

VOLUME XVII, NUMBER 3, SUMMER 2017

CLAREMONT

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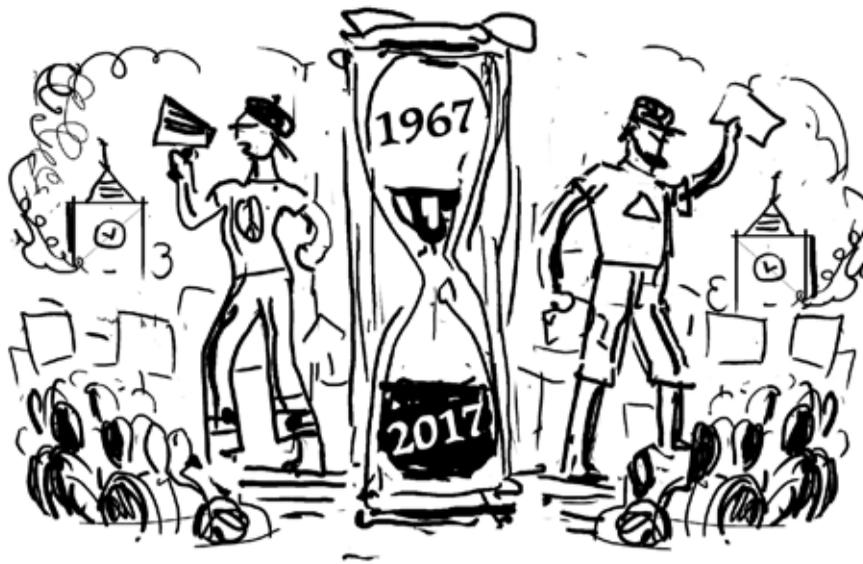
A Publication of the Claremont Institute

PRICE: \$6.95

IN CANADA: \$8.95



THE OLD NEW LEFT AND THE NEW NEW LEFT



THE “SUMMER OF LOVE” TURNS 50 THIS year. The hippies who flocked to San Francisco with flowers in their hair are now aging boomers who have long given up LSD for statins and blood pressure pills. Today’s youth couldn’t tell a hippie from a Yippie, though they may have heard, vaguely at least, of the yuppies, a later species from whom they are more directly descended.

Will the ‘60s ever end? Ever since the ‘60s we’ve been debating the ‘60s. With the recent bursts of rioting and student activism at Berkeley, Yale, Claremont McKenna, and across the country, even today’s Millennials and post-Millennials (Generation Z, as they’re called, perched on the very alphabetic cliff) find themselves drafted into nostalgic comparisons with their grandparents’ generation.

Cuba, Selma, Watts, Vietnam, assassinations, the Beatles, the pill, the moon landing—the ‘60s seemed to have it all, including some diversions so bizarre at the time that they can scarcely be believed now. The world’s first “Human Be-In,” for example, was held at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, in January 1967, a sort of prelude to the summer’s love-in. Its sponsors predicted it would initiate a “new epoch” in human history. “In unity we shall shower the country with waves of ecstasy and purification,” they told the *Berkeley Barb*. “Fear will be washed away; ignorance will be exposed to sunlight; profits and empire will lie drying on deserted beaches.” Twenty thousand turned out for what *Newsweek*, in a lav-

ish photo spread, called “a love feast, a psychedelic picnic, a hippie happening.”

Yet already a serpent of discord had crept into the stoners’ Eden. Among the stars at the Be-In was Timothy Leary, celebrated for his experiments with LSD and for spreading the countercultural gospel of “turn on, tune in, and drop out,” meaning drop out of high school, college, graduate school, and the corporate rat race, to follow him in search of your bliss. Also present was Jerry Rubin, a gadfly leader of the New Left, fresh out of jail, who at a press conference proclaimed a rather different message: “Tune-In, Drop-Out, Take-Over.” For better or worse, mostly worse, the future lay with the take-over artists.

The ‘60s

THE VERY IDEA OF THE ‘60S IS, OF COURSE, very ‘60s. It presupposes a generational consciousness, defined against hapless parents and forebears—“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!”—and marked by the enlightened superiority of those “strong in love,” to borrow again from William Wordsworth. As a concept, the ‘60s is, and always was, less about the decade than the generation that took possession of it.

