目 録  CONTENTS

一、美國新左派運動之評估  
**A REEVALUATION OF THE AMERICAN NEW LEFT AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

LEWIS T.C. LU

二、蝸帷在人群裡：德倪絲·雷佛朵芙的獨行自立  
**SOLITUDE WITHIN MULTITUDE: DENISE LEVERTOV'S POETRY OF SELFHOOD**

Sung Pint-ting

三、我國學生學習英文的適當年齡及其學習要領之探討  
**THE OPTIMAL AGE AND THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN OUR COUNTRY**

YEI Pei

四、中醫專家建造系統  
**TCM EXPERTS-CREATING SYSTEM**

五、直流電阻法横向異常解析  
**THE TRAVERSE ANOMALY ANALYSIS OF DC RESISTIVITY METHOD**

六、最大氧攝取量判定的研究  
**A STUDY OF DETERMINATION ON MAXIMAL OXYGEN UPTAKE**

七、地磚「黑斑」病變及防範之研究  
**DEGRADATION DIAGNOSIS AND PREVENTION 'SUGGESTION TO BLACK SPOTS ON GROUND BRICKS**

八、夯實泥岩力學性與滲透性之研究  
**THE STUDY ON THE MECHANICS AND PERMEABILITY OF THE COMPACTED MUDSTONE**

九、擴散性粘土的判定試驗  
**THE TEST FOR DOPERSIVE CLAY JUDGMENT**

十、汽車碰撞中人體動態反應的電腦模擬  
**PERSONAL COMPUTER SIMULATION OF AUTOMOBILE CRASH VICTIM**

十一、由CAD自動產生NC車床工件程序  
**AUTOMATIC GENERATION OF NC LATHE PART PROGRAM FROM CAD**

十二、可變振幅與可變頻率之正弦信號之快速  
**THE FAST AMPLITUDE AND FREQUENCY DETECTION METHOD FOR THE VARIABLE FREQUENCY AND AMPLITUDE SINUSOIDAL SIGNALS**

1～39……周子青

41～78……宋婷婷

79～90……葉佩霞

91～114……鄭錦英

115～138……呂崇嘉、蔡富仁

139～160……劉安球

161～180……王和源

181～206……蕭達鴻

207～219……沈茂松

220～244……黃世憲

245～260……吳泳慶

261～280……周宏亮、王連強
十三、一種電壓控制式之電壓源型主動電力濾波器
A NEW ALGORITHM FOR VOLTAGE-SOURCE VOLTAGE-CONTROL ACTIVE POWER FILTER

二十四、混合式最佳化方法－遺傳演算法與梯度法
A HYBRID OPTIMIZATION APPROACH-GENETIC ALGORITHMS AND GRADIENT-BASED METHODS

二十五、以非等間距線型陣列之四階累計矩陣作方位估測
DOA ESTIMATION WITH NONUNIFORM LINEAR ARRAYS VIA FOURTH-ORDER CUMULANT MATRICES

十六、可動空間4R機構之數目研究
ON THE NUMBER OF MOVABLE SPATIAL 4R MECHANISMS

十七、CNC搖動放電加工表面特性之研究
SURFACE CHARACTERISTICS DUE TO CNC LORAN MACHINING BY EDM

十八、新軟體工具在票據系統上之應用
A NEW SOFTWARE TOOL APPLIED IN THE BILL SYSTEM

十九、國中學生人體計測值之探討
AN ANTHROPOMETRIC OF INVESTIGATION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

二十、自行開發之電腦軟體成本其會計處理之探討—
兼論FASB Statement No.86之缺失
ACCOUNTING FOR THE COSTS OF COMPUTER SOFTWARE DEVELOPED INTERNALLY AND SOME ARGUMENT ON THE STATEMENT NO.86 OF THE FASB

廿一、統計方法在四連桿機構合成之應用研究
FUNCTION GENERATION OF FOUR-BAR MECHANISMS USING STATISTICAL METHOD

廿二、我國所得稅法對於營利事業所得稅課稅主體
與客觀規定妥適性之研究
A STUDY ON THE TAX SUBJECT AND TAX OBJECT OF PROFIT-SEEKING ENTERPRISE INCOME TAX UNDER THE RULES OF INCOME TAX LAW

281～296……周宏亮、吳晉昌
Hung-Liashng Jou
Jinn-Chang Wu

297～310……謝欽旭、楊正宏
Chin-Shiuh Shieh
Cheng-Hong Yang

311～330……林益生
Yih-Sheng Lin

331～350……李聰慶
Chung-Ching Lee

351～366……陳中城
J.C. Chen

367～386……黃士滔、池福灶
Shih-Tao Huang
Fuchiao Chyr

387～402……盧瑞琴、劉天賜
Lai-Chin Lu
Tian-Shy Liou

403～414……李合龍
H.L.Lee

415～442……曾秀美、許正和
S.M.Tseng、C.H.Shu

443～462……蘇慶義
Su Ching-Yih
廿三、世界各國會計準則之探討
A STUDY ON WORLDWIDE ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

廿四、抵押品與信用風險之研究
STUDY FOR COLLATERAL AND CREDIT RISK

廿五、台灣語初探
A STUDY ON TAIWANESE DIALECTS

廿六、列子思想概述
A SYNOPSIS OF LIEH-TZE’S THOUGHTS

廿七、從聲母文白對應看台灣閩南方言的文白異譯現象
ON THE PHENOMENON OF DIFFERENT LITERARY SOUNDS FROM COLLOQUIAL SOUNDS IN THE MIN DIALECTS IN TAIWAN BASED ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF LITERARY AND COLLOQUIAL SOUNDS IN CONSONANTS

廿八、王充論寓所思想的文學思想
THE LITERARY THOUGHTS DEVELOPED BY WANG CHUNG’S IDEOLOGY OF ELIMINATING PREPOSTEROUS FANTASY

廿九、中國憲法內之聯邦主義－邁向聯邦之路
THE FEDERALISM IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA-THE ROAD TO A FEDERAL STATE

三十、史記仲尼弟子列傳中「子貢存魯」之研究－「連環套」戰略模式之建構
THE STUDY OF THE EVENT OF ZI-GONG SAVE LU COUNTRY TO CONSTRUCT LIAN-HUAN-JAO STRATEGIC MODEL

著者簡介一覽表

463～486……管國珍 Kuo-tson Goan

487～512……杜建衡 Chien Heng Du

513～566……黃清良 Ching-Liang Huang

567～584……陳宗賢 Chung-Hsien Chen

585～600……黃忠天 Huang, Chung-Tien

601～618……林美秀 Lin Mei-Hsiu

619～638……呂漢忠 Hann-Jong Leu

639～658……鄭克強 Zheng Ke-Qiang

659～660
A Reevaluation of the American New Left as a Social Movement

Lewis T. C. Lu

Abstract

As the decade of "the end of ideology," the fifties witnessed the stagnation, decline, and disintegration of an organized American left (Bell, 1960: 296–7; Starobin, 1975; Shannon, 1959). However, as the mood of quietude ran its course into the middle of the fifties, the myth of prosperity and the "American creed" was gradually dispelled. Indeed, old issues had given way to renewed social concerns, i.e., the existing malpractice and abuse of justice. At this moment, people became aware that the repressive political climate had brought about new issues which required new ideologies to give them visibility. Lacking organized forms of political dissent, the discordant notes of new ideologies nonetheless stimulated uneasy rumblings in the silent generation or "ungeneration" as it was called by Bacciocchi (1974: 14–20). Right after the dying away of the Old Left, negative appraisals of what had been going on gave rise to the emergence of a new breed of leftists who no longer succumbed to the prevailing ethic of complacency caused by the material affluence and plenitude of this period. Upon the meeting of both the old and new lefts, this latent mood of restlessness and insubordination substantially paved the way for a renewal of ideology, ushering in a momentous epoch in which the "behemoth stirred" was to unfold in the sixties (Ash, 1972: 233). Although the social and cultural context of the fifties had a direct bearing on the emergence of the New Left, the early New Left derived its advocacies mainly from the ideals of the civil rights movement. Undeniably, racial injustice sowed the seeds of social insurgency; however, the New Left became inextricably enmeshed in violence, spitefulness, and aggressiveness after confrontational politics crossed over into black militancy. Later on, the attitude of the American public toward the issues of the Vietnam war again immensely gave thrust to the New Left advocacy. Meanwhile, the New Left movement could also be analyzed through a generational perspective in terms of the relations between the youth and the counterculture they symbolized. The New Left met
its decline in the late sixties and the early seventies. Major factors were internal fragmentation and the counter-movement launched by the conservatives. However, the lingering effects of this movement significantly left their imprint on the history of American social movements.

