

Post-Industrial Imperialism

The Global Village

At the centre of the 1964 New York World's Fair stood the icon of the exhibition: the Unisphere. Built by US Steel, this edifice was a massive, 12-storey-high, metal globe elevated above a circle of fountains. The Unisphere was a triumph of American engineering. Never before had anyone been able to create a representation of the earth on this scale.¹ As well as impressing people by its sheer size, the Unisphere was also praised for its aesthetic qualities. The US National Arts Club proclaimed that the giant globe was 'one of the most outstanding achievements of structural sculpture of this decade.'² Just like the Eiffel Tower at the 1889 Paris Exposition, the Unisphere became the instantly recognisable symbol of the World's Fair. Its image adorned magazine front-covers, newspaper reports, posters and souvenirs.³ The meaning of this planetary logo was obvious: the New York World's Fair was a gathering of the whole of humanity. During the two years of the exposition, the Unisphere was the focal point of the entire earth.⁴

In its international edition, *Life* magazine promoted the opening of the New York World's Fair as the ideal moment for foreigners to visit America. A global exhibition deserved a global audience.⁵ By the early-1960s, travelling to the USA from overseas was no longer a major undertaking. The long and arduous journey by sea had been replaced by a quick and uneventful plane flight.⁶ Despite this technological leap forward, moving between continents was still expensive. Air travel remained the

¹ The Unisphere demonstrated the potential of the new methods of computer-aided design. With aid of the latest technology, the corporation's architects were able to calculate the exact tilt needed to balance the globe on its three supports. See US Steel, 'Biggest World on Earth'; and Jeffrey Stanton, 'Unisphere'.

² Editors of Time-Life Books, *Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964/5*, page 90.

³ See nywf64.com, 'Unisphere'.

⁴ US Steel dedicated the Unisphere to 'Peace Through Understanding': one of the three themes of the New York World's Fair. See Editors of Time-Life Books, *Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964/5*, page 180.

⁵ In March 1964, the magazine published a special 'Vacationland USA' double issue to coincide with the opening of the World's Fair. See *Life International*.

⁶ In 1958, Pan Am introduced the first non-stop transatlantic jet passenger service which had cut flight times between New York and Europe to 6.5 hours. Back in 1620, it had taken two months for the Pilgrim Fathers – a celebrated group of early English settlers - to sail from Plymouth to Boston. See Lynn Homan and Thomas Reilly, *Pan Am*, page 102; Boeing Historical Archives, *Year by Year*, pages 87-88; and Donald White, *The American Century*, pages 170-171, 211.

privilege of an elite: the ‘jet set’.⁷ In contrast, the iconography of the Unisphere anticipated the democratisation of international mobility. As larger and more efficient machines were introduced into service, airplanes were in the process of becoming a means of mass transportation.⁸ Even better, as the NASA and Futurama exhibits at the 1964 World’s Fair promised, space travel would soon be available to all. Within twenty-five years at most, ordinary people would be taking their holidays on the moon. Reflecting this optimism, the Unisphere was surrounded by three rings which celebrated famous space flights: Yuri Gagarin - the first person to orbit the earth; John Glenn - the first American to repeat this feat; and Telstar – the first satellite to transmit television signals from the USA to Europe.⁹ At the New York World’s Fair, the symbolic representations of the two pioneering manned missions echoed the exhibits promoting the imaginary future of inter-planetary tourism. When holiday makers in the 1990s looked back at the earth from their lunar resorts, it would be obvious to them that all of humanity shared a common home.¹⁰

The rings surrounding the Unisphere didn’t just encourage fantasies about space travel. Alongside models of Gagarin’s and Glenn’s capsules, a miniature version of Telstar was also depicted circling US Steel’s giant globe. On 10th July 1962, audiences in America and Europe had watched in amazement as the first live television broadcast was made across the Atlantic using this communications satellite.¹¹ In the late-1920s, the formation of radio networks had enabled people living in different parts of the USA to listen simultaneously to the same programmes transmitted from studios in New York. For the first time, local communities were brought together as a national audience.¹² With the launch of Telstar, the same process was beginning to happen on a global scale. Viewers in different countries were now able to see the same images on their screens. By 1964, live feeds were already an essential ingredient of television news coverage.¹³ The model of Telstar circling the Unisphere promised much more. When large numbers of communications satellites were in operation, people across the world would be watching the same channels at the same time. Television was uniting humanity.