So one often reads that the ‘60s began in 1963 with John F. Kennedy’s assassination and ended in the early ‘70s with Watergate, the energy crisis, the fall of Vietnam, and *Roe v. Wade*. That certainly captures the ‘60s as

a tale of lost innocence or disappointed idealism. But as a storyline it shortchanges the determined cultivation of all that innocence, the peculiar roots and character of that generation’s self-proclaimed idealism. To understand those one has to glance back at the 1950s. Elvis, the Beat poets, *Brown v. Board of Education*, massive resistance in the South—many points are relevant; too many—but for our purposes the startling changes in American higher education demand attention.

Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein put their finger on these developments, using Harvard as their leading example, in the opening pages of *The Bell Curve* (1994), and David Brooks gave a classic account of them in *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (2000), a work that has lost none of its charm and bite. At the beginning of the 1950s, Harvard was a bastion of the WASP aristocracy. “Two-thirds of all applicants were admitted,” Brooks notes. “Legacy” applicants, i.e., sons of alumni, had a 90% admission rate. The average verbal SAT score for freshmen was 583, higher than the Ivy League average of around 500.

In a single decade the school was transformed. By 1960 the freshman verbal SAT had soared to 678. “The average Harvard freshman in 1952,” observes Brooks, “would have placed in the bottom 10 percent” of the freshman class of 1960. Harvard and almost all of the elite schools around the country became meritocratic hothouses, open to Jews, Catholics, non-mainline Protestants, women

(eventually), and other “brainy strivers.” In absolute and relative numbers, Americans going to college rose to unprecedented, by previous standards perhaps unimaginable, levels.

The story of the boomers triggering a boom in higher education is familiar. What’s less well known, however, is the connection with the upheavals to come. Here, Brooks is illuminating:

Imagine now you are a young meritocrat, the child of, say, a pharmacist and an elementary school teacher, accepted to a prestigious university in the mid-sixties. You are part of a huge cohort of education arrivistes. Your campus still has some of the aristocratic trappings of the WASP culture, though it is by now a little embarrassed by them. And as you look out into the world, you see the last generation of the Old Guard...still holding key jobs and social authority. They are in the positions of power and prestige you hope to occupy. But they are still living by an ethos you consider obsolete, stifling, and prejudiced.... Naturally, you and your many peers, even if you do not think about it deliberately, are going to try to finish off the old regime.

The ascent of the “meritocrats,” in Brooks’s and Murray’s analysis, produced a revolution of rising expectations that made the culture wars of the 1960s almost inevitable: as barriers and inequalities fell, the remaining ones seemed all the more hateful and intolerable. And because their scores really were higher than the old elite’s, the ‘60s’ kids felt they had *earned* the right to be listened to by the world, to dictate to the world the terms of its remaking.

This was their “bubble,” to use Murray’s favorite word, a bubble that was self-inflated, though many adults who ought to have known better contributed to the students’ premature self-regard. To begin with, it was the WASP elites who had embraced the Scholastic Aptitude Test and opened the university’s doors to the high scorers. While not quite educational suicide—the WASPS survived as a much smaller part of the new meritocracy—it came close enough, as Nicholas Lemann emphasized in his history of the SAT, *The Big Test* (1999), to make one wonder at the old elite’s dutiful willingness to supplant itself for what it believed was the country’s, and the academy’s, benefit. It got no credit for its devotion to duty from the student protestors then or now, to be sure. But the old WASPs (Harvard’s president James Bryant Conant was a crucial figure) should have known that verbal and mathematical skills, laudable in them-

selves, do not guarantee wisdom or the moral credentials for leadership.

Then there was Lyndon Johnson, no part of any pre-existing elite, but a poignant example of feeding the tiger that would soon eat him. Announcing the Great Society at the University of Michigan commencement in May 1964, he flattered the graduates in the standard modern mode. “Your imagination, your initiative, and your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, or a society where old values and new visions are buried under unbridled growth.”