The Concept of Social Movements

Many scholars (e.g. Turner, 1981: 1; Genevie, 1978: 137; Turner & Killian, 1987: 223; Tilly, 1978: 9; Foss & Larkin, 1986: 2; Harper, 1989: 126; Heberle, 1951: 1-23; Wilkinson, 1974: 26-32) have laboriously worked on the concept of social movements. From a mixture of collective behavior and resource mobilization approaches, we can identify social movements as basic processes in causing social change, but they are different from other social forms because they exist outside the institutional framework of everyday life. Oriented toward a degree of social change, social movements are generally understood as unconventional collectivities with varying degrees of organization aiming at promoting or preventing change. Although reflecting partly organized phenomena, social movements can be markedly distinguished from any integrated structures and organizations. Moreover, the rise of social movements involves intense emotion and conflict surrounding a specific set of issues. Being attracted to movements more through a face-to-face recruitment, adherents demonstrate a greater degree of personal commitment than do mere sympathizers and the public. Personal commitment results more from collective ideologies than from external reward. Through the propagation of movement causes and rationales, such a common belief system is employed by activists for the justification of collective action.

Some movements are not politically motivated, but many have overtones of political involvement even though they are either religious in nature or concerned about issues surrounding non-political topics such as environmental protection, consumer safety, the right to use guns, the legality of abortion and prayer in public schools. In addition, movements must perceive an oppositional target as the enemy against whom movement supporters can both direct their hatred and intensify their struggle. In addressing this, Alain Touraine (1977) identified three factors that give rise to social movements: opposition,
social identity, and totalization. Opposition is targeted at the
evil that is embodied in an enemy. Social identity refers to the
"we" feeling that draws the line between "us" and "them."
Totalization means the simultaneous presence of these three
factors. Besides this, movement organizers compete for the
loyalty of adherents in the face of countermovements and other
external pressures exerted by the authority. According to the
Marxian concept, movements can make "history from below" and
initiate change from the "bottom up" by creating mass unrest and
intra-group solidarity (Tilly & Tilly & Tilly, 1975: 273-4).
Through the support of the masses, movement participants believe
that decision-making elites will adjust social policies in
response to movement appeals. It should be kept in mind that
mass support can also be manipulated by the authority in order
to consolidate a totalitarian control in serving the ends of the
state.

The Implication of Social Change and the New Working Class Theory

The onset of the New Left originated from the structural
change of American capitalism. Owing to the ensuing change in
the relationship between the production of knowledge and the
production of goods as well as the shifting function of social
institutions, the class structure of American society no longer
remained what it had been prior to World War II. To begin with,
there arose an enormous increase in the numbers and importance
of bureaucratic and white-collar professions. Because training
and skills could be passed down to the succeeding generation,
people on these jobs increasingly became the major source of
technology and knowledge.

As a result, the revolutionary change in the mode of
production dictated that intellectuals no longer existed outside
the political economy of the American system. However, even as
a constituent part of the labor force, they showed antipathy
toward the corruptions and temptations of affluence, imparting
to themselves a latent revolutionary potential. Not to be
ignored was the dynamic impact their political thought and
activities exerted on the social structure. In light of the
homogeneous class composition of New Left students, students or
youth in a broader sense became a socially distinct category
rather than an ahistorical and universal one as they had been
previously defined. In the post-industrial society, change in
the structure of capitalism had diminished the importance of unskilled human labor such as farmers, blacks, the aged, and other outcast groups. After unskilled labor became comparatively marginal in the productive process, the prosperity of the national economy as a whole was increasingly contingent upon the bureaucratic and technical labor force. This reality in turn subjected intellectuals to tight scheduling, rigid rules, standardized and routinized regimentation, and other exploitative constraints (Goodman, 1956). Therefore, the New Left activists as a class could be understood in terms of the changing role and function of intellectuals within the broader social structure (Vickers, 1975: 107-127). This may be attributed to another more advanced phase in the concept of what Parsons (1960: 103) and Dahrendorf (1959) described as "structural differentiation."

After the lives of intellectuals were thus interpreted as a manifestation of class structure, it became increasingly apparent that they had gradually displayed a revulsion against the material exploitation they experienced on the job. The objective process of social change following the change in the instruments of production hence provided a non-psychological explanation for the emergence of the New Left. In other words, intellectual labor in the professional and technical occupations in the government or corporate services, or as highly trained personnel operating sophisticated machines in a technological setting, became a new working class whose formation was facilitated by objective and material changes in the structure of American society. The emergence of the New Left reflected an urge on the part of the intellectuals and/or students i.e., "apprentice intellectuals" as termed by Lipset & Altbach (1970: xxviii), to articulate and define the features of this reality.

The fact that the new working class did not possess production means and that their wages did not come directly from exploitation relegated them to a class resembling those who were exploited. Nonetheless, administrative brain power and other intellectual labor were consistently called upon to carry out a technical and scientific upgrading of the labor force in varying degree. This tendency profoundly changed the role of the university and college on the ground that white-collar occupations in federal and corporate bureaucracies had necessitated a tremendous expansion of education. In this context, the changing role of knowledge and changing functions of the university ascended to become the crucial features of the changing class structure.
The Role of the University and the Ascendancy of Intellectuals as Revolutionary Forces

For example, the university was no longer the province of the upper class (Kennan, 1970: 34-5). Instead of an insulated institution offering liberal arts for a clique of the elite, the university became a place where training and skills were provided for the public (Kennan, 1970: 34-5). And it was not unusual for business companies to practice systematic recruiting in the university. Besides, skilled workers might also be sent to a university where they received further training in order to upgrade their research skills for the government or businesses. In this sense, the university's ties, or interdependence, with the government and businesses grew much more direct than before, becoming deeply enmeshed with other sectors of society (Goodmann, 1956; Lipset & Altbach, 1970: xxviii).

However, change in the productive and social relationship failed to justify a change in the institutionalized relations between groups, resulting in a "cultural lag" (Garner & Zald, 1987: 311). This reflected structural strains caused either by maladjustment of the old culture to the new opportunities (Smelser, 1963) or by the contradiction arising out of the inconsistency between productive forces and institutional structure (Alberoni, 1984). Non-human factors such as economy, culture, or technology within the system thus constituted the "immanent sources" of change to herald in the crisis (Sorokin, 1937: chap. 38). In other words, "institutionalization" as an empirical and mutually understood definition of the system (Parsons, 1960: 102) was blocked because there arose a confrontation or "asymmetry" between the systemic and anti-systemic forces in the adaptive process (Arrighe & Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1989).

Although intellectuals were actively involved in the productive process, their self-directed values spurred them into disillusionment with suppressive social and productive relations in the wake of social change. Working in a big organization in a multi-faceted environment, they had to cope with complicated and ambiguous conditions and make decisions in reference to a plethora of factors depending on a wide range of goals. Domination of the private sector of the economy by large corporations thus created large numbers of "organization men" whose educational level and professional skills gradually cultivated in them a value of self-direction. Vickers (1975: 60-61).
indicated that these self-directed values put a premium on
change, innovation, the intrinsic aspects of job, alternative
models of behavior, freedom in deciding actions of their own, and
a proclivity to reject externally imposed standards and other
social entities. Defined as constraints imposed by social
entities were external authority, physical discipline and
supervision, and self-deprecatory conformity.

However, in almost all instances, the cultural organization
of the institutions was unable to reflect the values, beliefs,
and interests of the highly educated and skilled occupational
groups who really managed the economy. To serve their ends, the
New Left intellectuals intended to rationalize the institutional
relationship and cultural organization in line with the
productive process. On the basis of this self-directed value,
the New Left developed its political theory and practice so that
people in the intellectual strata could institutionalize their
belief system in tandem with the working environment. What the
early activists, who primarily came from the expanding strata of
the privileged and upper middle class, endeavored to find was an
articulation of this value so as to identify themselves in
distinction from capitalists at one end and the traditional
proletariat at the other.

