

American society operates essentially on the basis of capital, accumulated and exchanged, its *caveat emptor* morality justifying any means toward monetary profit, its very nature based on competition and self-repression, threading its malignancy through class, racial, and sexual segregation and repression to the very isolation of each person from another. The economy itself is expansionist, otherwise it would collapse upon itself (as it is presently doing anyway), heightening the desperation and repression at home and overseas. In the Pacific Northwest alone, jobs are becoming more scarce with each passing week, hundreds of thousands laid off which creates personal and economic crises that only get worse.

We are all born into this artificial climate, regardless of race, gender or economic class. We are programmed to compete with each other, by any means fair or foul, regardless of social level — trapped and manipulated by anciently absurd and unbending concepts of religious, cultural and economic obligations into mutilating ourselves (by our own hands) into unhappy, grotesque creatures endlessly pursuing and justifying vacuous illusions. American society has itself lost whatever intrinsic mobility it might have had, if it ever did have any; the class lines are rigid, race more than ever determines class position and privilege.

In the past, American society proved too heterogeneous to form any cohesive solidarity among blacks, Chicanos, Indians, oriental Americans, women, workers, farmers and everybody else. American capitalism and its concomitant imperialism has been too strong to break, resilient enough to come through the worst economic crisis.

Perhaps even more inclusive, American political rebels have continually failed to see future social development within contemporary society, unable to keep pace with its tremendous changes, sometimes able to respond and patch an impairment or another, but never ready to build a lasting entity that would successfully defy the expanding misanthropy.

Restricted by its generally middle-class base, the white reformist movement in this country — which has been, however unintentionally, a perpetuation of white preeminence (perhaps more humane, but white supremacy nonetheless) — eschewed methods it could have adopted that were germane to primarily white-oriented groups, and instead impotently caricatured styles and goals of the black movement.

Not a bad thing in itself, giving whites an enlightened empathy they might otherwise have ignored, the danger lies in the inability of white radicals to approach such groups as labor on their own grounds and deal with their individual problems, bringing them in successive stages into at least an understanding and sympathy with the third world, if not actual affiliation and identification, the central purpose.

The black movement itself grew into the most powerful, most original, creative and dynamic radical movement in the history of this country.

For three centuries New World whites butchered and manacled blacks, who in spite of tremendous oppression yet managed to develop the richest culture in the Americas outside the Indian. Up against the wall for our crimes, whites angrily whisper the black must not seek revenge but instead accept tepid apologies by our newly enlightened politicians.

Whites have failed to understand why American blacks disassociated from them. Black culture is far more vibrant and real, while white American culture is sterile, impersonal and bleak in style and philosophy, its true god money and profit. There is hardly a comparison; what good whites might offer, blacks accepted while whites were losing it.

White American culture has transposed material abundance for liberty and equality. Aldous Huxley suggested the industrial revolution was the downfall of humanity. Means became ends, and the human spirit suffered for it.

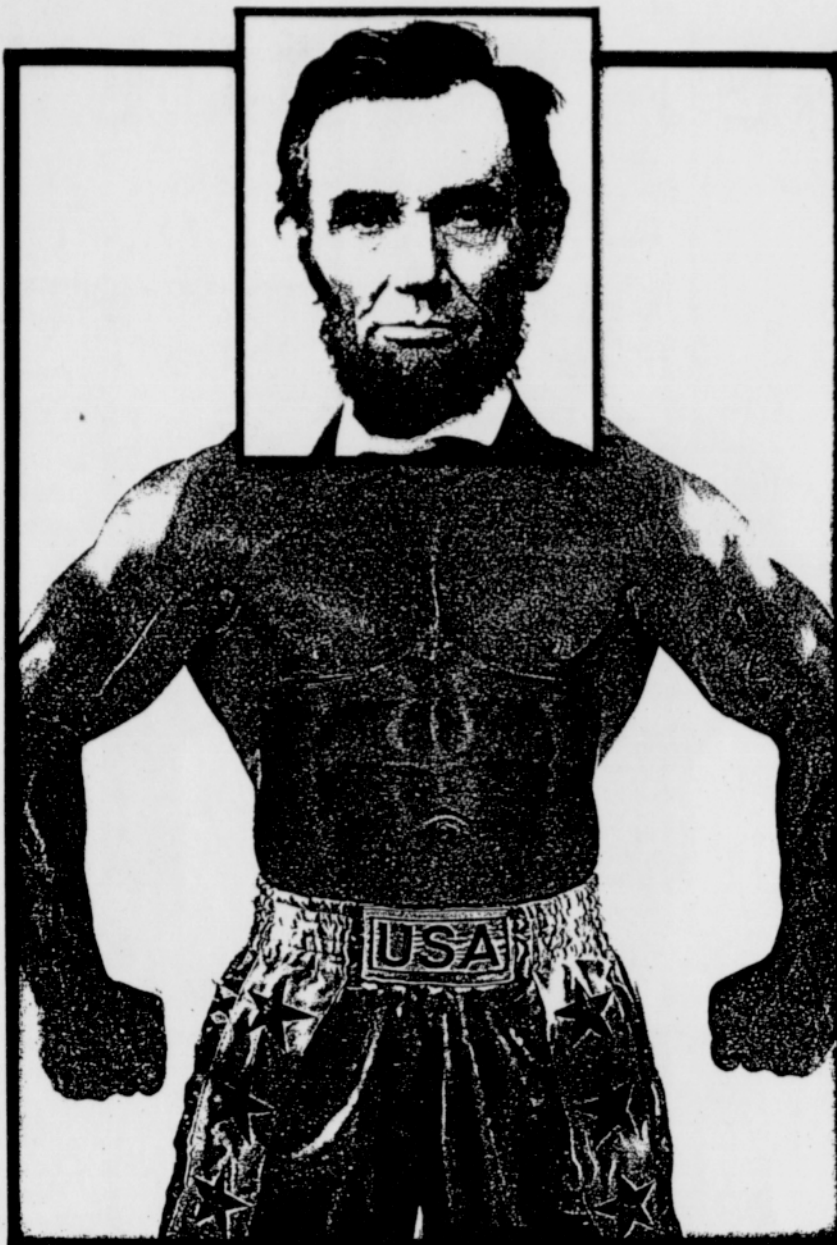
Black American culture is often called *Soul*. Soul is its very essence. The same can also be said of American Indian culture, and Asian American culture, and not least the fused Chicano/Latino/Hispanic approach to American life.