After the Great Recession and the longest, flattest recovery in American history, it may take some imagination to recall the startling affluence of the 1950s, and the ‘60s liberals’ anxieties over the downsides of “unbridled growth.” It is equally remarkable that President Johnson and the students shared those fears. He was wrong, of course, to assume that he and the kids would remain on the same page. He praised particularly their capacity for “indignation”—not dreaming that it would soon be turned against him. “For better or worse,” he continued, “your generation has been appointed by history to deal with those problems and to lead America toward a new age. You have the chance never before afforded to any people in any age.”

The Old New Left

ALTHOUGH THE HIPPIES PLAYED AN important part in the ‘60s, promoting free sex, drugs, and other groovy alternatives to virtue, they did not lead the way politically. In the political vanguard stood the self-described New Left (in uneasy conjunction with the emerging black power movement) and at its head marched not flower-children or dropouts but serious student activists.

As the name suggested, the new left defined itself against the old left, meaning both dogmatic Marxists and mainstream American liberals. In his 1961 “Letter to the New (Young) Left,” Tom Hayden, a 21-year-old Michigan graduate, explained, “Marx, especially Marx the humanist, has much to tell us but his conceptual tools are outmoded and his final vision implausible.” He rejected Marx’s economic determinism and its corollary, an inevitable workers’ revolution that would issue in a stateless society. But he hinted at appreciating Marx’s early writings (then much in vogue) and their critique of religion, private property, and the state as forms of alienation. For Hayden and many young radicals, Fidel Castro and especially Che Guevara would prove more attractive

examples of *praxis*, of Marxism as a living revolutionary faith.

Concerning American liberals Hayden had more to say, scorning the “inhibiting, dangerous conservative temperament behind the façade of liberal realism which is so current.” He criticized virtually the whole roster of 1950s’ liberal intellectuals:

[Reinhold] Niebuhr in theology; [William] Kornhauser, [Seymour Martin] Lipset, and [Daniel] Bell in political science and sociology; the neo-Freudians in psychology; [Richard] Hofstadter in history; [Arthur] Schlesinger and others of the ADA mind in the Democratic party. Their themes purport to be different but always the same impressions emerge: Man is inherently incapable of building a good society; man’s passionate causes are nothing more than dangerous psychic sprees (the issues of this period too complex and sensitive to be colored by emotionalism or moral conviction); ideals have little place in politics—we should instead design effective, responsible programs which will produce the most that is realistically possible.

Hayden identified himself with the radicals against the liberals. The “false liberals” had abandoned their “youthful dreams” and “the great optimistic tradition of liberalism,” he charged, betraying morality and, more important, passionate idealism as such. Man could not thrive, he insisted, without “emotion, dissent, outrage” and the other “wellsprings of life itself.”

After graduation Hayden went to work for Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), originally the youth arm of the League for Industrial Democracy, a socialist group on the old left. But under new leadership (its founder and first president was Robert “Al” Haber, a 24-year-old Michigan graduate student) and with a new name, the SDS was keen to shed that skin and emerge as the authentic voice of campus radicals.

In 1962 Hayden put SDS on the map by writing a manifesto for its annual meeting, held at a United Auto Workers’ retreat on Lake Huron. Extensively debated and revised by the five dozen attendees over five days, the *Port Huron Statement* caught on immediately as the best account of student grievances at the beginning of the ‘60s. It sold 60,000 copies in four years, and put SDS at the forefront of the radical movement, but not just of the radical movement. Richard Goodwin, LBJ’s aide and speechwriter, credited the *Statement* as part of his inspiration for the Great Society speech.



"We are people of this generation," the *Statement* began, "bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit." The traditional Democratic constituencies like union members, Southerners, and poor people were in no position to lead the way to a new age. That task fell to students and intellectuals (in, or fleeing, the universities) who, looking around them, saw a country suffering from "[t]he decline of utopia and hope." Only the student Left knew, or at any rate could learn, what this diagnosis meant and how to treat the underlying malady, so as to spare Americans a life of "apathetic absurdity."

"Utopia and hope"—it sounded like a road picture, coming to a screen near you: "Road to Utopia," starring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and jungle princess Dorothy Lamour. But the SDS wasn't known for its sense of humor, certainly not about itself. It was always in deadly earnest. Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign could almost have been transcribed from the youthful imaginings of the *Port Huron Statement*, except that he had the political sense to confine himself to hope and change, and leave utopia for the sequel.