Another dimension of class origin in explaining the
subjective process of the New Left activists was the family
background in which they had been socialized. As observed by
many scholars (e.g. Flacks, 1967; Draper, 1965: 14; Lipset &
New Left students to a large extent came from families with
either parent taking a high-paying, professional, and
prestigious white-collar occupation. As children of higher
educated parents, they had been socialized by the pattern of
child rearing into a value system divergent from the traditional
Protestant capitalist one. Raised in a warm, permissive,
supportive, and nonauthoritarian atmosphere, they developed
independent and flexible minds consistent with the inner directed
values of their parents. Upon closer analysis, reduction in
family size, erosion of close ties beyond the unit of the nuclear
family, and increasing geographic mobility characterized the
features of their families in sharp contrast to the
stratification hierarchies, residential stability, and extended
family units of the local working class community. As such, the
vanguard role of the intelligentsia in the light of higher
education, suburbia, and migration from home as transients urged
them not to conform to the restrictive and other-directed values

- 6 -
of the working class or people of the lower paid white-collar occupations.

The New Left revolt could be understood in terms of intellectuals' disappointment at the failure of the system to live up to the values of the new working class. However, after the American labor movement was integrated into American capitalism, the Old Left paradigm of class analysis fell into discreditation. To the dismay of intellectuals in general and the new working class in particular, the liberal paradigm of the establishment to which the affluence and stability of American society was closely related was still unable to solve problems of poverty, racism, and militarism. Corrupted by the centralized power of the system, liberal consensus equivocated in its attitude toward the civil rights movements at the very beginning, casting a new light on issues later proffered by the blacks, Cubans, Hungarians, and finally, the Vietnamese.

The New Left could be analyzed by the Marxist notion of "social class" in which intellectuals were a constituent part of the bourgeoisie. The new working class concept was the most important element in neo-Marxist theory in presenting the characteristics of the New Left, who demonstrated a strong tendency to cherish values in the light of human nature (Calvert, 1967). With the exception of black activists who were concerned more about "stomach questions" (Gouldner, 1970: 399, 408), the greater part of the New Left movement was overwhelmingly centered around the issue of "value" in its own right, especially the value of human nature. At the core of their concept of human nature was adherence to creativity, independence, flexibility, decentralized power, and a desire for community. As a corollary, the values of the New left highlighted an intense opposition to obsolete social relationships and cultural forms that remained at odds with the new structure of capitalism. After being programmed primarily for career opportunities, humans found themselves repelled and constrained by the prevailing culture of social order.

Worse yet, growth was unevenly distributed and productive relations were still structured on an assumption of scarcity (Wilson, 1974: chap. 10). Even if American capitalism had literally eliminated poverty and want without either fear of material insecurity or direct reliance on material production for subsistence, contradiction between the rhetoric of affluence and the reality of scarcity paved the way for the emergence of cultural discontent. A case in point was the cultural opposition that was germinated by the stress and discontent people suffered
in the working environment. On the one hand, the New Left intelligentsia felt guilty toward their special privileges, such as draft deferments that could not be obtained by the conscript army primarily recruited from unemployed youth in urban ghettos. On the other, they were discouraged by the system that failed to provide social institutions and cultural meanings for a post-industrial situation. What flowed from their sense of guilt and disappointment was an anti-capitalist sentiment, cultural opposition, or ultimately revolutionary activities (Vickers, 1975: 120-1; Shils, 1970: 21; Lipset & Altbach, 1970: 1-34).

For example, there was a growth in the average university enrollment and a steady increase in the overall educational level. Not only median school years were rising but the education expenditures in the gross national percentage were also increasing both in scale and concentration. Indeed, increased spending by the university and mounting reliance on government funding for research dramatically shot up costs for institutions of higher education (Wrong, 1971: 318-31; Vickers, 1975: 111-4). However, bureaucratization and specialization intensified the conformity pressures on students, with the rigid organization of student life remaining structured around conformist values in a highly disciplined atmosphere (Marglin, 1982: 285-98; Thompson, 1982: 299-309). Correspondingly, this gave rise to popular discontent with severe strains on the financing and administering of the educational system. Both discontent with the way in which student life was ordered and a sense of dislocation in the highly structured environment sowed the seeds of oppositional consciousness when a pool of students gathered together (Bacciocco, 1974: 149-58).

Furthermore, the old social relations and cultural values had inhibited the growth of free self-expression. In protest, the New Left goal was either to aspire for a life outside the goods-producing system or to rationalize American capitalism to the extent that cultural values would reflect productive and social relationships in the wake of the change in class and institutional structure.

Indeed, the expansion of capitalist organization and the increase in government expenditures for goods and services had stabilized continued growth of the national GNP to solve the ultimate economic crisis of the thirties. According to Walcott (1956: 295), the median family income in the fifties was twelve times as much as that of the thirties. However, this objective process of capitalism fostered a trend toward monopoly with economic power primarily concentrated in the private sector. The
result was that corporations had dominated through outright ownership, had controlled the economic future of the nation, and had accumulated the greater part of the capital in the nation (Seligman, 1971: 202-19). Likewise, the growth of the government sector substantially increased employment in the service sector. As soon as knowledge became the most critical instrument of production, it profoundly increased the overhead costs of production in the public sector. Since the state paid for most of the costs of training and research funds, the costs of production were accordingly socialized through the institutions of higher education.

Under this circumstance, a new breed of middle class took the economic stage. They consisted of specialists, technocrats, research workers, and other educated and skilled labor. As salaried white-collar wage earners in the advanced layer of bureaucracy, this new breed of middle class were sellers of labor at a high educational and skill level. Given their separation from ownership, they never considered themselves corporate bourgeois. However, their geographic mobility and lack of interest in union activities and other class-oriented organizations became factors in retarding their class consciousness. Seen in this light, their values and interests were different from those of the proprietors of small establishments, self-employed entrepreneurs, and managers of family firms. Nor were their values identical with those of either the corporate heads and security holding class on one end of the spectrum or unskilled labor, blue collar workers, and the traditional proletariat on the opposite end (Hodges, 1971). The subjective process of the New Left intellectuals had acted upon the objective and passive character of social change, and thus the totality of the New Left transcended, or was limited by, the objective forces to which it had succumbed. It could not be denied that class factors were closely related to these objective forces, which social change entailed. In this view, the New Left movement was created and defined on the basis of the activists' own experiences and the meanings they attached to them.

The Generational Explanation

Marxian emphasis on the connection between technology and ideology always indicated the relation between means of production and modes of social existence. On the basis of this
theoretical construct, interpretation of Marxism indicated that a revolution of class struggle in a Leninist sense should never gloss over the assets of youth. For a society to function smoothly, it relied, according to Engels, on the dialectical interaction of economic and ideological factors, and social crises arose when that discrepancy between technology and ideology took place. In fact, the mutual adjustment between both would germinate social progress.

Marx’s paradigm of revolutionary change stemming from class consciousness is thrown into dubious credibility when we note the transformation of class position into age-status position in the American society of the sixties. Against the backdrop of the New Left genesis, age or generational consciousness played a greater role in the political struggle than did economic determinism and conflict. Seen in this light, Weber’s political theme laid the foundation of theoretical thrust for us to explain the propensity of youth to be at odds with the older generation. Unlike the class explanation, generational explanations of youth culture were intended to treat the New Left activists as a generation (Braungart, 1984: 95-142). It was assumed that the generational conflict was caused by the common situation and experiences of youth and/or students irrespective of their class backgrounds. This approach stressed young people as an amorphous category of social units in the belief that their psychological traits would combine with a special set of historical circumstances to deauthorize their elders (Wilson, 1974: 472-80).

The New Left as a youth movement was a response to a society that had failed to rationalize the productive processes even if physical needs could be met by these very processes. The impact of technological change on being young was best characterized by the bewildering and threatening alienation experienced by youth, caused by the extension of training periods and the blurring of the line separating training and practice. Increasing numbers of highly trained students had participated in the labor force en masse after graduation, and they were expected to assume the onerous roles of adult society, while simultaneously abandoning the role of pampered children. To them, the forthcoming challenge of work was drudgery and the pay could not compensate for the ensuing alienation they were to be confronted with.

As a result, campus mutineers considered the puritan and proletarian perspective of work in association with nobility as obsolete, believing that the affluence brought by technological complexity was the arch-villain of this era. In their minds, industrial capitalism was a failure given the reinvestment in
surplus production for profit and the inflationary effect required of the labor skills and discipline. The results they yielded were merely labor subordination, inflation of unneeded goods, and an inability to solve the problem of scarcity in an age of affluence. In order to appropriate that change, the young naturally came up with their ideological tools in order to either diminish the dehumanizing effect or cushion the impact of "massification" brought about by technological complexity and capitalist bureaucracies (Hoffer, 1970: 124).