Perhaps a deep sense of soul was what was missing within the white radical movement of the 1960s, its Achilles heel the clinging to a middle class base, a germ that became the diseased Yuppism that replaced it.

A distinct Puritan streak was likewise its downfall. A mistaken impression that white radicals were the only true missionaries of liberty and justice for all, a maverick contradiction if not actually their undoing as a positive political force, certainly a perpetuation of arrogance and elitism that proved decidedly counterproductive and unable to resist the lure of Yuppiedom, equity and democracy ceremoniously played out for the sake of ritual.

The 1960s anti-Vietnam War war movement was a direct outgrowth of radical tradition in this country dating far back beyond its first European settlers escaping old world repression — forget for a moment the indentured servants, white slaves the white race no longer wishes to admit it chained and used to create and refine tortures later used against blacks — before Spartacus even, or Moses, a great radical who managed to set his own people free prior to their crucifixion of another radical who offered them no material advantages for throwing off their Roman conquerors several centuries later, however obscured both Biblical liberators have become through religious myth and invention.

However great and abundant American white radicalism of the past, it yet found itself justifying too often the annihilation of the Indian, the enslavement of the blacks who constantly rebelled against white feudal domination, the bigotry towards newer groups of immigrants clambering off ships at Ellis Island: the Irish, the Italians, the Slavs and other Eastern European peoples, Jewish of any ethnic nationality in particular — and especially the Chinese and Japanese who landed on the West Coast and Hawaiian Islands and promptly became virtual slaves and victims of white-nativist oppression.



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Although there had been a tradition of white radicalism, forlorn and compromised it might have been, it yet reemerged from a vacuum that spanned more than a generation. The older radicals on the far side of the generation gap are most certainly dead now, old age or otherwise, disgraced if ever mentioned (or so institutionalized their examples have no relevant meaning, the truth of their purpose so perverted or equivocated only vacuity remains). The combined legacy of their works and aspirations, perceptions and truths, are almost entirely buried in obscurity.

In their relative immaturity, their grasping, confused adolescence, young white radicals of the 1960s were in the main rather ahistorical, if not anti-intellectual in the tradition of their parents (who unconsciously maintained their children in cocoons of narrow perspectives), committing the same mistakes as their historic predecessors:

The secular utopians of the 1830s and 1840s who did not in their equally ahistorical consciousness concede the false yet enticing seduction of industrialization;

The abolitionists who failed to see social transformation the implications of emancipation provided for a socio/economic base for blacks and whites to live and work together;

The late 19th century agrarian radicals who strove too late to save the vanishing aesthetics and verities of a rural life already gobbled up by the ever expanding urban-based industrial economic system;

The old socialists of the World War 1 era who concentrated upon building a strong force of organized skilled laborers and ignored the latest batch of immigrants who were hungry and eager enough to force basic labor changes through the newly organized Congress of Industrial Labor (CIO);

The communists of the 1930s who discarded cultural reality and creativity to meet changing problems for Russian methods and phraseology, constructing a popular front whose very existence depended wholly upon the continuance of the New Deal;

The German radicals fleeing the Nazis in the early and middle 1930s who infused the decaying movement with a new and real vitality, but whose effect culminated in the hopeless crusade and draining off of the best, most intelligent, sensitive and creative men of that rejuvenation to the civil war in Spain and death, the survivors for the most part too shocked and disillusioned to have any continuing consequence, many of them abandoning all radical causes, catalogued and repressed as communists ("premature anti-fascists") by the American government.