Protest, Then and Now

YET THERE WAS SOMETHING INGENUOUS and almost admirable about the SDS's early manifesto that is lacking in post-Obama radicalism. Tom Hayden had spent fall 1961 as a Freedom Rider, getting beaten up by the KKK in Mississippi and jailed in Georgia. He and his comrades were appalled by the racial bigotry of the American South (and North), and they revered, at least in the beginning, the non-violent civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s. They longed, in a way, to emulate the heroes of that movement, who like Martin Luther King drew explicitly from Christian sources, among others, and insisted on strenuous "self-purification" as an essential stage of non-violent consciousness. Indeed, the *Port Huron Statement* quoted the Declaration of Independence and Abraham Lincoln, even as the civil rights leaders did, accusing the country of not living up to its own principles. It assailed American hypocrisy, and the apathy and alienation that went with it.

No such Americanism, however vestigial, remains in today's campus protestors, who celebrate only victims, not martyrs, and who have been taught to believe that America, and the West as a whole, are oppressors and nothing but oppressors, six ways from Sunday—racists, sexists, imperialists, homophobes, xenophobes, transphobes, etc.

The early SDS wanted to overcome "[t]he decline of utopia and hope" by showing that young people, on the new left as in the civil rights movement, could *make* history rather than wait patiently for progress to find them, or for the millennium to arrive in God's good time. Real hope was not passive but active, indeed transformative. For Marx, "utopian socialism" was a contradiction in terms, the opposite of his own "scientific socialism." For the new left, socialism without utopianism was the contradiction, because change came not through an inevitable dialectic but through hope, that is, hope in man's own ability to *will* a different or more humane future, where all latent or self-created human potential could be realized. That was the utopia, the nowhere land that had never been found because it had never been truly lost. In the words of the *Statement*, "We regard men as infinitely precious and possessed of unfulfilled capacities for reason, freedom, and love," where freedom meant "finding a meaning in life that is

personally authentic." The object was not "to have one's way so much as it is to have a way that is one's own." Such individualism rejected the old "egoistic individualism" in favor of an open-ended "humanism": making oneself by choosing or willing one's own values.

The crucible of the new left's individualism, where "do your own thing," "justice now," and "participatory democracy" were thought to be reconciled, was in the universities. It was from there that the SDS vowed to "reinsert theory and idealism" in politics. The idealism depended on the theory, as we've seen, and thus on theorists, but the idealism was for everyone, at least in theory. Thus the '60s new left launched sharp critiques of the prevailing theories in the university. The *Statement* condemned, in particular, value-free social science and the conformist premises of the military-industrial-collegiate complex.

Nonetheless, the SDS still regarded the university as the essential locus of the new politics, because despite its faults it stood