The New Left Vision of the State

Gusfield (1979) indicated that the expansion of the state is a precursor of the social movement. Bureaucratization was accompanied by the proliferation of the educational system, the new service sector in the economy, and private and public ownership. In response, the New Left arose against the dehumanizing effect on daily life caused by the trend of bureaucratization in the last stage of state making. Ironically, sympathy with third world nationalism slowly crossed over into a general ethos of anti-Americanism, probably originating from the belief that the nation-state was an important international process among world historical societies (Howe, 1970: 23-32). Although Marx considered the state an arena where economic conflict takes place, activists extolled the nationalist spirit of countries in the third world where the hard, violent, and dictatorial communist dogma prevailed. Approval of radical nationalism was even carried out to such an extent that they held an apparent political-moral bias in favor of regimes of communist authoritarianism such as Cuba, North Vietnam, Algeria, and the Indonesian Socialists, running counter to the democratic values embraced so strongly by the New Left ideology in the first place. After the war in Vietnam broke out, many were disheartened by the fact that they were fighting as instruments of the "bad guy" aggressor. At this moment, the popular desire on the part of black activists for freedom and equality characteristic of the civil rights campaign surprisingly transpired into a political drive for nationalism and self-determination, culminating in the separatist sentiment of another kind of nationalism that was based on ethnic identification.

When the New Left movement was considered as a response to the operation of state apparatus, what the movement idealists
pursued was a utopian alternative with which to humanize the bureaucratic structures of American society and to make it more responsive to human needs rather than to elite fiat (Roberts & Kloss, 1974: 60–63). According to Tilly (1988: 1–18), social movements aiming at challenging state power are called "national social movements," and such movements always claim a legitimacy higher than the state. The New Left usually assailed bureaucratic institutions and planning by the government at various levels in the name of participatory democracy. In the eyes of the activists, the state was no less than an embodiment of governmental and corporate bureaucracies whose oppressive form of tyranny had reduced the masses to lifeless crutches, working and functioning in alienating and dehumanizing bureaucratic forms.

Closely related to the bureaucratic mentality, charged the New Left, was the narrowness of view engendered by alienation which rendered the masses unable to see the larger view of self-interest in the whole context of the social picture. In this bureaucratic world, people became super-industrial men performing mindless repetitive tasks in clearly defined slots, and differentiated vertically according to their role and rank (Marglin, 1982: 285–98; Zeitlin, 1982: 196–223; Seligman, 1971: 202–19; Thompson, 1982: 299–309; Foss & Larkin, 1986: 153). Now that workers had been separated from the sensual product of their labor, mass production became the only instrument with which to reorder human relations, resulting in deprivation of the intrinsic joy and pride of craftsmanship endemic to creation. With the increasing estrangement from nature, humans were relegated to the role of commodities for the open market with human relationships primarily structured by mere exploitation, division of labor, and surplus repression (Back, 1978: 163–6). The same could be said of corporate bureaucracies that had flattered customers with falsified and distorted information, and attached to them values that were contingent upon their purchasing power, while frustrating meaningful change by suppressing, or retaining control over, the human instinct and creativity of sales staff whose value was to be measured only by the volume of businesses he or she could generate.

There can be no doubt that the New Left pressed for a decreased role of the state in American society. If so, enterprises would become social property that could be managed, although not owned, by workers (Fuentes & Frank, 1989: 185–7). To compound this arrangement, workers' control of individual management was believed to be conducive to the primary unit of
self-government as envisioned by the commune. According to Blumberg (1969: 233), only after individuals were able to take on a greater perspective of the entire economy could people "see beyond the narrow horizons of his minute task." With reduction in specialization, the society would be more consistent with one characterized by decentralization and egalitarian change. Indeed, when people were differentiated entirely according to skill and personal interest, alienation and manipulation deriving from echelons of artificial constraint would no longer exist. By then, it would germinate a broad humanistic form of human interaction to hedge against bureaucratic elitism. When such a time came, it was no accident that the world would be populated by a myriad of street artists, subsistence farmers, vagabonds, and ordinary laborers who were all capable of promoting substantive rationality for the fulfillment of human needs without a constellation of human characteristics dominated by manipulating forms of planning and stratification (Vago, 1989: 141-4; Magala, 1988: 244-5).

However, what had been characteristic of the psychological conditions engendered by the complexity of post-industrial production in the real world were irresponsibility, anonymity, and dependence. Especially when the income difference gradually polarized society between owners and the owned, it was perceived to have violated the democratic principle. Put quite simply, the ideals of the young in terms of their outlook on post-industrial society were to coordinate productive effort for investment in needed areas, to prevent economic dislocation, and to objectively relate effort to effect in a meaningful way. Also exhibited was the ideal of socialism epitomized by a classless society in which the economic direction was governed by the state machinery without wage earners being coerced by the concentration of state power.

The New Left as a Counterculture

From a psychological point of view, the New Left movement could be construed as a melange of rebellious activities purported to meet and fulfill the emotional needs of the activists who were ill at ease with being rejected, unloved, or even victimized by adult society. As young, well-educated left-wing intellectuals, activists were armed with an acute sense of injustice and personal motivational characteristics, yearning
to seek an oceanic feeling of union with an omnipotent presence. For example, they were to a great extent assertive, non-conforming, idealistic, romantic, impulsive, spontaneous, and humanitarian (Cowdry & Keniston & Cabin, 1970). These personality traits coupled with susceptible perception enabled them to strive for consistency between attitudes and behavior. Although intellectually oriented, they were psychologically maladjusted because of their frustrated utopian pursuits in resistance to the bourgeois values and stagnant materialistic culture of the adult generation (Sargent, 1972: 141-50; Lipset & Schaflander, 1971: 15). Upon contact with the disappointing set of historical circumstances created by the older generation, their interpretative responses reminded them not to gloss over the belief-behavior inconsistency so deeply embedded in everyday practice (e.g. the inconsistency between the rhetoric of equality and institutional racism).

In some major respects, self-assertion against the status quo and a desire to set things right spilled over into a feeling of specialness and duty with which to honor their own commitments. After they took action on the basis of their beliefs only to be overwhelmed by despair and powerlessness, a strong sense of the justice-injustice framework trickled down into irrational and narcissistic counterculture. As such, strong-willed, self-confident, expressive, and altruistic young students suddenly became self-centered, distrustful, and egoistic cultural rebels. In their defense against depression and alienation, those who refused to "drop out" became political rebels, turning rebellious toward authority. Their insurgent sentiment had distorted reality to such a degree that they allowed little diversity of opinion. Invariably, tight consensus within their ranks in total rejection of political positions made compromise with authority increasingly unlikely.

Contextualized as such, the youth revolution reflected the isolated subculture of youthful imagination that was unfortunately misled to manifest itself through fads in dress, music, and other counter-cultural behaviors. In this imagination, the "people" was a mystified concept in the movement rhetoric without any definite empirical definition, and the "revolution" itself was an amorphous and discontinuous series of outbursts rooted in a shared experience of distress and loneliness. Shocked by social realities, the rebelling young suffered a shared sense of being in the society but not part of it. However, the crucial point did not lie in the role of pampered and useless children consigned to the young; instead,
all that mattered was the fact that the society had no role reserved for them, resulting in their bitter disillusion.

In the absence of a firm place in society, the young became the leading edge of frustration and they began to reexamine the basic American commitment. What they found at home was poverty and discrimination which could hardly be redeemed by contemptible elements such as skills, persistence, long-range planning, and humdrum sustenance of the post-industrial society. From this perspective, their sense of mission was highly charged with dedication, spontaneity, enthusiasm, and idealism, without which the young who revolted could never acquire such a significant role in the New Left movement.

Ideally speaking, the campus mutineers were supposedly inclined toward a proletarian-puritan approach through which token tasks could build individuals a sense of self-confident identity and directly relate effort with effect to create a concrete and immediate personal significance. Within this objectivist utopia where productive activity was considered heroic, the effort was no longer anonymous and everything would be paid for individually. This idealism sought a return to a simpler age and claimed that only through simplification and adversity, such as that experienced by a subsistence farmer who ate what he grew, could humans make efforts meaningful.

