be actualized. But his most important argument is that the theory itself of the new class can not make the new class radical--that is, the new class would not automatically evolve into a political force for democratic and structural change of the economic system. To push the new class forward the democratic Left requires an apt political strategy.

The new class is not a single, natural majority, even though its elements come together on the basis of mutual ties to a radical cause. Hence Harrington, as seen in the last section, calls for a

new majority as a progressive coalition of poor people, labor (the old working class), the new class, minorities, and Democratic liberals. He does not deny the difficulties of bringing these groups together, but he thinks that a rational assessment of their interests ought to unite them toward realigning the Democratic Party, not toward forming a socialist (or radical) party, in the name of the democratic Left. For this purpose, Harrington has tried since 1973 to connect the forces of the democratic Left and the Democratic Party by means of ideological education and political campaigns for Democratic presidential candidates through the DSOC and the DSA. Perhaps it is an ideal, at least at the present time, to expect the Democratic Party to become realigned as Harrington demands. But he has a dream that a new majority can be created in the Democratic Party which demands democratic socialism in America.

CHAPTER V

NEO-MARXIST THEORIES OF THE STATE AND HARRINGTON

As Perry Anderson and S. M. Miller have separately pointed out, the most underdeveloped area in socialist thought is the area of politics in the nation-state, especially the theory of the state in its modern version, whether it is called the welfare state, the post-industrial state, or the socialist state.¹ Socialists begin by ignoring the famous Marxist notion that the state is a prisoner of ruling interests. For not only do they lack an adequate view of politics (the state) in modern capitalism, but they have little comprehension of democratic politics in a socialist state. To the socialist the state rarely does more than just administer "things." Questions requiring more detailed analysis concern not only elections and civil liberties, the ranges of legitimate political dissent, and the possibilities of moving beyond formal democracy, but also how conflicts among and within parties, the military, bureaucracies, economic sectors and occupations, and enterprises will be resolved.² How can established systems of bureaucratic privilege and oppression be attacked and abolished? How can bureaucratic indifference, narrowness, and inhumanity be overcome? What could be the structure of an authentic democratic socialism? These,

¹See Perry Anderson, Considerations on Western Marxism (Bristol, England: Western Printing Services, 1976), p. 121; and S. M. Miller, "On Socialism Now," Social Policy, 4:4 (Jan.-Feb. 1974), p. 3.

²See Anderson, *Ibid.*

Anderson accurately pointed out, are the most urgent agenda for the Marxist theory of the state today. Many European neo-Marxists are now beginning to focus on these important issues.

In America, these questions are often asked by Harrington and, in a sense, implicitly reflect the starting point of his democratic socialism. While the theory of the state is not explicitly or elaborately formulated at any great length in any of Harrington's works, it is intermittently stated throughout his works in a mosaic form, in his discussion of the liberal and socialist theories of the state. Nonetheless, as we will see, Harrington formulates his own unique neo-Marxist perspective on the theory of the state.

For Harrington, central planning, nationalization, and the other traditional socialist proposals are not socialist because they are not accompanied by democracy. Thus democracy is central to the political structure of socialism. It is the guarantee, the only guarantee, of the people's economic and social power. Such is the logic of Harrington's neo-Marxist views, and they reflect what he feels the state should be like in a just society in the future.

In this chapter's first three sections, we will briefly review Lenin's views on the state, known as the orthodox Marxist theory of the state, as well as recent neo-Marxist theories of the state articulated by instrumentalism and structuralism. In fact, instrumentalism and structuralism have until recently represented bipolar viewpoints in neo-Marxist theories of the state. In the last section, we will see Harrington's own position of approaching the state in his neo-Marxian perspective.

LENIN'S VIEWS ON THE STATE

Historically, Lenin was believed to have contributed to the Marxist theory of the state in the orthodox Marxist sense. He probably arrived at his views from a reductive reading of fragmentary and heterogeneous texts by Marx and Engels. Lenin's appropriative reading of Marx's texts in The State and Revolution (1917) has probably contributed much to the character of law in the socialist world, and has been instrumental in the oppression of the socialist working classes, as well as a source of slogans for Communist parties all over the world. Thus in Lenin's reading of Marx, Harrington finds the outlines of all that is wrong with so-called Leninism.³

Lenin's State and Revolution was a polemic against the gradualist parliamentarianism of Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein. He argued that the form of the bourgeois state must be preserved, and that the anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin and Pierre Proudhon, who believed that the state must be eliminated altogether, was by no means an acceptable alternative. Lenin's point, which mediated between the two, was that although the bourgeois state must be destroyed, the state form must be preserved, but controlled by the proletariat.⁴ To Harrington, Lenin's argument is interesting because it was carried out in the name of restoring the essence of

³See Harrington, Twilight of Capitalism, Part One.

⁴See V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution: Marxist Teaching About the Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution, revised trans. (New York: International Publishers, 1932).

Marx's view of the state. In Lenin's words, "in view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to re-establish what Marx really taught on the subject of the state."⁵ Yet it proceeds by a series of interpretative displacements which moved Marx toward conclusions Lenin himself proposed.

Lenin's first displacement is perhaps the most significant. He cited Marx's statement in The Communist Manifesto to the effect that "the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class" and "to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as a ruling class."⁶ Lenin used this quote to argue against the Kautskyites that the proletariat does not need the present bourgeois state, but instead a proletarian state: "The proletariat needs state power, a centralized organization of violence . . . to lead the enormous mass of the population . . . in the work of organizing a socialist economy."⁷ The crucial displacement occurs in the next paragraph: "By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited

⁵V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 25 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964), p. 386.

⁶Ibid., p. 402.

⁷Ibid., p. 404.

people."⁸ After establishing the "marxist" definition of the state as the "proletariat organized as a ruling class," Lenin substituted the vanguard party for the proletariat. From this point in the text, it can be assumed that whenever Lenin spoke of the political power of the proletariat, he meant the power of the vanguard party.

For Harrington, Marx's own thrust in the phrase "in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as a ruling class" is actually just the opposite of Lenin's. What was wrong with Lenin's argument was the assumption that the bourgeois state must be destroyed and replaced by another central state, that is, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," which Lenin called "the essence of Marx's theory of the state."⁹ In fact, it has been said that Marx never wrote a complete text on the theory of the state about which one could say "this is its essence." As Michael Ryan points out, in different situations at different times, Marx wrote a series of texts in which he mentioned the state, but these did not constitute a fully developed theory.¹⁰

Within orthodox Marxism the state is generally treated as a dependent variable, a product of the mode of production and an instrument of the dominant economic class. For Leninists, it becomes an instrument of the vanguard (Communist) party. In categorical

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 411.

¹⁰Michael Ryan, Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 165.

terms there are two schools in the neo-Marxist theory of the state: instrumentalism and structuralism. The theoretical debates between them appeared intensively in the 1970s, among American left scholars. Whereas instrumentalism tends to generalize the state as an instrument of an economically dominant class, structuralism prefers to see the state as an autonomous entity independent of corporate power (the dominant class), and assumes that "class struggle" is effective even in advanced capitalist society. While instrumentalism is part of the criticism of the traditional pluralistic theory of the state in America, structuralism arose out of the criticism of instrumentalism.