⁷ ‘The jet set – by definition – are rich, glamorous, louche ... and unobtainable.’ Ross Benson in Liz Barlow, ‘The Jet Set’.

⁸ See Lynn Homan and Thomas Reilly, *Pan Am*, page 101-120; and Boeing Historical Archives, *Year by Year*, pages 103-104, 131-140.

⁹ See Neil deGrasse Tyson, ‘Unisphere’.

¹⁰ According to US Steel, ‘... [the Unisphere] shows the world as it appears 6,000 miles in space.’ Editors of Time-Life Books, *Official Guide New York World’s Fair 1964/5*, page 180.

¹¹ See Daniel Glover, ‘Telstar’.

¹² See Erik Barnouw, *A Tower In Babel*, pages 235-285.

¹³ In the year after Telstar’s pioneering broadcast, the American networks were able to provide live coverage of the funeral of US president Kennedy to television stations across the world. See Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire*, pages 227-238.

At the same time as the first visitors to the 1964 World's Fair were admiring the Unisphere, Marshall McLuhan – a Canadian professor - published a book which provided the theoretical explanation of this dream of audiovisual harmony: *Understanding Media*. The symbolism of the Telstar model had been given written form. *Understanding Media* quickly became a publishing sensation. Unlike most academics, McLuhan wrote for a non-specialist audience. He rejected the stylistic conventions of his profession: dense prose, detailed investigation and careful referencing. Instead, McLuhan's analysis utilised 'thought probes': a dazzling combination of snappy headlines, sweeping generalisations and unsupported assertions.¹⁴ Although this approach outraged his university colleagues, his populist style appealed to the large numbers of educated readers outside the academy.¹⁵ Difficult concepts were turned into wacky catchphrases. Human history was explained through paradoxical exaggerations. In contrast with run-of-the-mill academic texts, *Understanding Media* made social theory fun to read.

McLuhan's book hit the zeitgeist of the mid-1960s. After perusing *Understanding Media*, any intelligent person was able to talk about how television, satellites, computers and other new technologies were radically transforming American society. Best of all, they could impress people by dropping its evocative thought probes into newspaper articles, public lectures and dinner-party conversations. The popularity of *Understanding Media* quickly turned McLuhan into an A-list celebrity. Within a couple of years of its publication, this once obscure Canadian professor had become one of the most famous people in the world.¹⁶ His books were international best-sellers. His musings appeared in leading newspapers. He starred in his own television shows. He was a consultant for major corporations. Across the world, McLuhan was hailed as a heroic genius: 'the oracle of the modern times'.¹⁷

The massive success of *Understanding Media* was the culmination of a long intellectual journey. When the book was published, McLuhan was a professor of English literature at Toronto University. He had been educated to appreciate the traditional forms of cultural expression: novels, poems and plays. Devoted to the

¹⁴ McLuhan declared that: '... I consider myself a generalist, not a specialist who has staked out a tiny plot of study and is oblivious to everything else ... Only by standing aside from any phenomenon and taking an overview can you discover its operative principles ...' Eric Norden, 'The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan', page 3.

¹⁵ Speaking on a BBC programme in 1966, Jonathan Miller summed up the profession's disdain for McLuhan's writings: 'His English is deplorable. ... He has appalling puns and slang associations in his prose. It's full of often very poorly assimilated ideas taken from cybernetics, and from modern science, and he misuses the terms a great deal ...' Jonathan Miller in Gerald Stearn, *McLuhan: Hot & Cool*, page 270.

¹⁶ Warren Hinckle, 'Marshall McLuhan', page 9.