As a matter of fact, the youth revolt to a large extent took an utopian-aristocratic approach that envisioned spontaneous activity as the goal of life which should be fulfilled through the elimination of meaningless effort. In a sense, they were reluctant to be producers and tended to embrace their parents' Madison Avenue logic in quest of the effortless utopia in the hope that their needs could be met by effortlessness. In other words, after the effectiveness of the Madison Avenue concept of utopia had liberated them from the assumption of responsibilities, their restlessness generated a mutiny against purposive effort to demand more freedom from the degrading and unnecessary drudgery (Tyler, 1971: 169-83).

In the eyes of the young, reliance on spontaneity was incompatible with technological complexity, and the realms of necessity unavoidably collided with those of freedom. Disappointed at the fact that only economically necessary activities performed by old fashioned administrators could win the leisure of free time activities, the young refused to be trained as the would-be skilled, disciplined, and dependable labor. All they needed was to liberate themselves from external motives and to seek the spontaneous activities that could only
be found in the aristocratic utopia. Therefore, effortlessness and dependence symbolic of the aristocratic, or upper middle-class, families were carried out by their children to such a point that both were suggestive of frustration, alienation, and self-destructive decadence.

In the mean time, the young tended to consider "play" their birthright and naturally regarded the freedom of the new sensibility as a way of obtaining their instant self-realization. Reluctant to accept the inner need for effort, they would nevertheless like to benefit from the self-operating technology at the same time. After their withdrawal from the world of effort into that of sensibility, young rebels attempted to transcend problems that seemed to be so insoluble that they were primarily concerned about how to surpass them instead of solving them. Also evidenced by the endeavor to eliminate the economic system was the ideology of the Great Refusal, i.e. the campus version of heroic effort. Although productive effort was heroic in essence, the young rebels argued that effort had long since lost its objective significance on the ground that the post-industrial society was entirely unable to improve life quality simply with its productive capacity, surplus investment, and repression of individuality. Seen in this light, they wondered what good it was for a society to produce more than it needed when it could provide the necessary goods of daily life with only minimum effort.

To a great extent, quite a few students took a mock heroic approach by endorsing a revolutionary-utopian synthesis; that is, translation of campus concern for the external world into emotions, attitudes, and feelings. Heavily tinged with individual emotions, the alienated youth attempted to objectify social problems such as racism, uneven distribution of affluence, sexism, oppression, and, ultimately, the "imperialist pig" America. Transpiration from the anti-authoritarian temper to the quest for the anarchist utopia hence bestowed on young students a sense of instant significance, hastening them to take a strategy of withdrawal by dropping out or "turning on" (Kohak, 1971: 164; Kohak, 1970: 239-49).

By the same token, the social model patterned on the myth of affluence was not functional in the post-industrial society in the sense that humans could never be free from "senseless" drudgery. To solve the ambivalence of youth, Kohak (1971: 165) proposed that only an ideological alternative of democracy could consign work with a purpose so that individuals could work for good reason. In his view, necessity should be a way of
obtaining freedom and should serve as a catalyst to mediate between reality and ideals. Through the aesthetic perspective of the relation existing between men and the world, Kohak believed that the democratic alternative could win individuals the freedom with which to meet necessity with effort in the sense that total dependence on others would only cause alienation. From this perspective, the proletariat was the most congenial to this kind of freedom because it tended not to exploit, or depend on, the labor of others. This "catalytic" ideology and human alternative of democracy could hence provide the young a significant and productive social role, safeguarding their personal responsibilities and initiatives as well as their rights of free critique and dissent.

There was no doubt that the young were longing for maximum participation in the university in the belief that individual and collective actions could give them more confidence in themselves as a positive social force. Aside from initiatives on campus, off-campus involvements also provided them an opportunity to handle social problems and win back their self-esteem. Once society took students seriously and showed them respect, they would feel themselves to be engaged in it. In this way, their personal identity would be no longer trivial or insignificant, and the skills with which they performed social services would no longer deprecate the importance of their primary role in the adult society.

On the contrary, if deprived of the personal identity of skills, interests, and obligation, the youth would consider effort unnecessary and accordingly effortlessness, heroic. As such, they would inevitably feel alienated from the adult world and be unable to keep functioning as free men and women in the existing social context any longer. From the recognition of social rights, self-expression, and a general concern for social realities would materialize a social climate featuring fewer demands and greater freedom. If the young were provided with more opportunities to participate and to assume responsibilities as members of the community, responsible ways of participating in social existence would substantially compensate for their feeling of being displaced by technological complexity. Kohak (1971) bemoaned that being young was not only a privilege but also an obligation, and if the state and society had provided the young with such a democratic alternative in the early stage of the sixties, the explosive disruption of the youth revolution would never have taken place. The reverse was also indicated by the failure of the New Left to convince the public that they
could meet human needs with a system alternative to the corporate and government bureaucracies. As a result, the silent majority of the American public would rather choose a safe, though oppressive, form of tyranny than opt for an anarchy of which they were so uncertain.

Being a leftist connoted that a person possessed a social conscience, agitated for social change through a means of upheaval, and championed the preeminence of a socialist society over a capitalist one (Egbert & Persons, 1952: 368-74). With a definition like this, any history-making elite who relied on the support of the working class and peasantry in order to achieve the goals of socialism could be categorized as leftist. However, Landau (1965: 48) suggested that it is unrealistic for a leftist ideology to proliferate in the United States because the proletariat does not make history; the elite does. Therefore, intellectuals who have a social conscience should do whatever they think is best for them.

Undeniably, the New Left had rebuilt the American left in its attempt to rationalize the social relationship within the expanded system of capitalism. Most noteworthy was its reversal of the exclusionary practice of the Old Left in the fifties, both to recruit adherents or any forces that antagonized the established pattern of social relationships and to give visibility and strength to them. This moral valor shattered the political quiescence of the fifties to challenge the assumption that capitalism could stabilize American society following the coming of the era of the "end of ideology" (Bell, 1960; Waxman, 1968). In the meantime, it was ill at ease with the narrowness of political correctness and the sectarianism characteristic of the Old Left tradition and practice. In the process of subjective or objective development, the New Left had shaped its social force with alternative models of living and working together to provide a core framework through which the manifestation of the changing capitalistic society could be interpreted. What flowed from the assumption of these models was the advisability for unceasing attempts to rationalize the sources, connections, and consequences of the social relationship lest the capitalists should obscure, for the sake of their perpetual survival, the nature underscoring the linkage between the productive process and the institutional relationship (Heberle, 1951: 38-92).
A Reflection on the Social Movement Dynamic

From a collective behavior approach to the New Left, catastrophes caused by wars, fear of being defeated, and destructive technology (such as atomic weaponry) brought society to the verge of breakdown. This fear, coupled with the problems arising out of the rapid expansion of society in the areas of population, education, citizenship, and unemployment, ultimately contributed to a discontinuity between culture and structure (Kornhauser, 1959; Greer, 1979). Closer to the concern here is that, in the process of modernization and industrialization, external conditions may result in hardship, dislocation, and disorganization for a certain segment of the population, exerting considerable impact on their ability to mobilize. In response to the environment and the strains and discontent it entailed, social units actively participated in and shaped the environment in a certain sociohistorical context, paving the way for the emergence of social movements. This perspective suggests that, in the process of differentiation, the stability and balance of the society were threatened by disruptions within the sociopolitical system (Smelser, 1963), with the ensuing changes in commerce, industry, or urbanization immensely disturbing the life experiences of the normative frameworks. Suffice it to note that the integrative mechanisms (such as the union, university, voluntary associations, and other government regulatory agencies) failed to integrate those whose traditional vested interests had been dislodged from old social ties into a new social order. After the normative frameworks could no longer regulate the life experience on account of social disharmonies and anomie, an incongruence between the authority pattern and polity was slowly emerging, causing disparities between ideal culture and society (Eisenstadt, 1978). Considering themselves the vanguard of social change, the New Left activists as an intellectual status group used the university as the central place to react against political authority or even the whole system of "autocratic politics" (Braungart, 1984: 98).

In other words, exceptional occurrences such as war and other conflictual aspects symptomatic of domestic injustice had ruffled the subsequent routines of polity. In response, the New Left activists mounted a campaign against the disruptive and disappointing set of conditions created by their elders lest polity be isolated from other segments of society. In this view, the movement objective was to bring back the correspondence of authority with polity in light of the strong constitutional
tradition. However, the discrepancy between what they aspired to attain and what they believed they were capable of attaining generated a relative deprivation in collective value orientation; that is, they failed to adjust the value expectation to their value capabilities, vulnerable to a sense of relative deprivation regarding the divergence between achievement and expectation. Therefore, the New Left experience could be explained through the nonroutine perspective of collective behavior tradition that tends to set the stage for the New Left movement in terms of the tug of war between social breakdown and integrative forces (Lipset & Raab, 1978: 4-6).