INSTRUMENTALISM

The instrumentalist views are those that tend to describe the state as the instrument of a specific social class. All instrumentalists seek to demonstrate the continuing tendency of the upper class to dominate the state apparatus, while conceding that in normal times this class may be somewhat disunited and its members at cross purposes. Control of the state apparatus is maintained, nevertheless, through the formal and informal ties of the upper class to the state. Further, in times of crises members of this class use state intervention in the economy to maintain their position. It is, therefore, the task of these theorists to demonstrate that the welfare-state reforms of post-New Deal America and Western Europe have not only served the long-run interests of capital but were instigated for that very purpose by the elite. As Fred Block points out, "the heart of the theory is the idea that enlightened

capitalists recognize that the crises of capitalism can be resolved through an extension of the state's roles."¹¹

For the sake of classification, the instrumentalists may be loosely subdivided into two groups. The first consists of the historians of "corporate liberalism," notably Gabriel Kolko, James Weinstein, and Ronald Radosh, who are concerned with tracing the evolution of the "corporate capitalist state" as a structure for mediating the contradictions of capitalism.¹² A common theme of these theorists is that corporate rich dominate and control the state apparatus in capitalist society, with an assumption that the welfare state still remains capitalist.¹³ In other words, the United States (the welfare state) in mid-twentieth century is a "Leviathan Corporate State--a political economy dominated by giant multinational corporations."¹⁴

¹¹Fred Block, "Beyond Corporate Liberalism," Social Problems, 24 (Feb. 1977), p. 355.

¹²See Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crises: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the New Deal," Politics and Society, 10:2 (1980), p. 161.

¹³See: Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916 (New York: Free Press, 1963) and Wealth and Power in America (New York: Praeger, 1967); James Weinstein, The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); and Ronald Radosh, "The Myth of the New Deal," in Radosh and Murry N. Rothbard, ed., A New History of Leviathan (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), p. 146-187.

¹⁴Radosh and Rothbard, *Ibid.*, p. v.

The second instrumentalist group contains such power-structure researchers as G. William Domhoff.¹⁵ This group has concerned itself with teasing out elite influences on the governmental process as well as documenting class cohesion among the elites, something that more orthodox Marxists take for granted. The power-structure researchers also differ from the orthodox Marxists in that their definition of elite tends to be based on a combination of status characteristics, such as social-club membership and educational and ethnic background. In this respect, they draw extensively on such American sociologists as C. Wright Mills and Floyd Hunter, as well as orthodox Marxist sources.¹⁶ As John Mollenkopf briefly summarizes the position of power-structure research, "the state does not play an independent or initiating role in policy formation, or is there any separate basis for political power aside from economic dominance." He continues to say that "the state does not therefore undertake anti-business measures."¹⁷

¹⁵ See G. William Domhoff, The Power That Be (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), Who Rules America? (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), and The Higher Circles (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

¹⁶ See: C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953) and Top Leadership, U.S.A. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959).

¹⁷ John Mollenkopf, "Theories of the State and Power Structure Research," in G. William Domhoff, ed., New Directions in Power Structure Research, A special issue of The Insurgent Sociologist, 5:3 (Spring 1975), p. 148.

Both these groups--corporate liberalism and power structure research--address similar issues. Their initial concepts are firmly within the Marxist tradition. Unlike Mills, they presume the existence of a "ruling class." Domhoff, like Mills, generally uses the terms "elite" or "power elite." However, his work differs from Mills' precisely in that he maintains he has "grounded the power elite in a social class, whereas Mills has viewed it mainly in an economic class." And Domhoff defines the "power elite as the leadership group or operating arm of the ruling class."¹⁸ This enables him to describe the operation of the elite while remaining theoretically committed to class analysis.

It seems that instrumentalists have done much to pin down exactly what and whom they mean by "the state" by focusing on the practical or empirical groups of individuals influencing policy-making, but not on the abstract or formal mechanism of government. This pragmatic orientation is politically useful and also has some scholarly merit in a dynamic analysis of politics. On the other hand, they inevitably show a pessimistic view of "class struggle." This pessimistic view results from their methodological weakness, which forces them to focus for the most part on the one side of instrumental relationship of the state to the capitalist class and is likely to ignore the positive possibilities of the relation of the state to the labor movement.¹⁹ As Fred Block and

¹⁸G. William Domhoff, The Power That Be, pp. 9 and 23.

¹⁹Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crises: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," Politics and Society, 10:2 (1980), pp. 162-63.

Nicos Poulantzas have pointed out, instrumentalists have tended to reduce the whole relationship of the state and the economy to that of capitalists and bureaucrats, which is an oversimplification of the whole structure of the state.²⁰ Therefore, the instrumentalists argue that state intervention (i.e., the capital-dominated bureaucratic oppression of the labor movement) in the economy has prevented the transition to socialism in America.

STRUCTURALISM

Structuralist views of the state supplement what the instrumentalists failed to explain in their methodological perspective. According to Skocpol, there are two distinct trends within the structuralist argument: "political functionalism," best exemplified by the early works of Nicos Poulantzas, and the "class struggle" position, best represented by the recent works of Fred Block.²¹ While both share the structural starting point of the autonomous state, they provide a useful contrast within the structuralist camp--from the most deterministic (Poulantzas) to the least (Block). Stated simply, it can be said that Poulantzas stands for a relatively autonomous state and Block for a fully autonomous state.

²⁰See Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule," Socialist Revolution, 33 (1977), pp. 6-28; and Nicos Poulantzas, State, Power and Socialism, trans. by Patrick Camiller (London: New Left Books, 1978), Part One.

²¹Theda Skocpol, op. cit., p. 158, and see Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, trans. by Timothy O'Hagan (London: NLB, 1973); and for Fred Block, see footnote 11.

Nicos Poulantzas views the state as a "relatively autonomous" institution: "autonomous," because state policy is seen as independent of the wills of capitalists; "relative" because of the ultimately "determinant role of relations of production."²² He also insists on "no identification between the party and the state."²³ For Poulantzas, the central difficulty in the work of modern Marxists is the confusion between men as actors and men as bearers of structural relations. But in his reading of Marx, it is the structure of capitalist society and its culture that makes the state an executive committee of the bourgeoisie, not the decisions or actions of individuals.

Since the capitalist state, according to Poulantzas' structuralism, was created by capitalists, the state's structural interests simply are the interests of capitalism, whether or not contemporary capitalists and bureaucrats realize their interrelatedness.²⁴ In this respect, one can hardly see any difference between Poulantzas' thinking and that of orthodox Marxists viewing the capitalist state as an executive committee of the bourgeoisie. But the core of his thinking is that the direct participation of the capitalist, while possible, is not at all necessary for capitalist control of the

²²Nicos Poulantzas, "Political Parties and the Crisis of Marxism," interviewed by Stuart Hall and Alan Hunt, in Socialist Review, 48 (Nov.-Dec. 1979), p. 67, and for more discussion on the state, see Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, trans. by David Frenbach (London: NLB, 1975).

²³Poulantzas, "Political Parties and the Crisis of Marxism," p. 73.