The short-lived, drug-inspired counterculture of the 'Beats' that arose in the 1950s as a direct result and antagonist of the McCarthy purges, more disposed toward Eastern philosophies and unorthodox styles of life and art than towards overt political involvement;

The Civil Rights activists of the early 1950s and 1960s, both black and white, who stood up against Jim Crow in the South, integrating schools and registering blacks to vote.

And the offspring of the Beats and civil rights activists, the Vietnam antiwar movement. The surviving white veterans of those idealistic years and the more recent war dissenters formed the first wholly radical structures in decades — by then even the old hardline American Communist Party was as wornout and conservative as the established power structure itself.

Yet for all its reasoning as an antagonist to established order, its opulent idiosyncrasies, internal splits and factions,

the white American radical movement of the 1960s and early 1970s faltered by essentially institutionalizing itself.

The older groups, such as Students for a Democratic Society, begun so imaginatively, became increasingly rigid in scope, concentrating upon single issues — the Weather faction demanded the privilege to use the state's violence against itself, holding it accountable for the desperation leading to those acts; but went no further, calling for revolution without substance, parroting third world styles not particularly applicable to this multiple-jointed, heterogeneous society as a whole.

Some of the old self-styled leaders buried themselves in quick and easy solutions, washing their hands of winning over the labor movement, considering it hopelessly privileged compared to third world peoples, or dismissing it with traditional Stalinist demonology, ignoring the obvious historical and contemporary fact that the mass of American labor holds the ultimate key to which way 'the revolution' goes.

Others of the old leadership swallowed centrist theory or mad elitism; still others gathered such a following and prestige with their radicalism they evolved into establishment liberals dependent on the system they purported to abhor, shrinking from thoughts of its overthrow (partly as a result of not hypothesizing a bearable alternative), cautioning the disgusted and oppressed from asserting too strongly or effectively their goals, philosophizing issues to a point of nullity.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the resurrected, struggling antiwar movement from its inception was its middle class base and organizing around college campuses, insulating itself from the average American working person who was for the most part unable to identify with the so-called New Left's goals, instead resisting them to long-range detriment.

As a result of not gearing its purpose toward the great mass of American labor which was even then alienated and insecure, and by perpetuating among themselves myths of an intellectual elite while augmenting delusions offered by official America and Red Russia relative to labor, ignoring labor's goals that promote grassroots collaboration rather than corporate schemes based on war and imperialism, the American radical movement gave piously fraudulent politicians an edge toward manipulating the working class into a tool of its own oppression.

Old traditions, ideas and institutions die hard, stingy and prolonged deaths. Those who would change cutthroat rivalry into cooperative magnanimity were yet children of their parents, responding instinctively to parental patterns taught so rigorously. Yet as a spark of change, as a counterculture of unique and unifying forms, they were flowering seeds of the first multiracial transgender culture this ruptured society ever forged.

Often isolating themselves and repressing one another, they sometimes lost sight of their overall objectives, which were, as simply as I can define them, a world of women and men of all creeds and races equal in a social, cultural and economic sense, working for and not against each other, appreciating and encouraging diversity whether cultural, racial or individual, with a common understanding humanity is a single species that can survive only through harmony, depending upon and thus cooperating with one another.

One of the most treasured and enduring myths is that civilizations or nations collapse when they have become permissive, immoral and lacking the will to fight any perceived enemy. That is simply untrue — nations and states fall when they have lost faith and trust with their peoples, when they no longer even pretend to meet or respect the most basic material and philosophic needs of their citizenry, when they have lied to them and used them badly, when they have become repressive and over-extend their oppression to satisfy the empirical ambitions of a insatiably privileged minority.

So it is happening within this country. It has stretched itself too thin, it has ruled highhanded over too many people for too long. It has substituted artifice for substance, defrauding its citizens with bright baubles of mediocrity, claiming material prosperity while hundreds of thousands lose their jobs either because the overburdened economy is unable to support them or indifferently exports their jobs overseas. Repression escalates against the desperate and hungry, imperialism intensifies its attempts to dominate other peoples politically and economically in order to stave off internal collapse at home.

Yet the country resists progressive change. Change creates chaos. History, while refusing to honestly chronicle the lives of the great mass of ordinary people, perpetuating instead elitist perspectives, does at least present some examples of response toward chaos.

Faced with social chaos and the break down of order, ordinary people grasp desperately at oppression simply because it purports to be a base of stability and order. But the history we think we know betrays us. The chaos during times of change is not from the new and rising ideas and forms but comes directly from the decaying institutions committing suicide to stay alive through absolute repression. Yet when so many demand change, there is obviously a desperate need for it, and it must be met.

The angry leaning pressure of increasing humanity will have the last word. It will seek to rectify the monstrous inequities between the world's *haves* and *have-nots* simply to survive, overthrowing their governments and privileged institutions if their fundamental needs are not met. On such a low intellectual level will come the dynamics of revolution.

We are
all in waiting
to see if something
will take
us and melt the past
which is only
a reminder to a
place where we
listened and
decided our futures...

~SHARE ZANERA



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