Arguing along a different line, the resource mobilization approach to the New Left emphasized the voluntaristic role of political activities, either attitudinal or behavioral. According to this perspective, historical disruptions were not what energized activists into collective actions. Tilly (1975a) argued that external conditions could not determine the level of mobilization. Rather, the momentum of mobilized violence was contingent upon the cognitive-affective politicization as well as the extent to which adherents approved or remained committed to the movement cause. What underlined this contention is the importance consigned to the role of political conflict and struggles among groups and "classes" or "generations," for that matter. In the mobilization process, the secondary association in social structure could easily facilitate the formation of ideological commitment and peer group approval because those who had been subject to a certain degree of organization were easier to mobilize. Since social movements from the resource mobilization perspective were only collective solidarity of articulated interests, the existence of a network of political or special interest groups, ideologically sophisticated leaders, and other political and economic factors became crucial elements in explaining the growth, decline, and change of social movements (Zald & McCarthy, 1979).

As a corollary, the New Left movement was considered a merger of existing campus groups in the dynamics of power blocs. According to Foss and Larkin (1986: 94-107), social movements can fulfill the function of "disalienation." However, what highlights the resource mobilization approach to the New Left is the contention that the group consciousness of the New Left, primarily based on atomized and alienated discontent, was not sufficient to mobilize a social movement. What counts most was the effort to focus and channel discontent through the interplay, conflict, and competition of group politics so as to sustain the
momentum of the New Left (Jenkins, 1985: 210-22). There is little doubt that the New Left movement had triggered a multitude of civil disorders, protest activities, popular unrest, and other occasions highlighting participatory explosions. Although the framework of the Movement was shaped by the counterculture, the anti-war movement, and black nationalism, it was not entirely in a rival position with the authorities. Rather, it interacted with institutionalized politics in a specific way, with its inner logic propelling a plethora of identification moves, campus building occupations, marches, petitions, ghetto riots, and other visible forms of crowd aggregation.

Another point helps elaborate why the resource mobilization perspective could be employed for analysis of the New Left. Many of the New Left activists, either cadres or political entrepreneurs, were highly skilled in reflecting the aspiration and grievances of their constituency. They knew how to innovate in symbol production and how to engineer confrontations newsworthy enough to attract media attention. However, their insufficiency of organizational skills and the tenuous organizational ties they kept with adherents could be partially attributed to too much reliance on mass media for their communication with the rank and file. In point of fact, it was the transitory teams who dramatically swelled the ranks of the New Left to trigger brief spurts of activity. These non-activists were inclined to use mass rallies, instead of electoral processes or party politics, in order that their views and demands could win the recognition of the authority. In so doing, they expected to generate confidence, hope, and a sense of security with the bulk of movement people. Without a strong organization, all they could do was to harvest a collective identity and ideological gratification through participation in collective events in the hope of influencing politics.

Also noteworthy was the existence of those who did not directly involve their labor and bodies in movement activities but had provided public opinion support, skills for legal defense, or even financial contributions for movement organizations. Neither the principals of movement activity nor the beneficiaries of movement success, this "conscience constituency" supported the cause of the New Left primarily out of moral zeal and enthusiasm. Illustrative of this were the northern liberal white students who went to the Deep South to mobilize voter registration drives for blacks. Many organized entities such as civic associations, churches, and foundations that morally and financially contributed to New Left causes were
also cases in point.

Activists, transitory teams, and the conscience constituency contributed enormously to the growth of the New Left in the sixties in terms of the identity, symbols, leadership, labor, and money they provided (Ash, 1972: 246). The premise of maintaining diverse sets of people in a collaborative working relationship with each adherent contributing his or her resources to the collective good presupposed the availability of a shared political culture. To fulfill this function, the social movement organization (SMO) was supposed to hire professional staff, conduct the due-raising and fund raising activities, intensify members’ resource commitment, and allocate these resources through the central apparatus of decision-making bodies in pursuit of collective goals and organizational maintenance (Garner & Zald, 1987: 293-318; Zald, 1988: 19-41). In other words, as a social interaction field, the SMO should facilitate the formation of shared group identity, goals, and commitment to tactics and prescribe an appropriate channel through which the organizational resources might be distributed from the central body to the local chapters and the rank and file. However, the New Left movement was expanding too soon. Rapid movement growth made the SMOs control only a fraction of the social interaction field with the central leadership group unable to execute the task of resource allocation.

Accomplishments and Contributions

Although the New Left alliance was represented by massive reunions highlighting inclusiveness, pluralistic components, and lack of selectivity, the Southern Nonviolence Coordination Committee (SNCC) and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were the two major organizations whose names were synonymous with the generic "New Left" in the popular mind. What constituted the main force behind the civil rights campaign in the fifties was an organization which was generally considered by the popular mind as identical to the New Left in generic terms: the Southern Nonviolence Coordination Committee (SNCC). In 1960, Martin Luther King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) attempted to coordinate efforts by integrating various local sit-ins. More than 200 college graduates and dropouts attended a conference called Easter Weekend in Raleigh. Since they were reluctant to become the youth wing of the SCLC, these students
decided to form a new organization autonomous from the control of the SCLC. Founded in May, the SNCC gradually shed off their image as an offshoot of King’s movement, but still smacked of the Protestant ministry. The SNCC was not a membership organization; instead, it was an elite group with white volunteers coming from upper middle class families and the prestigious northern universities. In summer, the northern white student workers would regularly and dramatically swell the ranks of SNCC. On the other hand, blacks who constituted the largest part of the workers came primarily from theology students sharing similar beliefs with King (Oberschall, 1973: 204-8; Wilkinson, 1974; Hudlin, 1987: 5-38).

With a belief that the denial of civil rights to blacks had violated the rhetoric of the "American creed" (Myrdal, 1962; Merton, 1949: 185-216), SNCC went into the Deep South to alleviate the plight of blacks at the risk of being harassed by white resistance there. Because of their lack of knowledge surrounding the substantive law and procedural remedies, aggrieved blacks did not know how to present their case and assert their rights. They were a dependent population fearful of white retaliation. Under these circumstances, it was necessary for social reform groups to help blacks assert their claims through the procedural remedies. In their attempts to get laws changed and to prosecute the minority claim through the assault upon segregation laws, SNCC workers finally persuaded blacks to overcome the free rider problem in pursuit of collective good.

In pressing for national legislative attention to disenfranchised rural black people, SNCC was confident that inclusion of white radical students from the northern universities the civil rights crusade could not only inspire nationwide sympathy toward blacks in general, but also arouse controversy to agitate for social change from the American conscience. Owing to SNCC’s struggle on behalf of blacks, the federal government finally passed the Civil Rights Law in 1964. The following year, the Voting Rights Bill and the War on Poverty program were put into enforcement. To a great extent, SNCC’s voter registration projects ran parallel with the community organization projects of SDS, but SNCC emulated the ideals of full participation, integration, and decentralization in such proportions that it finally pioneered an identification with the revolutionaries in the third world (Coser, 1970: 120-34; Smith, 1970: 101-3; Burke, 1988: 1-12; Robert & Kloss, 1974: 88-9).

It was no accident that SNCC had successfully corrected
traditions, norms, and laws that it considered prejudicial, culminating in its founding of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) (Miller, 1987: 57-8, 103, 149-50, 200). However, after the walkout of MFDP representatives from the national convention, SNCC, suddenly aware of the hypocrisy of white liberals, withdrew its trust in the legitimacy of authority and decided to abandon the early advocacy of nonviolent reform and amity with white society in favor of an extremism of black power and self-sufficiency. After that, a large number of blacks went to colleges both to emphasize fraternity with ethnic compatriots and to obtain professional skills so that they could amass sufficient resources to continue fighting for the ideal of black power without the assistance of white activists. However, SNCC lost its momentum after 1965 as soon as SDS succeeded to take its place as the vanguard of New Left radicalism.