²⁴Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, pp. 104-120.

state.²⁵ Indeed, he asserts that under the modern capitalist system the state is likely to function best when capitalists are not directly involved. State bureaucrats must transcend the short-sighted interests of the individual capitalist in favor of the general interests of capitalism. Hence the state may enforce necessary concessions, engage in long-term planning, and defend the interests of capitalism over those of particular capitalists. In addition, such an "autonomous" state serves to disunite workers, promote the privatized citizen and undermine the politics of the class struggle. It is, in short, best for capitalism when the ruling class is not the governing class.²⁶

But, to call Poulantzas' notion of the state "autonomous" still seems to be quite misleading. For while he grants autonomy from class domination, he nevertheless paints a picture of a state utterly determined by structural imperatives which support ultimately the interests of capitalism. Poulantzas' emphasis on objective structures implies an actorless notion of power and an historical notion of the state. Men and women are cut out of history entirely, and the state has no specific history of its own. His formulation is based more upon its own internal logic than upon any concrete history.

²⁵Poulantzas, "Political Parties and the Crisis of Marxism," p. 72.

²⁶Poulantzas and Ralph Miliband, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," in Robin Blackburn, ed., Ideology in Social Science (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 73.

In the same philosophical context, Fred Block has devised a theory of the state capable of explaining class domination while acknowledging the contributions both of the instrumentalists and of Poulantzas. Block begins with the premise that modern capitalism consists of a division of labor between the rulers and the accumulators of capital. He argues that Marxists must "reject the idea of a class conscious ruling class" and posit instead "a division of labor between those who accumulate capital and those who manage the state apparatus."²⁷ He sees these two spheres as autonomous with no "inherent" reason why the state should serve the class accumulators. Like Poulantzas, Block sees capitalists as concerned primarily with short-term profits. Unlike Poulantzas, he recognizes that these same capitalists are under constant pressure from workers who have their own goals.²⁸ And the state, rather than simply mediating the contest between capitalists and workers, is itself a third interested party. State officials also have their own goals: the maintenance of their rule, political stability, the steady collection of revenue, and the expansion of their own domain.²⁹

According to Block, state managers are bureaucrats who are always aware that "exceptional periods are generally of a limited

²⁷Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule," p. 10.

²⁸Fred Block, "Beyond Relative Autonomy: State Managers as Historical Subjects," in Ralph Miliband and John Saville, ed., The Socialist Register 1980 (London: The Merlin Press, 1980), p. 231, and "Beyond Corporate Liberalism," p. 356.

²⁹Fred Block, "Beyond Relative Autonomy," p. 234.

duration" and that they "will return to their earlier dependence on capitalist cooperation."³⁰ For Block, this explains the tendency of state intervention to aid capital without denying the importance of conflict or "the continuous possibility of other outcomes."³¹ Up to this point, he is postulating a state that can intervene on behalf of "a more general rationality." State bureaucrats "unlike the individual capitalist . . . do not have to operate on the narrow basis of a profit maximizing rationality."³² This argument leads to the possibility that class struggle can materialize in a capitalist society. Block maintains that class struggle is functional for capital in that every workers' victory forces capital to improve methods of production and control. If wages go up, capitalists have to develop more capital-intensive technology. This "diminishes the capacity of workers to win wage gains." In short, "class struggle is responsible for much of the economic dynamism of capitalism."³³ Class struggle pushes forward the development of capitalism. "It does this economically by raising wages and thus prompting capitalist to substitute machinery for workers. It does it politically by pressuring state managers to institute economic regulations and social reforms."³⁴

³⁰Ibid., p. 230.

³¹Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule," p. 23.

³²Ibid., p. 20.

³³Ibid., p. 21.

³⁴Theda Skocpol, op. cit., p. 183.

In a number of ways, Block's ideas are useful to the understanding of why the New Deal occurred as it did. In Skocpol's words, "the federal government was transformed from a mildly interventionist, business-dominated regime into an active 'broker state' that incorporated commercial farmers and organized labor into processes of political bargaining at the national level."³⁵ If her view is right, Block's theory of the capitalist state is quite elegant and powerful. In fact, Block attempts to explain the state as an independent variable where the state is conceived as an organization with an exclusively political structure and purpose. It is an organization with its own structure, its own history, and its own pattern of conflict and impact upon class relations and economic development. Nevertheless, his theory reveals a fundamental methodological limitation as it focuses only on the fully autonomous state. Hence Block's theory is likely to ignore the dependent role of the state in class relations.

HARRINGTON'S THEORY OF THE STATE

My reading of recent neo-Marxist works leaves me feeling that the theoretical debates on the state in capitalist societies are still wide open. The neo-Marxist critique of the traditional pluralist paradigm seems to provide a fresh insight into the development of the theory of the advanced capitalist state. But there

³⁵Ibid., p. 156.

is not much agreement among the various neo-Marxist approaches to the state. One can see, as Skocpol points out, the basic inadequacy of those lines of neo-Marxist reasoning that treat political outcomes in advanced capitalism as the enactments of a far-sighted capitalist ruling class or as the automatic functional responses of the political system to the needs of capitalism. In other words, the instrumentalist theory of the state, including the orthodox Marxist theory, basically views the capitalist state as a dependent variable, while the structuralist theory regards the state as an independent variable. As the works of pioneering neo-Marxists, like Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno, have implicitly indicated (see Chapter II), one can hardly afford to underestimate the state's independence or to conceive of it as a reflection of anything. For neo-Marxist political analysis to move forward, it must be urged to press the argument for the interdependence of the state (the government), the capitalists, and the non-capitalists (the working class) in a whole society. For neo-Marxist political analysis (at least in Gramsci, Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno) is fundamentally based on the dialectical interdependence between infrastructure (i.e., class relationships) and superstructure (i.e., the state or government).

Harrington quickly became dissatisfied with the distortions and simplifications in neo-Marxist explanations of the state. In analyzing the welfare state, he utilizes theoretical insights from both instrumentalist and structuralist arguments. He does not confine his analysis of the modern capitalist state simply to one of these two neo-Marxist categories. He sees the welfare state as a

"socialism for the rich," or as "political capitalism," where the state becomes increasingly dependent upon the corporations.³⁶ He nevertheless places great emphasis on the role of the American labor movement as an effective agent of class struggle within the context of an autonomous state.³⁷ In fact, he points out that "the state has intervened more and more in the economy and social structure," and that "that is not because the conservatives betrayed their principles or the liberals and socialists were bent on creating a leviathan. The intervention grew out of the increasing complexity, and the national and international interdependence, of late capitalism."³⁸

More specifically, the independent role of the state to control corporations is still seen as the function of a New Deal government at least in its initial stage. In Harrington's view, however, it is no longer the case that the government can act independently, since repeatedly the history of the New Deal economy in America shows that the interests and priorities of what he calls a corporate collectivism override those of government.³⁹ It is clear that Harrington sees the history of the American welfare state and New Deal policies as a dynamic dialogue between instrumentalism and

³⁶Harrington, Socialism, p. 5 and Twilight of Capitalism, p. 205.

³⁷Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, pp. 255-59, and Twilight of Capitalism, pp. 295-319.

³⁸Harrington, The Politics at God's Funeral (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), p. 212.