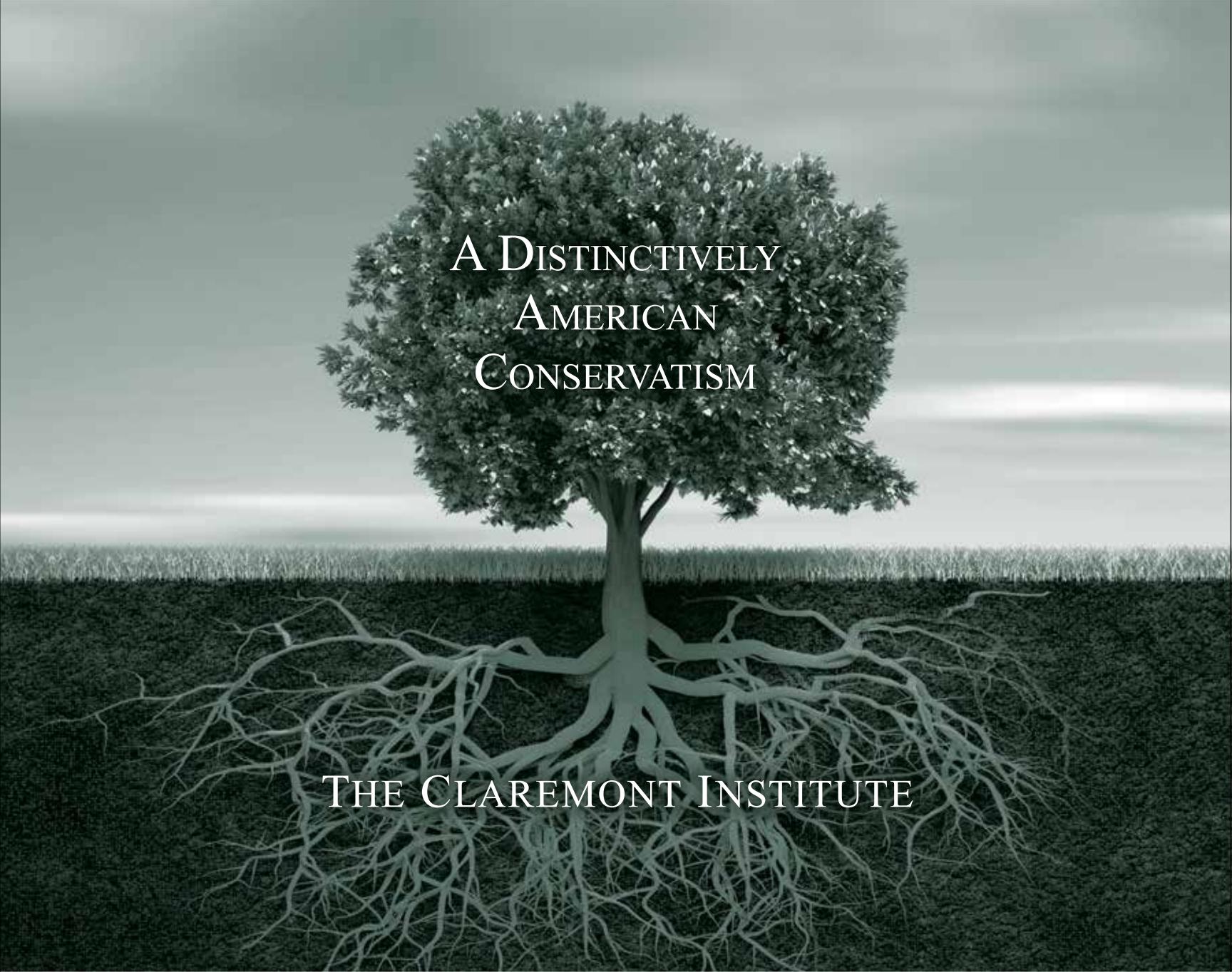
as the "only mainstream institution...open to participation by individuals of nearly any viewpoint." The radicals honored the university as "a community of controversy"—no safe spaces or trigger warnings for them—and championed "the personal cultivation of the mind" as over against the rampant, neurotic specialization of the bureaucratized academy.

The old new left hated being treated as children by professors and deans who claimed to stand *in loco parentis*. Nothing offended Tom Hayden more, as he remarked in his 1961 Letter, than American universities' "endless repressions of free speech and thought, the stifling paternalism that infects the student's whole perception of what is real and possible and enforces a parent-child relationship until the youth is suddenly transplanted into 'the world.'" When the Free Speech Movement (FSM) formed at Berkeley in 1964, its analysis of frustrated, alienated students, as Allen J. Matusow writes in his very fine *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (1984), "came straight out of the *Port Huron Statement*." "In our free-speech fight," said one of FSM's leaders, Mario Savio, "we have come up against what may emerge as the greatest problem of our nation—depersonalized, unresponsive bureaucracy."

Nowadays, student protestors demand in effect, and sometimes literally, that colleges protect them from adulthood, from humanistic debates and political disagreements. "It is not about creating an intellectual space!" a Yale student shouted in 2015 at Professor Nicholas Christakis, then master of Silliman College, one of Yale's residential colleges. "It is not! Do you understand that? It's about creating a home here!" She added, not exactly maturely, "You should not sleep at night. You are disgusting!" At home of course she is always a child.

Authentic or strong individualism seems far from what they are seeking. They raise their voices almost always as members of groups, whose relevant identity is more collective than personal: students of color, the marginalized, victims of microaggressions, who seek protection by and from the white power structure, and compensation to boot.

On their own, apart from the group, today's protestors often seem emotionally fragile. As another Silliman resident, Jencey Paz, wrote in her *Yale Herald* article "Hurt at Home," "I don't want to debate. I want to talk about my pain." The journal removed her article from its website after it attracted a lot of unflattering attention—thus confirming Paz's preferences.