Roughly at the same time when SNCC was organized in the South, younger social activists in the North saw the need to form a new radical movement based on fresh tactical and ideological currents of thought. To break new ground, they constantly demonstrated strong intellectual and humanitarian concerns that went beyond the stale ideologies of the Old Left. In points of fact, the conservative left such as the League of Industrial Democracy (LID) in the fifties claimed itself to be an overt anti-communist group, supposedly in avoidance of being suppressed by authority. After 1954, students became active by coordinating effort in concert with the civil rights campaign. However, the youth affiliate of socialist groups still came under the dominance and supervision of adults who usually planned the overall strategies with students carrying out the belated but dramatic details. In the early sixties, the student branch of LID changed its name to Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) because the Old Left had obviously outworn its usefulness and it was necessary for a new group to arise as a substitute (Diggins, 1973: 169-70). At this time, SNCC in the south was inclined to initiate planning, expecting SDS in the north to respond by clarifying its movement objectives. These two factions were to constitute the main forces of the New Left and subsequently unfold a series of multi-issue movements in the next decade (Peterson, 1970: 206-10).

Although SDS activists were well versed in the theory of Marxism, they grudgingly accepted the Old Left ideology with immense reservation. In view of a working class that had been faring well under American capitalism, there was no point, they argued, in celebrating the Marxist premise and crude dynamic of
class struggle. In their minds, socialism should not run counter to democracy to such an extent as to evoke an impression of concentration camps, secret police terror, and struggle for the control of partisan bureaucracies reminiscent of prevailing conditions in the Soviet Union. In the same vein, it deplored the current American society that was founded on a framework of racial bigotry, authoritarian institutions, corporate dominance, competitive individualism, skyrocketing defense spending, and above all else unreasoning anti-communism. It was conceivable therefore that it railed against the arms race and the coexistence of poverty and affluence in American society to plead for the uplift of the humanitarian spirit (Miller, 1987: 59-60, 187, 191, 220).

Although SDS was synonymous with the New Left in the North, it was just one of the organizations that sponsored and participated in the New Left movement (Walsh, 1978: 155-77). In fact, the New Left represented massive reunions that went beyond the composition of individuals to resemble a Popular Front (Gouldner, 1970: 405-6). As a capacious vessel of change, it featured immense inclusiveness, pluralistic components, and a lack of selectivity. Unlike the massive certainties of the Old Left, it was an amorphous cluster of customarily uncoordinated groups of liberals, radicals, reformers, bohemians, militant blacks, disaffiliated youth, those who were indifferent to politics, and even dogmatic hard-core leftists. Not a social movement in the traditional sense, the New Left accepted recruits with divergent social and political views without apparent political programs, viable organizations, or a substantial constituency. These ad hoc coalitions were vulnerable to a debilitating effect endemic to, or implicit in, the symbiotic but ephemeral relationship existing among diverse and heterogeneous components.

Both SNCC and SDS were staunch structural critics of American society, aiming to eliminate the unreasonable features of American capitalism. Each of these two organizations treasured not so much the dogma of class confrontation as the premium on egalitarian values. In the meantime, both allowed for maximum of personal expression despite the anarchistic nature it suggested. In contrast to the Old Left, neither SNCC nor SDS tended toward political process to seek elective office (Coleman, 1971: 76). On the contrary, they displayed no trust in elective politics and adult authority and supervision. Unlike the sectarian nature besetting the Old Left, both SNCC and SDS were open, unsuspecting, and inclusive organizations that welcomed
whoever shared their ideology.

Reevaluation

The New Left recruited a heterogeneous set of adherents who participated out of a variety of reasons with each person possessing various ways of defining his or her outlook on the success or failure of the movement. Whether the New Left was a success or a failure in the sixties was a controversial issue. When a social movement ceased to exist, it might mean a success if the movement had obtained its goals. Likewise, it might mean a failure if its adherents withdrew in large numbers after they became disappointed with the movement cause. A movement might also be institutionalized to become an interest group, political party, or a public agency in view of the stable constituency and routinized resource base it owned. In this sense, there was no definite success or failure in regard to human enterprises. All that mattered was the extent to which the goals of social movements were realized. If the previously ignored groups could force the decision-maker to implement their concerns for institutional resources, then the movement could be considered successful even if it ceased to exist immediately afterwards. In this view, the ultimate goal of the social movement was to translate the interest and preference of the less privileged groups into a routinized input into the political process and, in a broader sense, into the polity at large with the result that the decision-maker would deal with the previously exploited groups in the same way as it would with the recognized groups (Bacciocco, 1974: 234-43).

From 1964 to 1968, the activity of the civil rights movement, student or youth movement, and the anti-war movement was directed at the executive branch of the federal government. It was conceivable that the existence of a common target had given these loosely coordinated movements a common thrust of opposition. During this period, a Democratic administration sympathetic with the liberal advocacies controlled the executive branch and gave tacit moral backing to these movements without taking harsh oppressive measures, a condition conducive to growth of the reformistic spirit. Although the Republican president moved forcefully against reform after 1968, the spirit of the movement became firmly enmeshed with the daily impulse of the common citizen. Cwing to the repertoire of impulsive protest
actions and the sympathetic stance of the mass media, the Nixon government was in no position to suppress the New Left overnight. The tradition of collective hostility toward the government dating back to the early sixties profoundly compensated for the organizational weakness of the New Left (Bacciocco, 1974: 227-33).

The New Left movement had substantially caused a realignment in political forces, goading them to explore the goals and values the movement embraced. At the very least, the New Left had a few of its goals fulfilled. Among them were the ending of the war in Indochina, full citizenship rights and equality for blacks, termination of the draft, more democratic governance in the university, and greater responsiveness to student needs. In mobilizing support for the civil rights, black power, youth, and anti-war movements, the New Left did successfully activate powerful allies and coalitions to gain substantial institutional recognition, even though its achievement in the redistribution of political and economic powers was not very phenomenal (Jenkins, 1985: 223-30).

The New Left opposition coincided with the war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement, and the counterculture that arose from the demographical surge, i.e. the post-war tides of the baby boom. Although American society was crosscut by the lines of class and race, the whole system nevertheless allowed for reforms because American society was after all open to talents up to the near top. With the potential of cooptation, the system could theoretically provide dissidents and critics with the most rewarding position in the affluent mass market. In a sense, reforms expanded the industries and bureaucracy, sending those leaders born of less privileged groups up the ladder of mobility. As the system grew more receptive to reforms, it must become more responsive and open to new forces with the dissidents thus coopted strengthening the system itself (Oberschall, 1978: 285). As a matter of fact, the system did not change; rather, it solely became more engaged in tinkering with bureaucracies and the economy so that it could accommodate more opposition and dissent.

Why did the New Left successfully solicit overwhelming responses from the authorities? The reason lay in the highly searching question explored by the New Left: what is America as a country all about? It can hardly be disputed that the general conflict giving rise to social movements was admittedly centered around the contention of material resources, and the solution of conflict management was to enlarge the pie and dish up a bigger slice to each of the rivaling parties. However, what the New
Left in the sixties was laboring for had everything to do the problem of values, making the reference of the general pattern of conflict solution not only inapplicable but also irrelevant (D’Anieri & Ernst & Kier, 1990: 453-4). This differs from the so-called "lower class leftism" (Portes, 1978: 222-7) and the "stomach questions" mentioned by Gouldner (1970: 399, 408). It should be borne in mind that at the formative stage of the New Left, the activists were to a great extent composed of highly educated students whose parents were employed in high level positions in either the government bureaucracies or the professions. As the most privileged members of the upper social strata, they had long been the beneficiaries of American capitalism. Paradoxically, in no other instance had there been so many social elite concerned about the citizenship rights of the most negatively privileged minority, i.e., blacks. In view of this, there was little doubt that the undertaking of the New Left at the outset was deeply enmeshed with a belief in a moral principle that was both rational and idealistic.

However, this noble feat was not accomplished without backlashes. Highly moralistic as it might seem, the New Left failed to distinguish their oppositional value from that of blacks, the poor, and those in the strata of the marginal labor force. Liberals in the white upper middle class did not have to worry about the cost of reform partly because their community was not effected by desegregation and partly because their children did not have to attend the public schools at all. Moreover, regarding institutionalized power and authority as the arch enemy of reform, the New Left vacillated between the desire to fight for social justice within the system and the desire to abolish the system of social inequality by the means of revolution. Owing to such a lack of historical self-consciousness arising out of the contradiction between subjective and objective identities, the New Left was unable to institutionalize its self-directed values with the result that its theoretical coherence was severely jeopardized. There was little doubt that the early New Left belief was compatible with that of blacks. However, after 1965 many of the black groups excluded white liberals to take a disciplined and rigid organizational form in direct violation of the self-directed values consigned earlier to the role of the New Left. This disciplined and hierarchical mode of the black movement was highly incompatible with the informal and flexible style of the early New Left ideals (Draper, 1970: 221-38).