³⁹See Chapter III.

structuralism, so that he takes the radical or liberal characteristics from both categories. When he defends the welfare state as something other than "a liberal plot to manipulate the dispossessed," Harrington demands recognition for the point that the welfare state was "created over the violent resistance of most men of property and wealth, and its creation required a major upheaval on the part of the workers from the bottom up."⁴⁰

The methodological synthesis of instrumentalism and structuralism provides a dialectical framework from which to study the history of the welfare state in America. Such a synthesis implies a continuous dialectic between the state and society. As Harrington points out, the welfare state "has been the instrument of the oppressed as well as the oppressors, a means of partial liberation, as well as of partial pacification."⁴¹ Such a dialectical approach, which follows from his neo-Marxian perspective, presupposes the interdependence of social relations (see Chapter III), and may avoid, or replace, the methodological weaknesses of both the structuralist and instrumentalist theories of the state. Hence his theory of the state is considered an effort to develop a unified theory of the state as an approach to the totality of social relations by means of looking into the interdependent relationships between the state and society. In Harrington, therefore, the state

⁴⁰Harrington, "The Mystical Militants," in Irving Howe, ed., Beyond the New Left (New York: The McCall Publishing Co., 1970), p. 37.

⁴¹Harrington, Twilight of Capitalism, p. 306.

is understood neither as an autonomous institution in the structuralist sense nor as a dependent variable of a dominant class in the orthodox Marxist or instrumentalist sense.

This neo-Marxian ideological distinction of interdependence of social relations must be kept in mind when examining Harrington's liberal or socialist idea of tripartism (or corporatism) in which the workers participate directly on the boards of directors of industry--that is what Harrington calls "co-determination."⁴² Whether the formation of the boards of directors is based on the European social democratic model containing representatives of the workers, of the consumers at large, and of the state authority, or on the American liberal model of corporatism, with representatives of the workers, of corporate people (managers or owners), and of the state authority,⁴³ Harrington calls for "the public (socialized) corporation with both the right to internal financing and the responsibility to democratically-elected representatives of the people."⁴⁴ It is clear that he, like the European social democratic leaders in the early part of the century, such as Jaurès, Bauer, and Kautsky, rejects the anarchist and syndicalist

⁴²Harrington, "Why We Need Socialism in America," Dissent, 17:3 (May-June 1970), p. 265.

⁴³See Chapter IV.

⁴⁴Harrington, *Ibid.*, p. 264.

proposals to vest title and control of every enterprise to its own workers. What he emphasizes in tripartism is the interdependence--in other words, co-determination--between the state, the workers, the capitalists, and the consumers.

It is well known that Marx's utopianism is expressed in his views about the withering away of the state. In Harrington's views, however, the state will not disappear. The administration of things will never replace administration of human beings. The democratic task is to make the state more responsive to the public interests as it protects basic human civil liberties.⁴⁵ According to Harrington, "government cannot relegate itself to an ancillary role, and it must intervene actively with regard to basic investment priorities, and to the best use of our human resources."⁴⁶ Even in tax reform state action should take place. Looking to the state to make good the claims of social justice, Harrington calls for a national transportation plan, a national health program, and federal chartering of all major corporations including a federal oil and gas corporation, which might lead to the political and economic costs of a totally centralized economy. Such liberal programs get mired in inconsistencies because Harrington always rules

⁴⁵See Harrington, Twilight of Capitalism, Chapter 12.

⁴⁶Harrington, "How to Reshape America's Economy, Dissent, 23:2 (Spring 1976), p. 121.

out a system of "centralized command planning with the bureaucracy settling thousands of prices and production targets."⁴⁷

In a moderate fashion, however, Harrington combines the techniques of French-style "indicative planning" with a wide extension of democracy: in his words, democratic planning.⁴⁸ This combination is taken to be a way of overcoming the tendencies of a market economy to respond primarily to profit considerations, and to force it to respond to social priorities. The techniques of indicative planning include: "collection and analysis of data, wide publicity, discussion among the various sectors with representatives of owners, managers, technicians, labor and government, and finally, projection of the goals and targets of a plan."⁴⁹ But these goals and targets are not production quotas, nor is it mandatory that they be targeted. Harrington intends that the state should not resort to central planning as an end in itself, but should recognize that, for consumer goods at least, the market is usually a better mechanism to deal with cultural differences in consumer demand.⁵⁰ Hence, he is able to characterize this

⁴⁷Harrington, "What Socialists Would Do in America--If They Could," Dissent, 25:4 (Fall 1978), p. 445.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 446.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 447, and Socialism, pp. 265-66.

kind of planning as "a publicly subsidized system of market research."⁵¹

But if the "planning" agency, either centrally or in concert with the owners, does not carry the main responsibility for making allocative decisions, what mechanism other than the market is there? Harrington's answer may seem to echo the ideas of the corporation boardroom organized by tripartism. And yet, his discussion of this question seems to be unclear. Although he sometimes reads like a market socialist, he does not seem to be one, because "market socialism" has been understood as an economic system in which the government is excluded from making allocative decisions.⁵² But it should be noted that although Harrington shares the market socialist ideas of democratic control, he does not exclude the government's presence in making allocative decisions. His position here invites serious criticism for advocating centralized planning or state intervention for its own sake. As discussed in Chapter III, the old structure of authority, according to Harrington, is not replaced in its entirety by the workers' council.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 448.

⁵²See Leland Stauber, "A Proposal for a Democratic Market Economy," The Journal of Comparative Economics, 1:3 (Sept. 1977), pp. 235-258, and "The Implications of Market Socialism in the United States," Polity, 8:1 (Fall 1975), pp. 38-62.

One can see a similar approach in Harrington's general ideas for remedies of the urban mess of the 1970s. When he discusses remedies, Harrington's accent is on local determination, backed by national policies keyed directly to public ends, instead of favoring private sector institutions that serve as surrogates for the government. And this local leadership, responsible because it is properly informed, is to exercise genuine power. He writes in a key passage:

When tax funds are used to support major transformations of the society, the decisions should be democratically debated and decided on. But if this perspective is not revolutionary it is profoundly radical. It means that the state will establish its priorities through the democratic process and only then finance them, rather than simply underwriting an economic and social context in which private interests are dominant. To do this would clearly require the creation of agencies for democratic planning and a conscious decision to allocate more of the country's resources according to criteria of social need.⁵³

Harrington is a compassionate moralist with sufficient expertise in economics to discern that the time has come when the weight of government intercession must shift to new institutions that correct the imbalance between the rich and the poor. He assumes that the existing political system is open to significant reform, that "even in a society based on private economic power, the government can be an agency of social, rather than corporate, purpose--if a vast popular mobilization forces it to do so."⁵⁴ It is only with such a perspective that he can believe that a new majority will be

⁵³Harrington, Toward a Democratic Left, pp. 50-51.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 101.

able to "build new institutions of democratic planning which can make the uneconomic, commercially wasteful and human decisions about education and urban living this society so desperately needs."⁵⁵ Hence Harrington sees democratic planning as an outcome of the dialectical interdependence between government intercession and vast popular mobilization. He believes that his "new class" and a new majority of the democratic Left will form the core of this mobilization. Without this vast popular mobilization, government (the state) is likely to remain the arm of corporate power.

