American Association for Public Opinion Research

The Struggle Is the Message: The Organization and Ideology of the Anti-War Movement. by Irving Louis Horowitz
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of questioning can produce conflicting information. He discusses the tremendous pressures in political polling for methodological shortcuts to save time and money, for the leaking of possibly distorted versions of the findings, and for outright fabrication. He sees no real solution to these problems except through the slow process of education. Candidates, legislators, news editors, and the general public must learn to distinguish good polls from bad, to ask sharp questions about the methodology behind alleged findings, and to ignore those that do not measure up. Crespi applauds the efforts of AAPOR and the National Council on Published Polls to set standards to which all would adhere.

Starting with FDR's effective use of radio to reach millions of voters, Mendelsohn reviews the developing use of the broadcast media, and especially TV, in recent political campaigns. While he rejects the crude notions that anything can be sold over television, given enough money, or that voters change their behavior to conform to computer forecasts, he clearly shows the revolutionary impact which TV has already had on our politics. It has changed the style of political campaigning, reduced the importance of the press, weakened the role of the old-style political party rulers, and increased and dramatized the power of the President. It can make or break political personalities. Mendelsohn is concerned that the commercial use of television will result in "pseudo campaigns." Nixon's appearance on "Laugh-In" is great P.R., but what else can be said for it? How can a series of carefully pretested 20-second spot announcements or commercials contribute to informed political discussion? Mendelsohn sees a danger that politics will become a televised spectator sport just like football, with the public playing it vicariously, watching it as a game, and withdrawing from informed political activity.

The facts and insights which both authors bring to this small volume will be of interest to anyone concerned with polls or television or politics. Sophisticated readers will not find much new, but the issues raised are still very much with us and deserve thoughtful consideration. I would only note my own belief that, by and large, people vote for their own perceived best interest as the result of considerable interpersonal discussion, and are influenced hardly at all by the polls and little more by television commercials.

Paul B. Sheatsley
National Opinion Research Center


Irving Louis Horowitz has written a book on the structure, goals, and tactics of the anti-war movement in the United States which demands attention, even though it suffers some real limitations. The latter can be quickly summarized. The book is short, the substantive commentary covering just 120 large type pages. It had, upon its appearance in 1970, a kind of incompleteness bred of the fact that most of the research and writing was completed in 1968, as part of the author's work as consultant to a special task force formed under the auspices of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. A lot bearing on the anti-war movement has transpired since 1968, and these developments are only cursorily covered. The book is, moreover, subjective and impressionistic; it adds little "hard" data on any phase of the protests against America's involvement in Vietnam. Horowitz offers a succession of sweeping judgments with little ef-
fort at either qualification or substantiation, a fact that will sometimes trouble even the sympathetic reader. For example, he writes (p. 17) that "all demonstrators became [in the eyes of law enforcement officials] deviant hippies and revolutionaries; in this sense all were 'niggers'... The police were no longer able to distinguish between orderly demonstrations and any other kind." The merit of such observations seems almost exclusively polemical. Finally, a number of what are offered as basic generalizations are little more than tautologies: for instance, (p. 7), "... when warfare has become legitimate in the eye of the public, when a given conflict has a binding value on the total population, the anti-war movement tends to be small." Amazing!

Still, The Struggle is the Message is interesting if uneven, and is not without its insights. The book comprises the author's views on the anti-war movement and its place in the larger course of American political life, set forth as such without apology, and these judgments are, more often than not, astute. Among the plethora of essays, pro and con, on the movement against the Vietnam war which have appeared over the past half decade, this is among the best—the most balanced and insightful.

Horowitz discusses the organization of the anti-war movement, the various social and ideological groups within it, and the changes in philosophy and tactics as American involvement in Vietnam deepened. But his most interesting observations deal with the reasons for the political failure of the movement. The matter should not be put—and certainly Horowitz does not so put it—that an anti-war campaign differently organized, with different perceptions and tactics, would have achieved a quicker extrication of the U. S. from the morass of Vietnam. On that, there can be only conjecture. Still Horowitz believes—and so do I—that the movement against the war failed badly, if the objective was to develop effective majority opposition; and that this failure was not something casual or accidental, that it was rooted in essential characteristics of the perceptions of activists of the movement. The political failure of the anti-war movement is a matter of exceptional importance, and we are in Horowitz's debt for seriously, if not definitively, exploring it.

It should be noted first that opinion surveys have shown clearly that opponents of the war have had a lot of "raw material" to work with, in the sense that American involvement has never been truly popular. Responses to the numerous questions on the war asked in many national surveys since 1965 lend themselves to a variety of interpretations on many points, but without question they reveal a public ambivalent, frustrated, and dissatisfied. One good summary indication of this is the question Gallup began asking in 1966: "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U. S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?" The proportion of the total samples answering "Yes" (with those of no opinion excluded), for various points in time over the last half decade, are as follows (Gallup Opinion Index, passim):

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
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<tr>
<td>5/66</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<td>7/67</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/67</td>
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<td>3/68</td>
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<td>10/69</td>
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As early as May 1966, then, more than four Americans in ten were
describing the U. S. Vietnam intervention as an error, and by the fall of 1967 those sharing in this assessment were a majority. The conclusion seems inescapable that this sentiment was not effectively tapped politically, and we need to ask why.