¹⁷ Tom Wolfe, 'What If He Is Right?', page 110. Also see Philip Marchand, *Marshall McLuhan*, pages 136-211.

artistic legacy of the past, English professors were expected to be contemptuous of modern media: films, radio and television.¹⁸ Confounding this stereotype, McLuhan had long been fascinated by the vibrancy of popular culture. While teaching in the mid-West of the USA in the late-1930s, he had applied the techniques of literary criticism to the analysis of advertising and comics. Initially, he had believed that exposing the limitations of popular culture would prove the superiority of high culture.¹⁹ During the 1950s, McLuhan slowly abandoned this conventional wisdom and started to discover his own voice. Suspicion of popular culture turned into celebration of new technologies. Nostalgia for the past became hope for the future.

McLuhan's new approach was inspired by the work of Harold Innis. According to this Canadian cultural theorist, the 'movement of information' played the primary role in shaping human history. The invention of a new form of media had always led to the emergence of a new civilisation.²⁰ After he lost faith in cultural snobbery, McLuhan became a fervent advocate of Innis' idiosyncratic form of technological determinism.²¹ Despite being a professor of English literature, he argued that the ideological meaning of cultural products was irrelevant. Instead, it was the technology used to create these products that was determinant. McLuhan believed that Innis had discovered how human behaviour was shaped by the psychological impact of the media. Like Pavlov's dogs, people were much more responsive to the stimulation of their senses than of their imaginations. According to McLuhan, every technology was an 'extension of man' which shaped human perception of the surrounding environment. When a new form of media was introduced, this sensory relationship was always reconfigured. Because this process changed people's behaviour, a new social system would inevitably be created.

'The effects of [media] technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without resistance.'²²

¹⁸ When he was studying at Cambridge University in the mid-1930s, McLuhan had been a follower of the leading English exponent of the modernist form of aesthetic elitism. See Philip Marchand, *Marshall McLuhan*, pages 30-41; and F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment*.

¹⁹ See Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride*; and Philip Marchand, *Marshall McLuhan*, pages 42-110.

²⁰ See Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications*, pages 166-167.

²¹ In the predecessor to *Understanding Media*, McLuhan paid homage to his mentor: '... Harold Innis was the first person to hit upon the *process* of change as implicit in the *forms* of media technology. The present book is a footnote of explanation to his work.' Marshall McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, page 50. Also see Marshall McLuhan's 'Foreward' in Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications*, pages v-xii; Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*; and Philip Marchand, *Marshall McLuhan*, pages 111-135.

²² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 18.

McLuhan summarised his theoretical position in a famous slogan: ‘the medium is the message’.²³ It was not what was said which was important, but with what technology it was said. This insight meant that the history of humanity was understood as a series of ‘break boundaries’ between different media technologies.²⁴ Crucially, McLuhan rejected all political, economic and cultural explanations for the advent of modernity. Instead, the introduction of printing was solely responsible for this profound social transformation. The new media technology had stimulated human senses in completely new ways. In response, people were forced to adopt the psychological attitudes of modernity: individuality, rationality and self-discipline. Just as the uniqueness of each illuminated letter had been replaced by standard pieces of type, the diversity of medieval communities had been supplanted by the homogeneity of industrial societies. Everyone was now the same: equal citizens of the nation-state; anonymous employees of large corporations; and identical consumers in the marketplace.²⁵ The whole of society had been reconstructed in the image of the new media technology. Johann Gutenberg’s print shop had led inexorably to Henry Ford’s factory.²⁶

Since printing had created modern society, McLuhan was convinced that the advent of the electronic media marked the next break boundary in human history. Beginning with telegraphy and radio in the Victorian era, this new technological paradigm had slowly but surely undermined the hegemony of the written word. During the 1950s, the spread of television had led to the electronic media finally supplanting printing as the dominant ‘extension of man’. Although important, this historical moment wasn’t the end of the process of social transformation. Inspired by Wiener’s theory of cybernetics, McLuhan believed that the electronic media was already evolving beyond television. In the near future, broadcasting would fuse with computing and telecommunications into one demiurgic technology.²⁷ What radio and television had begun, the ‘electric global network’ was going to complete.²⁸ By the time that convergence was fully realised, this new media technology would have created a new – and better - social order. Five years before Los Angeles and Stanford universities first

²³ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pages 7-21.