Overall, Harrington wants neither the market nor central control. The market emphasizes competition with all its ramifications. Central control monopolized by the state, while appearing to open the way for rational planning, involves the risk of totalitarianism. The answer is democratic control of the economy, structured to prevent the threat of totalitarian takeover, and to provide the arena for free cooperation. But no one knows how to make democratic control work. It remains only a concept without any practical implications. It can be categorically stated that this kind of planning is not being accomplished and at the present historical moment cannot be accomplished. Harrington must sense this, because he acknowledges a role for the market in any transitional socialist society. But he stands for planning. This insistently raises the specter of the centralized state, without a key role for the market. So he brings in democratic planning as an

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 100.

antidote. But democratic planning by itself, in its pure form, seems difficult to work. It necessarily requires the assistance of the market. Perhaps the formulation of democratic planning by the state without the assistance of the market is one of Harrington's main problems, which seems to derive from his liberal and socialist perspectives on the theory of the state. This has prompted Stanley Aronowitz to describe his ideas as "the liberal pastiche."⁵⁶

But since he does not entirely endorse workers' control or exclude the government presence in making allocative decisions, Harrington cannot easily be criticized as an advocate of centralized planning or of "state socialism," as Stanley Aronowitz criticizes him.⁵⁷ Harrington, to repeat, devotes himself to a middle of the road position between instrumentalism and structuralism; the state is neither the instrument of a ruling class, nor an autonomous authority isolated from and over and above, society. It would be more accurate to say that Harrington basically perceives the state from a neo-Marxian perspective of "dialectical" interdependence between the state and social relations.

CONCLUSION

In sum, Harrington's theory of the state does not simply remain a theoretical (analytical) tool in itself analyzing the

⁵⁶See Stanley Aronowitz, "The Liberal Pastiche: The Wrong Issues Again," Social Policy, 4:4 (Jan.-Feb. 1974), pp. 19-20.

⁵⁷Ibid.

given facts of the welfare state, based on the analysis of what the state is or has been. Instead he puts his emphasis on the problem of what the state should be in creating a just environment. The picture of the "ought-to-be" state is drawn from the notion of the democratization of corporate power (the instrumental perspective) and from the notion of collectivism based on state intervention (the structural perspective). Thus his ideas are drawn from both instrumentalist and structuralist perspectives, and are logically reduced to the notion of "democracy," in which the democratization of investment through the effective participation of workers and citizens in choice is a key demand. In a sense, he talks about "democracy" when he speaks of the state in a just society. This, for Harrington, is possible by the strategic formation of the new majority of the democratic Left on the foundations of a structural perspective (the autonomous state and class struggle without militant revolution).

Whereas Marx's theory of the state remained utopian and its purpose is not just to understand the capitalist state but to aim at its destruction, Harrington's theory is more realistic or pragmatic in assessing the role of the state. While other neo-Marxist approaches to the American welfare state prejudicially fall into one of the two categories of instrumentalism or structuralism, Harrington's eclectic approach goes beyond these categories in a middle of the road direction, with the notion of "dialectical interdependence" between the state and social relations. To conclude simply that we need democratic planning, as Harrington does,

however, begs the critical questions. In the American context, to what extent should democratic planning occur within states, regions, and local communities? What is the role of workplace democracy? What is an optimal point to balance the role of the state and that of workplace democracy? Harrington seems to bring us only part of the way to general answers, but not quite far enough for specific policy formation. In his latest work, The Politics at God's Funeral (1983), Harrington takes a decentralist and communitarian position (i.e., the distribution of functions and powers from central authority to local governing bodies, and the emphasis on the communal system of organization) as the point of departure for democracy, but he still does not demonstrate it precisely.⁵⁸ If he could demonstrate this with precision, it would be likely to emerge through trial and error, or through testing in practical terms. When he proposes his democratic, or decentralist and communitarian position, Harrington requires a more elaborate and dynamic theory of the state than he has so far been able to put forward. At this point, his most famous, but seemingly paradoxical, statement is enough to summarize his political attitude toward the state: "Conscious centralization is a precondition for decentralization."⁵⁹

For many contemporary leftist theorists of the state, the logical place to turn was to Marx, whose writings still constitute

⁵⁸Harrington, The Politics at God's Funeral, pp. 204-206.

⁵⁹Harrington, Decade of Decision, p. 324.

the basis of an alternative understanding of capitalism. But to make the decision was probably not to solve the problem, because in the Marxist tradition the state, or the political element of society, was often assigned a secondary role, the understanding of which was to be derived from outside of itself. It soon became clear that to study the state from a Marxist perspective meant not the application of an already developed theory to existing circumstances, but the creation of that very theory, based upon some all too cryptic beginnings in Marx himself. Nonetheless, by the 1970s, the pluralist vision, as a means of explaining the nature of the state in America, was becoming a source of controversy among American intellectuals. In their attempt to resolve this controversy, neo-Marxists, like Harrington, seem to have contributed much to the various alternatives to the theory of the state.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this closing chapter I will summarize Harrington's approach to Marxism (his "spiritual materialism"), his concept of socialism (democratic socialism), and his ideological position in contemporary American radicalism (radical liberalism). I will also explore some new implications and possibilities for the application of Harrington's ideas to contemporary American politics.

SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM

From 1968 to 1972, Harrington was known as the major theoretician of European-style social democracy in America. During that period he replaced Norman Thomas as chairman of the Socialist Party of America, which represented post-war American socialism and was ideologically equivalent to European-style social democracy. But, since the 1972 split of the Party, he has turned his back on the Old Left and has come to represent a new and more democratic trend in American socialism. Harrington has applied his own unique interpretation of Marx to American politics by mobilizing the whole range of the American Left in an attempt to integrate Marxism and American liberalism. What follow is a discussion of Harrington's Marxism.

Harrington theoretically integrates the concepts of the young Marx and the old into a "mature Marx." Harrington's Marxism

transcends the vigorous dichotomy of the young Marx and the old. For Harrington, the mature Marx is to be understood as flowing naturally, and with intellectual integrity, through all of Marx's works. Harrington's mature Marx is not simply an old Marx, but can be best understood as a reaction to the oversimplified dichotomization of the young Marx's idealism and the old Marx's materialism. Thus, for Harrington, the young Marx is in the old Marx, the old Marx in the young Marx, and both of them can neither be separated nor opposed, but are combined into an intellectually mature Marx which is characterized by Harrington's notion of "spiritual materialism."

Harrington's spiritual materialism is characterized as an eclectic epistemology which mediates between the young Marx's idealism and the old Marx's materialism. Harrington is committed neither to the teleological concept of a "material totality" nor to that of an "ideal totality," but to the non-teleological concept of an "interdependent totality" which takes place as human subjectivity and objectivity interpenetrate in society as an "organic whole." In other words, Harrington's spiritual materialism is a formulation of the dialectical understanding of the interrelation between spirit and nature by which totality is non-teleologically expressed in the real world. For Harrington, man in history and society is best understood by means of a dialectic that sees him as the simultaneous creature and creator of his circumstances. Accordingly, history is understood as a totalization process, which proceeds by means of a dialectical interpenetration of human subjectivity and objectivity. For Harrington, both freedom and necessity

co-exist in the real world. Harrington accepts the concept of "totality" as developed by Adorno, but categorically rejects the Frankfurt school's pessimistic epistemology in which the truth and essence of things in the world are always problematic. Harrington's concept of totality can be claimed to be a dialectical integration of human freedom and necessity. Consequently, Harrington's epistemology is eclectic, but non-teleological and dialectical.