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Recovering the American Idea



The New New Left

NO ONE WOULD HAVE CALLED HAYDEN or Jerry Rubin or the other leaders of the old radicals “snowflakes.” They wanted to oppose the macroaggressions of a society that, in their view, had lost its way amid racism and the existential threats of the Bomb and the Cold War. They wanted to change society, not retreat from it. What happened to the new left’s passionate idealism?

It hasn’t disappeared entirely, but the theory embraced by today’s campus left is far different from that of the ’60s new left. The *Port Huron Statement* reflected deep intellectual engagement, if not exactly seriousness. Its contemporary influences included Herbert Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization* (1955) and C. Wright Mills’s *The Power Elite* (1956). Marcuse, a student of Martin Heidegger’s, had perhaps the primary philosophical influence on the movement, and along with other writers helped to connect it, however tendentially, to Freud, Nietzsche, Marx, Hegel, and Rousseau.

The new new left has no comparable philosophical grounding or intellectual foundation. A widely adopted primer of its thought (used in the Claremont Colleges, for instance), *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (2001) by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, now in its third edition, nods in the direction of Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, but these are dusty portraits on the wall rather than active intellectual interests. The book presumes the truth of an easy-going and politically convenient postmodernism without ever establishing it, or reflecting on the alternative. But that’s what’s so handy about postmodernism, isn’t it? It let’s you *get on with it*—skip past the questions of truth and justice, and get right to the delicious matter of power.

In the present case, that means cue the law professors and radical feminists. So far as I can tell, the ideology of the new campus left was born from a shotgun marriage of critical legal studies, a postmodern enthusiasm at elite law schools (particularly Harvard, just when Barack Obama was studying there) in the late 1970s and 1980s, and radical feminism in the same period or slightly later. What drew them together was the discovery that formal or legal equality, by then essentially achieved for blacks and women, did not guarantee equality of results, and above all did not guarantee the most essential aspect of equality of results, the *feeling* of equal recognition and respect. They joined together in pursuit of that comprehensive equality, and of the high that only that *feeling* could give, and

dared any man to put asunder what Harvard Law School had brought together.

More particularly, *Critical Race Theory* acknowledges the late Derrick Bell, one of the “Crit” (critical legal studies) professors at Harvard Law and later New York University Law School, as the movement’s “intellectual father figure.” Father figure—so much for feminism! The book lists many other minor scholars—usually by race or gender or ethnicity, but including “a number of fellow travelers and writers who are white”—as having contributed to the intellectual heritage of today’s radicals. From the Crits they drew the notion that legal texts have indeterminate meanings, hence are playthings of the powerful. From the feminists they learned of “the relationship between power and the construction of social roles, as well as the unseen, largely invisible... patterns and habits that make up patriarchy and other types of domination.”

It is all quite dreary. Consider the “basic tenets” of the position. First, in America (and the theory seems to be purpose-built for this country) racism is pervasive, inescapable, “ordinary” and “not aberrational,” the “common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country.” Only “most”? That equivocation is one of the many slips in this slipshod argument. But it pales beside the refusal to define “racism.” Does discriminating against people on the basis of race mean denying them equal rights, or objecting to the imposition of equal results? The second principle is “material determinism” or “interest convergence,” meaning that whites (but not other races?) are guaranteed to pursue their own economic interests as a race, thus ensuring and perpetuating “white supremacy.” Third, the “social construction” thesis, which holds that race and races are not “objective, inherent, or fixed” and correspond to no “biological or genetic reality,” but are social inventions. But how can there be “material determinism” if races are immaterial?

You begin to see the problem. The fourth tenet, “differential racialization,” presumes “that each race has its own origins and ever-evolving history,” which the powers-that-be exploit and manipulate. But now races are the real substratum under the constantly changing interpretations of society, not mere artifacts of those interpretations. Fifth, “intersectionality and antiessentialism.” Identity politics has to recognize that “no person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity,” the authors declare. This notion traces to black feminism’s big discovery, that you can be black and a woman (and gay, Democrat, Episcopal) at the same time, and have to deal with the potential conflicts lest there be a nasty crash at the intersection. Notice that the ugly new

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terms contribute nothing to the solution of the problem of who should yield to whom.