No less ironic was the anti-war campaign in which it was the Old Left that took the initiative in outright disregard for
New Left theory and practice. Equally surprising was the new working class theory tailor-made to reinforce the spirit of the Old Left based on the sentiment of antielitism, rendering the New Left more theoretically untenable. Therefore, those who participated in the New Left only saw the New Left opposition without being able to comprehend the values under which this opposition was subsumed. When it came to those who refused to follow the lead of the Old Left, they had no alternative but to exit from political activism into counterculture. Others continued to explore the New Left values by abandoning their privileges as white men to join the Progressive Left (PL), the Young Socialist Party (YSA), or other Marxist sects. For instances, the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) in the formative stage planned to combine the goal of revolution with the oppositional culture of the New Left; this attempt finally became bogged down to such an extent that the RYM developed into the Weathermen, who ironically rejected the New Left values in their totality. After the internal paralysis and fragmentation worsened, core cadres could no longer sustain cohesive leadership, hastening the disintegration of the New Left alliance (Oberschall, 1978: 257–89).

As compared with the early sixties, the New Left adherents after 1965 expanded to encompass people in the lower level of bureaucratic class and white collar occupations. The extent to which they embraced the New Left values varied in accordance with their position, relative size, and education in the occupational echelon. Especially after the white collar workers were gradually proletarianized, it became increasingly apparent that their life experiences were more or less influenced by New Left values, with the revolutionary potential substantially different from that of the early idealists.

After intense radical and protest activities ground to a stop, idealism and activism were no longer driven by madness and despair, leading to a renewal of political activities and involvement in the light of electoral politics. By this time, the accomplishments blacks reached in the later phase of the civil rights movement served as the conventional political avenues to power in the sense that large numbers of registered voters had stricken down the obstacles standing in the road to an open society, that trade unions had undergone integration and democratization, that the training of young blacks as political organizers had been well under way, and that a large number of black candidates had been elected to political offices (Handler, 1978: 125-126). Without the efforts of the New Left in the civil
rights movement early in the preceding decade, it would not have been so easy for the black racial minority to incorporate themselves so smoothly into mainstream politics.

Reassessment of the New Left's Role in Sociology

Although the New Left was composed of a heterogeneous variety of thought systems, its coherence was rooted in a new infrastructure of the younger generation who yearned for the establishment of a "counter society" with "parallel institutions" (Gouldner, 1970: 399). This new vision of alternative values reflected an anti-utilitarian phase of sociology in opposition to the cash-nexus and materialist society. Unlike the "realpolitik" of historical Marxism, the general pathos of the movements was a younger Marx of alienation. Movement people pledged against the consensus and continuity of Functionalism and the social equilibrium it exemplified. In its place, dissensualist rebels voiced their utopian longings, craving experimentation and inventive sensuality. Their urge for social change based on an intensely-felt interpersonal style was a reaction against the functional indispensability of stratification and the rational discipline of bureaucratic establishments. This ideology contrasted sharply with the older anti-utopian orthodox Marxism. Little wonder Gouldner (1970: 399) suggested that the New Left should be termed "New Radicalism."

In contrast, the traditional structural-functional approach, viewing the society in systemic terms, assumes that the social system has needs that must be met in order to assure its survival. The social world is composed of various mutually interrelated parts that respectively fulfill the prerequisites of the system as a whole so that it can be maintained in a condition of equilibrium. Employing this approach, theorists try to explain the way in which social changes come about. They believe that social change is explicable either through the function each part serves or by the manner in which each part is related to the other within the integral system of culture. It is observed that function is aimed at the maintenance of social life. Working toward this goal, institutions and individuals alike predestinately perform functions in such a way as to continue the existence of the social structure (Durkheim, 1947).

Parsons (1960: 103) elaborated on the concept of stable
equilibrium as follows:

variations are kept within limits compatible with the maintenance of the main structural patterns, and through adaptive mechanisms, fluctuations in the relations between system and environment are similarly kept within limits. If we look at what is meant by stable equilibrium from the perspective of the principle of inertia, then it becomes a problem to account for alterations in this stable state through disturbances of sufficient magnitude to overcome the stabilizing or equilibrating forces or mechanisms (Parsons, 1960: 103).

Running counter to the equilibrating process are processes that operate to bring about social change. According to Parsons (1960: 95), structural change occurs when "disturbances in or around a system are sufficient to overcome the forces of equilibrium." Disturbances refer to the discrepancies between the reality or normative expectation and other conditional factors. When discrepancies build up to a threshold point, systemic balance is altered in such a way as to create another new system that is an alteration of its previous structure. Namely, when processes of change upset the initial equilibrium, they will gradually settle down into a new system of equilibrium.

Functional theory starts from the assumption that the system is in a state of natural equilibrium and that sources of social change primarily come from factors external to the social system. Shifts and crises may result from climactic change or other physiographic events. However, when the external source of change is another society or culture, inter-system contact becomes the consequence of external events. In this case, cultural interdependence by the means of communication and exchange of values ultimately not only reduces the isolation and autonomy of this society but also increases the trend of inter-society relations. This change is purported to cushion the impact of shifts and crises that frequently occur during cultural impact. In reaction to change, the system must establish a new equilibrium, causing a specifiable change in any component of the system. Viewing social change as deriving chiefly from external sources, or "exogenous" sources as termed by Parsons, the equilibrium model implies that social change occurs in adaptation to external events and that any change has repercussions throughout the system. To prevent discontinuance, adaptive
mechanisms should be employed so as to stabilize the process of change.

However, the myth of Functionalism and its theory of social change have been dispelled by the uprising of the New Left. To the New Left, both Functionalism and orthodox Marxism were devoid of sensibilities because their downright "square" sentiments had retarded the sense of what was real, i.e., the experiences people took to be real. This rendered the infrastructure of tacit domain assumptions unable to mediate between social theories and the social world. When the implication of social theories was unable to indicate which were possible and desirable for the guidance of sentiment, social theories failed to fit a certain infrastructure after it was affected by the larger cultural and social surroundings. Therefore, dissonances between theories and infrastructure caused tension, making theories seem irrelevant and absurd to the infrastructure. As such, a cohort of age peers collectively developed and transmitted new social theories in the university milieu in the hope that a new infrastructure could better reflect their experiences and lives. In addition, they lent support to the welfare poor and blacks in their struggle against deprivation lest the under-privileged should lose their dignity amidst affluence; otherwise, "poverty amid plenty" as described by Rodgers (1976: 40-60) would become a reality. Furthermore, they attempted to remedy the expanding dependence of the deprived strata brought about in the wake of the expansion of the welfare state.

Indeed, the New Left idealists demanded that the older generation be responsible for the mismanagement of society and the current social ills. They developed a protective sense of generational solidarity to validate a new infrastructure, endeavoring to provide a new context of theoretical alternatives for freer self-expression than before. They believed that only through disengagement from the established theories that took hold among the middle class could the American people curb the large-scale proliferation of social utilitarianism (Gouldner, 1970: 408). To unmask the ugly hidden aspect of the status quo, the New Left at least nurtured a critical sociology that was morally both sensitive to the practicality of utilitarianism and skeptical of the worthiness of mundane success as well as the legitimacy of the current system. Even if the New Left met its decline in the late seventies, the social movements it launched represented the alienation of young sociologists who developed collective and organized forms of alternative theories to affirm new sentiments. Their aspiration was to perpetuate the triumph
of freedom and equality in opposition to the assumption of Functionalism. In this view, it becomes irrelevant to evaluate the New Left in terms of being ideologically right or left. Rather, the social movements it launched, according to Gouldner (1970) and Hamilton (1985: 12-5), merely represented the crisis of Functionalism in modern sociology.

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- 37 -


美國新左派運動之評估

魯子青

摘　要

由於冷戰之故，五十年代的美國，全國上下高度仇共，加上物質舒發，戰後經濟起飛等因素，瞬間取代了英國成為民主陣營的新領導者。值此之時，國內左派運動的式微不難預見。但何以於六十年代初，另一波格調新奇特異的左派卻異軍突起，成爲反對力量的中堅，本文旨在探討此一新左派崛起的社會因素，並評估其所扮演的社會功能。
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