Horowitz finds the answer in significant part in characteristics of the American Left, and especially in the radicalism which grew up in the 1960's and which was influential in setting the tone of the anti-war movement. Four principal features of the new radicalism are seen militating against its ability to mobilize a political majority.

Elitism. Horowitz argues that the radical activists of the anti-war movement deliberately chose a minority strategy, seeing themselves as embattled truth-bearers in a sea of philistines: "Such a mode of thinking carries an implied metaphysical pathos, as if a certain nobility accrues to being both a minority and on the Left. . . . Political minorities thus discreetly and almost without notice become transformed into a Platonic truth-bearing elite bringing the message of apocalypse to a public indulging in Roman orgies." (p. 72) This elitism of contemporary (white) radicalism, nourished by its middle-class, intellectual base, contributed to an unwillingness to pursue a strategy of cooperation with large sectors of the public.

The anti-politics of purity. Radical involvement in the peace movement is seen characterized by a greater concern with self-redemption than with success. "Basically, the answer given is that therapy is more important than victory. Orientation overrides achievement. Passion and meaning in struggle are more valuable than material accomplishment." (p. 90) The new radicalism is profoundly egoistic, and following from this is hostile to organization. The regular political process and the organization it requires is rejected as a corrupting element. Behind this is a revolt against the organizational necessities of advanced, industrial societies.

The flight from reason. The notion is, Horowitz observes, that reason is an ideology which by its emphasis upon a spirit of judiciousness and prudence is incapacitating—requiring one to stand between the extremes, unable to act decisively. "Hero types . . . are virile, savage, angry, akin to a popular image of the black, the isolated youth. . . . It is more important that hero types show authentic inner turmoil, political convictions unmitigated by the complexities of a relativistic and thus immobilizing education." (p. 98)

The impatience of moral certitude. So strong has been the sense of being right that an impatience with regular political processes has naturally ensued, along with an attraction to apocalyptic politics. The "New Left," in its opposition to the war as in other facets of its political activity, has consequently been unwilling "to await the verdict of consensus-building formulas among disparate individuals. . . ." (p. 85) The public at large could not be expected to respond affirmatively to simplistic formulations of moral absolutes, has been suspicious of "panacea-makers and self-styled reformers whose solutions are worked out in advance of everyday tough problems." (p. 80)

Horowitz's own values and premises are laid out clearly enough in The Struggle Is the Message. Strongly opposed to the war in Vietnam and to the politics of the Cold War generally, he has favored the building of a peace movement on a liberal rather than a radical pivot, around the premise that in the thermonuclear age "peace is everybody's business." He favors, in this enterprise, a democratic movement that finds allies where it can, which does not
forget that "patience, competence, and organizational skills are virtues in any major venture." But this in no way detracts from the thoughtful overview he provides of a half decade of Vietnam protest, or from his insights into why the anti-war movement proved so incapable of mobilizing and directing widespread public dissatisfactions.

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Mrs. Pateman has written a very interesting little book, particularly the theoretical portion. She distinguishes between the contemporary theorists of democracy (e.g. Berelson, Dahl, Sartori, and Eckstein) and the theorists of participatory democracy (Rousseau, J. S. Mill, and G. D. H. Cole) on the basis of the functions they respectively maintain are served through widespread participation in the political process. According to Pateman, the contemporary theorists, following Schumpeter, regard democracy in terms of national institutional arrangements wherein participation is restricted, through elections, to a protective function—thereby preventing the rascals in office from going too far. Mass participation beyond this function is regarded as dangerous since, as recent empirical findings have shown, the mass has a totalitarian predisposition and lacks the rationality necessary to make proper decisions; therefore, participation should not rise much above some necessary minimum—i.e. at about the level that presently exists (love 'em or leave 'em) in Anglo-American polities.

I doubt that contemporary theorists are actually antagonistic to mass participation. In his Polyarchy (1971), for example, Dahl restricts "participation," as Pateman has said, to mean the right to take part in national elections, but he believes such participation should be more inclusive; in his After the Revolution (1970), he suspects one will not participate if there are other things he would rather do, and probably ought not participate if someone else is significantly more competent with respect to the task at hand. So far as an attitude about mass participation is concerned, Dahl appears more apathetic than antagonistic.

As Pateman reminds us, however, democratic theory has its prescriptive element, and the contemporary theorists have modified the classical normative values in certain important respects. Besides, as she further argues, the whole notion of a "classical theory" is stereotypical to begin with: Bentham and James Mill are classical theorists, yet they, too, are primarily concerned with national institutional arrangements and share the contemporary theorists' view of the protective function of participation. What distinguishes the theorists of participatory democracy from other theorists, classical or contemporary, is the emphasis they give to other (primarily educative and psychological) consequences of participation, and as Pateman shows in her later chapters, there is considerable empirical evidence, particularly from British industrial sociology, to support the participatory viewpoint.

As an illustration: the often-found empirical relationships among apathy, low self-efficacy, authoritarianism, low SES, etc., have been used to justify restricting mass participation to the act of voting. But as Pateman points out, it is one thing to notice these relationships and quite another to determine their meaning, for these same facts could just as well be used to support the participatory theory: increase participation, one