Finally, the “unique voice of color.” “Coexisting in somewhat uneasy tension with anti-essentialism,” the authors admit, “the voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression,” minorities have “a presumed competence to speak about race and racism” that whites are “unlikely” to have. Check your white privilege at the door, in other words, because whiteness implies a presumed *incompetence* in matters of justice, at least regarding anyone who is non-white. This is passed off as a matter of history and experience, but the (acknowledged) tension arises precisely because, as the name suggests and everyone realizes, the “voice-of-color” thesis keys off the color of your skin, not the content of your character or experiences.

It is hard to believe how many contradictions are papered over in this catalogue of “basic tenets.” To take the most obvious example, for something that calls itself “critical race theory,” it has no consistent theory of race and no critical distance from its political agenda. Is race something real, indelible, and fundamental, which shapes the soul itself and commands opinions, passions, and interests across society? Or is it all in our heads, a social construction that we could do without? It is as if Marxism proclaimed both that the his-

tory of the world is the history of class struggle, and that it isn’t. Or that the Communist revolution is inevitable, or maybe not.

The new new left can live with its contradictions because of its postmodernism. It finds each part of the contradiction politically useful, and that is the standard that matters. Sometimes it is useful to say that whites are objectively privileged and therefore oppressors, and that blacks, say, cannot be racist because they objectively lack power and are the oppressed. But other times it is useful to deny this, and to say that anyone can be a racist because racism is a state of mind. Sometimes it is useful to claim, as Justice Harry Blackmun did (adopted as one of the volume’s epigraphs), “In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race.” At other times it is useful to insist that in America it is never possible to get beyond racism.

Is it any wonder that liberal idealism, or any sort of idealism, is in short supply on today’s campuses? Postmodernism isn’t about justice—because there is no justice “out there”—it’s about the will to power. Add that to an invidious racial consciousness that might have made the antebellum South proud, and you have an ugly combination. Having run that banner up their flagpole, it’s clear why young people who salute it can be vicious and violent in packs on and off campus, while despondent and fragile

at heart. Idealism depends on transcending self-interest, and today’s protestors expect every ethnic, racial, class, and gender group to follow its interest, and the most powerful to win. We are a long way from utopia and hope.

From Old to New

MOST COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE nothing to do with campus radicals, of course. They don’t want to transcend the thorny thickets of political correctness, however, and so let the radicals do their thing and set much of the campus agenda and climate. In enforcing political correctness, the radical students usually command immense assistance from the college administration and faculty, where the original new left went to die, or rather to rule.

For the contrasts so far between the old and the new new left are only part of the story. The *Port Huron Statement* caught the SDS at its most thoughtful and idealistic, in 1962. The rest of the ’60s saw its rapid descent into violence and anti-American extremism, and its defeat as a political force. The SDS’s campaign against the Vietnam War, which became its focus from 1965 on, did not halt the war but did help to elect President Richard Nixon, twice. From a too soaring or unnatural idealism, the radicals plunged into a

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deep, cynical hatred of the country they had once hoped to lead and redeem.

Speaking at an antiwar march in Washington, D.C., in late 1965, SDS president Carl Oglesby explained that the leaders who had taken America into Vietnam “are not moral monsters. They are all honorable men. They are all liberals.” They had rationalized their folly with the ideology of “anti-Communism,” a word that Hayden and the early SDSers had always loathed as part of the “fascist” political vocabulary. For Oglesby, such liberals, whether they knew it or not, stood for “corporate liberalism,” or what his predecessor, Paul Potter, had called the “system,” unjust and oppressive in its operations at home and abroad, always putting “national values before human values.”

Liberals were the enemy, but in a more urgent and comprehensive way than in the *Statement*. Marcuse’s influence was growing among the radicals, and his essay “Repressive Tolerance,” published in ‘65, pointed them away from their old free speech idealism and towards a more ruthless, revolutionary consciousness. Toleration was once a great progressive cause, he argued, when liberals adopted it as a weapon against authoritarian societies. But now it risked becoming silently repressive: toleration in a liberal society like America was a means of neutralizing and coopting all opposition to the power structure or power elite. It was a means

of preventing a liberal society from being replaced by a revolutionary one. Marcuse urged the students to treat tolerance as a partisan tool, i.e., to show no tolerance for “affluence,” corporate capitalism, and the war. His argument laid the groundwork for political correctness.