One can also see eclecticism even in Harrington's theory of the state. The debate over the theory of the state has until recently polarized Marxists as either instrumentalists (the state as a dependent instrument of the dominant economic class) or structuralists (the state as an autonomous organization independent of social classes). Reacting to these bipolar positions, Harrington has demonstrated that New Deal policies, or the process of the first and second New Deals, were created through the dialectical interrelation between state autonomy and society (capitalists and workers). The first New Deal (1933-35) was dominated by the National Industrial Recovery Act, a joint business-government effort to promote national economic recovery which involved the cooperative efforts of the federal bureaucracy and private enterprise. The second New Deal (1935 to the present) began with the Wagner National Industrial Recovery Act, which created welfarism and involved the cooperative efforts of government and labor. In general, these acts are especially relevant to any assessment of the interrelations of capitalists, the industrial working class,

and the national government throughout the entire era of the New Deal. Theda Skocpol's recent study of the New Deal supports Harrington's position.¹ Harrington sees the state neither as a dependent instrument of the dominant economic class, nor as an autonomous organization independent of social classes. Hence Harrington presents an eclectic but dialectical theory of the state, which is a serious alternative to instrumentalism or structuralism.

Harrington's spiritual materialism offers a Marxist paradigm for the analysis of society. When he speaks of a Marxist "paradigm," he does not want to suggest that there is an agreed-upon Marxist model of society which is now being tested by its proponents. This is not a paradigm like those of the natural sciences. What Harrington calls for is a synthetic method with which to analyze the real world from the standpoint of synthesizing philosophical and empirical scientific methods. This may be considered either scientific in the positivist sense, or philosophical in the normative sense. Harrington's dialectical view of totality avoids the pitfalls of the linear logic of dependent and independent variables and the conventional causal model. It also avoids the pitfalls of an a priori method which traditionally ignores empirical facts and historical data which are constantly changing

¹See Chapter V and Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crises: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," Politics and Society, 10:2 (1980), pp. 155-201.

over time. Unfortunately, Harrington has never elaborated precisely on what this synthetic method actually is. All we can gather is that it is a synthesis of traditional normative philosophy and empirical science. The synthetic method of social analysis in Harrington's Marxist paradigm mediates between empirical and non-empirical epistemologies.

Finally, Harrington's spiritual materialism is not revolutionary but evolutionary. Like all Marxists, Harrington's Marxist paradigm looks for contradictions in the social dynamic. But he insists that such contradictions cannot be resolved through revolution. Revolution has almost always resulted in totalitarianism. In Harrington's Marxist paradigm, it is more appropriate to approach the subtle and complex problem of social contradictions through a gradual, systematic, evolutionary strategy. Such a view of social change is closer to Bernstein's revisionism. But Harrington's starting point differs from Bernstein's. Unlike Bernstein's revisionism, Harrington's evolutionism is based on his concept of the "mature Marx," who he insists was the first revisionist of Marxism. Harrington sees the mature Marx not as a revolutionary but as a genuine democrat. Harrington's mature Marx is committed to a more refined democracy, which was to emerge from the civil hegemony of the working class. As a result, Harrington finds in the mature Marx a democratic and anti-totalitarian socialist, and concludes that democracy is the essence of socialism in the mature Marx.

In sum, Harrington's spiritual materialism is in essence a form of democratic socialism taken directly from the concept of the mature Marx. Harrington's Marxism, in its acceptance of the concept of a dialectically interpenetrating totality, owes much to the Hegelian tradition of Gramsci and Lukács and to the works of the critical theorists like Horkheimer and Adorno, but is substantially based upon his uniquely creative reinterpretation of Marx.

Ironically, Harrington once insisted that Marxism is still not a complete philosophy. He insisted on the existence of a future, emerging Marx, implying that Marxism is not a static dogmatic orthodoxy, but an ever-changing, pragmatic philosophy constantly adapting itself to the future. At any rate, in the context of American Marxism, Harrington has contributed not only to the beginning of the quest for theoretical articulation of a new conception of Marxism, but also to the task of rescuing the fatally vulgarized Marx of the past. In other words, he has contributed to moralizing and humanizing American Marxism.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

Since the Socialist Scholars Conference of 1964, Harrington has helped usher in a new phase of American radicalism. Harrington has taken issue with traditional socialism and its political strategies which Old Left socialists like Norman Thomas have generated.

To be sure, Harrington's Marxism and socialism are symbiotically united and together have contributed to a better understanding

of democracy in post-industrial society. Traditionally, equality and nationalization have always been at the center of socialist beliefs. What is clear and strongly articulated in Harrington's socialism is that it can no longer be taken for granted that equality and nationalization follow automatically from the ending of private ownership. Even though Harrington has shown a great concern for poverty in America, now poverty can no longer be the basis of the struggle for socialism. For Harrington, democracy is the only cause behind the struggle for socialism. There is, in Harrington's thought, a unity of democracy and socialism. For Harrington, the essence of socialism is democracy rather than equality and nationalization.

Indeed, the theoretical underpinnings of Harrington's socialism have always been found on the need for democracy in everyday life. We have learned from Harrington that until workers (or citizens) are persuaded that socialism means democracy, not only at the ballot box but also in the workplace and neighborhood, there can be no real discussion of the prospects for change. Just as the unfolding of political democracy (especially the extension of voting rights) was a radical development in the early nineteenth century in Western Europe, economic democracy (i.e., the labor movement and welfarism) is a similar development in the twentieth century. Harrington felt that these trends would inevitably integrate into some form of liberal and economic democracy in the future. Such a development, Harrington predicts, would result in the

convergence of "gemeinschaft" and "gesellschaft" in the twenty-first century. For Harrington, traditional economic planning, nationalization, and other socialist proposals are not socialist when they are not accompanied by democracy. Democracy is not simply central to the political structure of socialism, it is the guarantee, and the only guarantee, of the people's economic social power.

Harrington discussed socialism with great clarity. First, he insists that socialism is not simply a matter of economic models at the macro-economic level. Such models are the concern of totalitarians and corporations. Secondly, a new civilization (socialism) is not a problem of quantity (i.e., simple increase in incomes) but of quality (i.e., participation in the democratic decision-making of the investment process).² Harrington attempts to divorce himself from the cliched concepts of past socialism and enter into a new dimension of socialism, which, as he insists, can be adjusted to post-industrial society.

Harrington is best known, and properly so, as the most articulate proponent of democratic socialism of this century of America. However, there is still a great deal of confusion in using the term "democratic socialism" and "social democracy," even among social scientists. Some use these two terms to refer to the same phenomena. For Harrington, these are two distinct concepts. European-style social democracy is not accompanied by democracy in the

²Harrington, The Accident Century, p. 300.

economy. It is identified with bureaucratic elitism in the management of nationalized industries. In contrast, Harrington views democratic socialism as more humanistic and democratic in its approach to the economy and less bureaucratic and elitist in its approach to management. What follows is a discussion of the characteristics of Harrington's democratic socialism.

Harrington's democratic socialism is anti-capitalist in its basic assumptions, as it criticizes today's capitalism for being dehumanizing. However, he is critical of the distorted welfarism of the New Deal-style economic system, which, according to him, eventually became divorced from the original socialist meaning of welfarism. The second New Deal in America has so far changed to "socialism for the rich" rather than to creating a nation with a single and decent standard of well-being. Harrington ascribes the stagflation crisis of the seventies, the co-existence of joblessness and inflation, to the capitalist system of "socialism for the rich." In his desire to humanize the second New Deal, he calls for a third New Deal which has as its objective the democratization of welfare capitalism.

Harrington's socialism is presented as an alternative to what he terms "anti-socialist socialisms." It is the negation of existing Soviet-style totalitarian collectivism and European social democracy, because Harrington always insists that they have not been accompanied by democracy. Soviet-style totalitarianism is a fundamental failure and a massive betrayal of genuine socialism.

European social democracy is just another method of managing the capitalist economy, which he refers to "socialist capitalism." Totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism is also found in the Third World socialisms of China and North Korea. He feels that if socialism were to be effectively turned into a rationale for new modes of exploitation and monstrous crimes, then there would be no hope of a just order of things in the world. Hence Harrington's socialism stands against Soviet-style Communism, European-style social democracy, as well as Third World socialism.

Harrington's democratic socialism is non-revolutionary. It is a policy-oriented socialism, in which the ideals of humanism and democracy are to be expressed in the form of policies by means of the force of the democratic Left within the Democratic Party. It stresses the gradual accumulation of humanitarian democratic policies in society; it does not emphasize the nationalization of industries, which would eventually lead to the rise of statist bureaucracy as in European social democracy. In this sense, Harrington's strategy of democratic socialism is as reformist as New Deal-style liberalism. Politically, his reformist strategy places emphasis on revitalizing the Democratic Party rather than on forming a socialist party. For Harrington, the Democratic Party has always been the cradle of American radicalism. Thus Harrington's democratic socialism is non-partisan in the sense that he does not believe that one class, like the working class, should

rule under the control of a socialist party in America. For traditionally partisan socialists, the argument for social change begins primarily with a discussion of power and is only secondarily concerned about socialist policies (i.e., nationalization). Though critical of perverted welfarism, Harrington's socialism accepts the contemporary welfare state as the point of departure for a gradual progression toward democratic control of the investment process. It visualizes the American political process as offering ample opportunity for successful change through electoral means under the banner of the Democratic Party. In this regard, Harrington champions a non-Marxist strategy in the revolutionary socialist sense.

Unlike Soviet-style totalitarian collectivism, Harrington's socialism is based on a mixed economic system. Harrington's economic system does not reflect the monolithic structure of economic organizations that are so common in both capitalist and socialist societies. It is an economic organ in which private enterprise, the non-profit public sector, and cooperatives are all combined. For Harrington, the state (or the government) should guarantee democratic control in each element of those three sectors. It should not control the economy bureaucratically. He suggests that the state's conscious centralization should be a precondition for decentralization. This is probably paradoxical, but he means that the state may subsidize the non-profit public sector and the cooperatives, but should not control them. The state should consciously support democratization by requiring that they function

democratically. Even in the Soviet Union, private enterprise is partially allowed in farm production, but is not significant in light of the monolithic structure of its socialist economy. When it comes to TVA, a typical representative of the non-profit public sector in America, Harrington suggests that they should be subject to more popular, democratic control. The TVA community, he argues, should choose its board members directly by election instead of through political appointment by the federal government.

Harrington's socialism concentrates on the democratization of corporate power in the form of "tripartism," a joint decision-making machine containing government, capital, and labor, including the consumer at large. As seen in his economic system, Harrington does not totally reject private enterprises (or private property), but focuses on the structural transformation of corporate power by means of tripartism, giving more power to society as a whole in investment decision-making. Tripartism is Harrington's version of rationalized modern syndicalism in post-industrial societies. American liberals have sometimes called it "corporatism." Tripartism or corporatism is neither "sugar-coated socialism" nor "creeping socialism," as claimed by conservatives. For Harrington, it is a real model for the reduction of corporate power in post-industrial societies. It is also a modernized model of liberal economic organization in the tradition of American radical democracy and populism. Harrington emphasizes all along that this transformation should proceed through the emergence of a revived

liberalism which will, of necessity, be much more socialistic than traditional liberalism (or New Deal-style liberalism), even though it will not, in all probability, be socialist in a traditional sense. And he always maintains that this structural transformation of corporate power would not involve a sudden and dramatic lurch toward the socialist Left, but the evolutionary reform of the system within and through its traditional structures. In this sense, Harrington's democratic socialism, or his political ideology of the third New Deal, can be properly termed "radical liberalism," pushing today's American liberalism in the direction of democratic socialism and mediating between American liberalism and socialism.

Harrington's democratic socialism is most applicable to the political and economic conditions in advanced countries, especially America. Harrington believes that the best hope for socialism in the Third World lies in the victory of socialism in the developed world. He argues that the preconditions of democratic socialism, such as economic abundance and the political formation of an effective democratic Left, are not yet found in the developing world. Accordingly, some critics indict Harrington's democratic socialism for not being applicable to socialism in the poor countries of the Third World.³ But Harrington's point of view is

³See Edward Chase, "The Illumination of Socialism's Total Meaning," Commonweal, 96: 12 (May 26, 1972), p. 287, and Stephen Miller, "The Poverty of Socialist Thought," Commentary, 62: 2 (August, 1976), p. 35.

different from that of these critics. He is fearful of the necessity of totalitarianism to effect revolutionary change in the Third World, rejecting an apocalyptic vision of creative destruction with his insistence upon his own preconditions for socialism (especially, economic abundance). Here Harrington suggests immediate and positive programs that can make abundance a real possibility in the Third World: technological innovation, population limitation, and a change in consumer tastes. In this sense, economic modernization is the priority of Harrington's perspective on socialism in the Third World. But traditional revolutionary socialists have maintained that socialists should first encourage alliances with nationalists of the Third World to seize political power. Modernization of poor countries will begin only after power is firmly in the hands of a revolutionary government. In fact, one can see through all of Harrington's writings that he has never supported international socialism. He does however agree that democratic socialism can be properly adjusted so as to meet the needs of highly developed post-industrial societies, especially America.

Finally, Harrington's democratic socialism is based on coalition politics, a politics of a new majority coalition of the democratic Left which attempts to weld together the progressive social strata, such as the poor, the labor unions, minorities, the new class, liberals, and radicals under the banner of the Democratic Party. This is a new movement in American socialism, sometimes

called a "new populism." This coalition strategy transcends the traditional strategy of socialism which had mobilized only industrial workers under the control of a socialist party. Harrington's consistent theme of the democratization of corporate power depends upon this coalition politics and is based on the vision and will of the new majority to create a new social order. Harrington presents a scenario of mobilizing a democratic Left capable of overcoming the weakness of the working class, particularly in America, through ideological education via organizations such as the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The DSOC and the DSA are not political parties, but function politically to bridge the gap between the Democratic Party and progressive social strata outside the Party.

Harrington's political strategy has been criticized for being overly optimistic in forming the democratic Left in America. Most critics of Harrington are skeptical of the coalition politics approach, and argue that the new coalition majority is irrelevant to political reality in America because of its heterogeneity, its differences outweighing its agreements.⁴ But they must recognize that the so-called New Deal coalition has played a significant role in radical politics in America. Harrington has always insisted

⁴See Tom Christoffel, "For Middle-Class Candidates," The Nation, 206: 23 (June 3, 1968), p. 736; Michael Novak, "In Search of Unity," Commentary, 57: 5 (May, 1974), p. 74; Christopher Lasch, "The Politics: 1968 and After," The New York Review of Books, 11:1 (July 11, 1968), p. 4; and Stanley Aronowitz, "The Liberal Pastiche: The Wrong Issues Again," Social Policy, 4:4 (January-February, 1974), p. 21.

that the elements of the democratic Left traditionally have pushed America in a progressive direction. It is his feeling that this tradition must play a role in any future American radicalism.