By late 1966 the SDS had denounced the war as genocidal. The students’ fight was therefore for the Vietnamese people as well as for themselves. Opposing ROTC, the draft, and black Americans’ conditions of life at home, the radicals increasingly saw all of their protests connected by the tyrannical nature of American society. It was only logical to move “From Protest to Resistance,” the title of a celebrated piece in *New Left Notes* in early 1967. (So student-led were these developments that Matusow, whose account I follow, switches in his history at some point from regular years to academic years.) America’s besetting sin, said the SDS, was “imperialism,” an old left (Leninist) indictment now endorsed by the new left, which echoed as well the black power movement’s charge that inner city ghettos constituted “internal colonies.”

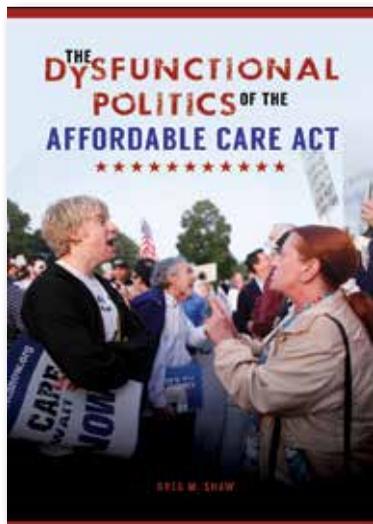
“Once the new left determined that America was the villain,” writes Matusow, “it shifted from an antiwar movement to a movement favoring victory for the Vietcong.” Hayden and friends began to meet with Vietnamese Communists. Bigger, more violent demon-

strations followed, designed, among other things, to shut down the “war machine” and in early 1968 to seize Columbia University. As the new left came more and more to resemble the old, cheering Marx and Mao, it turned its back on the *Port Huron Statement’s* hope for “participatory democracy” and adopted Lenin’s principle of democratic centralism, concentrating control at the top, finally in 1969 in the so-called “Weatherman” faction. The Weatherman’s call for “Days of Rage” in Chicago, designed ultimately to stop the imperialists’ war by starting a civil war at home, failed miserably. Afterwards, keen to sow terror, the Weathermen went underground to plant bombs, which later blew up several of their own. It had been only a little more than two years since the Summer of Love.

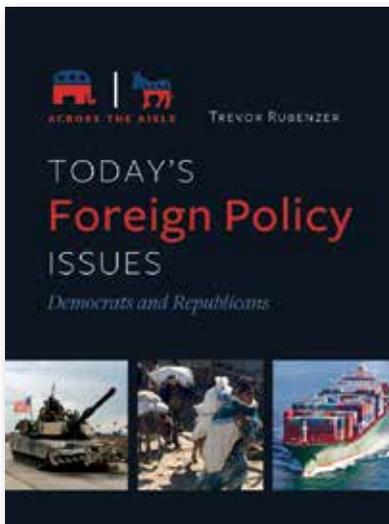
Students for a Democratic Society collapsed in 1969, paralyzed by schism and by its own decadent principles. But its spirit and many of its leaders moved into the academy. Though in some ways out of sympathy with today’s P.C. radicals, the old new left and its successors find it difficult to oppose them. It has always been their fatal weakness that they could imagine no enemies to their left.

Charles R. Kesler is the editor of the Claremont Review of Books.

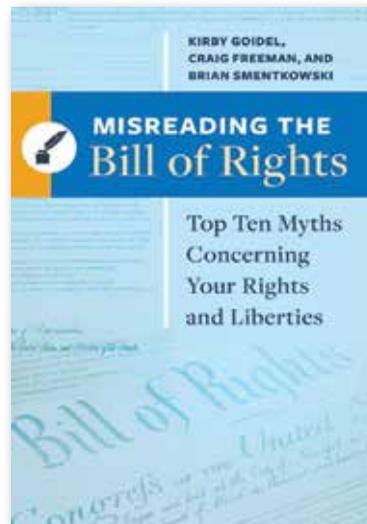
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