American politics, since the 1980 presidential election, has turned decidedly conservative. During the last two decades, American conservatism has been dominated by the so-called New Right. Historically, America's New Right conservative revival during the early sixties represented just the most recent episode in a long series of extreme right-wing movements which have erupted periodically throughout the course of American history. The term "New Right" describes its tactics--a bold activism stressing drastic solutions to social problems while rejecting a compromising approach. At the same time, it has been identified with the so-called traditional American way of life, such as Anglo-Saxonism, Christianity, civic morality, individualism, male chauvinism, and white supremacy. Sometimes it contains libertarian values, particularly economic individualism and the idea of limited government. In general, present American conservatism is characterized as a mixed form of traditional and libertarian values, but the New Right is most concerned with extreme right-wing movements dominated by those rejecting every liberal cause.

The New Right's control of the Republican Party has been confirmed by Reagan's 1980 and 1984 elections. However, it is perhaps too early to say that Reagan has guaranteed that the Republic Party will remain the long-term vehicle of the conservative majority coalition that elected him. The mere fact that the conservative

majority coalition came together to elect Reagan does not guarantee that its components will not separate again, just as they came together in 1972 to elect Richard Nixon overwhelmingly, and then separated again in the Ford-Carter race of 1976.

The current hegemony of conservatism at the level of presidential elections is obviously not the whole story. The American Left may find comfort in the idea, still upheld by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., that American politics are subject to the cyclical alternation of periods of reforming activism and conservative retrenchment.⁵ If we follow the general practice of periodizing by decades, this century displays a strikingly regular pattern in which protest and liberal-radical ferment were succeeded by transitional decades (often marked by foreign wars), followed by conservative decades, after which the whole cycle began again. If this sequence should hold, we may expect another turn to the left in the 1990s in the aftermath of the conservative 1980s, which were preceded by the transitional 1970s after the radical 1960s.

On the other hand, some scholars refuse to grant any sort of legitimate status to the New Right. Richard Hofstadter, for example, views the movement as both an aberration from the American tradition and a dangerous attempt at "subverting the whole pattern of our politics of coalition." Thus he detects a kind of "paranoid

⁵See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968 (New York: Chelsea House, 1971).

style" running through the New Right, while Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab depict New Rightists as practicing "the politics of unreason."⁶ If they are right, current conservative phenomena must be an aberrant and unreasonable epiphenomena in American politics.

In this context, the radical potential of the democratic Left as a new majority within the Democratic Party, which can revitalize and strengthen the now seemingly defunct New Deal coalition in light of radical democracy, can replace the current conservative impulse in the future. Harrington believes that at some future point when the democratic Left, with a comparative degree of unity, is lined up with the Democratic Party, the phenomenon of the democratic Left can become a reality in American politics.

In sum, Harrington's plan to bring democratic socialism into the Democratic Party is only the beginning of a process intended to popularize new socialist ideas (Harrington's) among Americans. Such ideas can enter into the social structures and democratic cultures within which most Americans have lived. They can materialize at a time when democratic socialism becomes relevant to their ways of thinking and acting.

Harrington insists that all that can be done is to create a very modest socialist presence (democratic socialism) among the Democrats. Any possibility for mass socialist consciousness must emerge out of the present liberal consciousness. Harrington's

⁶Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965); and see Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, The Politics of Unreason (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

democratic socialism is a relevant alternative to New Deal liberalism in light of the American liberal tradition, as he claims. Harrington argues that one must seriously consider the ideals which liberals and socialists share, but which socialists follow to their basic conclusion: The economic power must be democratized throughout American society, and that the age of corporate power, of an industrial feudalism in which a small group of elites makes fundamental and intolerable social choices must be brought to an end.

RADICAL LIBERALISM

Harrington's democratic socialism seems to be a polemic designed to stiffen the backbone of welfare liberalism by reminding Americans of the simple errors and foolishness of the conservative program and of the liberal obligation to continue the evolution of progressive thought and action toward a more democratic and just society. As an important intellectual figure of the American Left and an activist in every major liberal cause of the past two decades, Harrington is eminently qualified for the task. Actually, Harrington's democratic socialism can perhaps best be characterized as radical liberalism, a leftward position radicalizing the Democratic Party's liberalism. Harrington himself has once used the term "revived liberalism" in reference to his approach to democratic socialism.

In regard to Harrington's modification of traditional socialism, Philip L. Beardsley has said:

Joint critiques of private ownership and public ownership have recently been offered by liberals who espouse a complex vision of an alternative political economy that includes some elements of socialism, and by socialists who espouse a complex vision of an alternative political economy that includes some elements of liberalism. Robert Dahl and John Kenneth Galbraith typify the former⁷ group, while Michael Harrington typifies the latter.⁷

Emphasizing a similar point, Lasch maintained that Harrington's socialism is nothing more than the "narrowness of populism."⁸ And he also said elsewhere that Harrington's movement for a new majority "is merely a logical extension of liberal reformism in America."⁹ Similarly, Rudolf Klein said that Harrington "is too much of a liberal to urge revolutionary tactics and too much of a socialist to settle for liberal-reformist policies."¹⁰

Harrington's ideological position crystallized when he advocated forming a political group of radical liberals capable of supporting his democratic socialism. James Finn's terms "truly radical" and "radically liberal" are proper references to Harrington's ideological position.¹¹ Harrington takes a middle-of-the-road

⁷Philip L. Beardsley, Conflicting Ideologies in Political Economy (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1981), p. 74.

⁸Christopher Lasch, "Populism, Socialism, and McGovernism," New York Review of Books, 18:1 (July 20, 1972), p. 16.

⁹Christopher Lasch, The Agony of the American Left (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 191.

¹⁰Rudolf Klein, "Crumbling the Barricades," Commentary, 54:2 (August, 1972), p. 66.

¹¹James Finn, "These Three: Faith, Hope and Death," Commonweal, 100: 20 (September 6, 1974), p. 506.

position between liberal reformism (welfare liberalism) and socialism in the traditional sense. In other words, he has devoted himself not only to modifying traditional socialism but also to radicalizing liberal reformism.

Harrington's thought cannot be measured by any of the standard ideological categories of the Left in America, such as orthodox Marxism, European-style social democracy, and New Deal liberalism. The theoretical foundation of Harrington's thought results not from the standard ideological categories of the American Left but from the convergence of his Marxism with America's democratic traditions. While Harrington's democratic socialism is drawn from Marxian thinking, it can best be understood as "Harringtonianism" because it is a distinctive position in contemporary American radicalism. It is Harrington's strong faith and hope that this will be widely accepted in the future as a meaningful and appealing left-wing alternative in America.

One may say that it is difficult for liberals to uphold their own principles and still align themselves with the cause of socialist revolution abroad, and that it is also difficult for orthodox Marxists to see anything worth salvaging in America's liberal tradition. Yet the apparent incompatibility of these two ideologies need not preclude the desire to support the human needs and aspirations that gave rise to both Marxism and liberalism: justice and freedom. Harrington's greatest contribution to contemporary

American radicalism is his theoretical merging of these two opposing ideas, in such a way that allows them to function in American politics in terms of policy-formation.

Michael Harrington is not a Marxist in the orthodox sense, but a humanist and genuine democrat who seeks the roots of democracy in both Marxism and the democratic traditions of America. He is not a New Deal-oriented liberal reformist. He is a radical liberal who has reversed the trend of government-dominated paternalism. He is an idealist who tries to combine liberal freedom and socialist justice.

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