²⁴ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 39.

²⁵ See Marshall McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, pages 155-279; and *Understanding Media*, pages 7-32, 170-178.

²⁶ McLuhan explained that: ‘Printing, a ditto device ... provided the first uniformly repeatable “commodity”, the first assembly line - mass production. ... The private, fixed point of view became possible and literacy conferred the power of detachment, non-involvement.’ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, page 50.

²⁷ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 354-359; and Eric Norden, ‘The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan’, pages 20-21. Also see Norbert Wiener, *The Human Uses of Human Beings*.

²⁸ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 351.

connected their mainframes together, McLuhan had identified the hi-tech saviour of humanity: *the Net*.²⁹

‘Playboy: Isn’t this prediction of an electronically induced world consciousness more mystical than technological?

McLuhan: Yes ... Mysticism is just tomorrow’s science dreamed today.’³⁰

Like its predecessor, this new information technology imposed its own specific psychological outlook upon humanity by stimulating the senses in new ways. Instead of dividing society into isolated individuals as printing had done, the electronic media encouraged communal feelings between people.³¹ This radical shift in mental attitudes was hastened by the transformation of the workplace. In the same way as the printing press had replaced the farm with the factory, the computer provided the prototype for the new methods of fully-automated production. With the spread of radio and television, the manufacture of physical goods was already beginning to lose its predominant role within the economy to the creation of information.³² This meant that the narrowly-focused experts of the industrial age would soon become redundant.³³ In their place, the new economy required a new type of worker: multi-tasking generalists.³⁴ According to McLuhan, the social consequences of these changes within the workplace were obvious. In a very short time, print consciousness - the indifference of rationalism - would be superseded by electronic media consciousness - the empathy of intuition.

Marshall McLuhan was convinced that the emergence of a new economy would be accompanied by a radical transformation of the political system. The printing press had not only created the factory, but also the nation state. If computer-mediated-communications was going to abolish the former, it would also get rid of the latter. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan explained that the combination of the printing press and the wheel had enabled political leaders to extend their control beyond the limits of the tribal community: the ‘explosion of the social’. As these technologies spread across the world, humanity had been divided into the rival nation states of the ‘Gutenberg galaxy’. Internally, the political institutions of modernity had imposed cultural and linguistic homogeneity. Externally, these nation states had emphasised

²⁹ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 346-359; and Eric Norden, ‘The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan’, pages 8-9, 18-19. Also see Internet Society, ‘A Brief History of the Internet’, pages 2-3.

³⁰ Eric Norden, ‘The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan’, page 19.

³¹ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pages 50-51.

³² ‘As automation takes hold, it becomes obvious that *information* is the crucial commodity, and that solid products are merely incidental to information movement.’ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 207.

³³ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 354.

³⁴ ‘In the age of instant information man [and woman] ends his [and her] job of fragmented specialising and assumes the role of information-gathering.’ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 138.

their cultural and linguistic specificity.³⁵ McLuhan believed that - after centuries of dominance - this political system was now in crisis. When printing had dominated society, people had accepted the limitations of representative democracy. But, with the advent of the electronic media, they now wanted more direct participation in political decision-making. Sooner or later, choosing between candidates in infrequent elections would be replaced by on-line voting in daily referendums.³⁶ The new information technologies were beginning to impose a new paradigm: the 'implosion of the social'.³⁷

No one could stop this process. Television was replacing printing and '... Telstar [was] threatening the wheel.'³⁸ When everyone across the world was watching the same programmes, national hatreds and cultural differences would inevitably disappear. The computer was already deepening the social impact of television and satellites. As shown by the Russian-English translation machine on display in the IBM pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair, artificial intelligences would soon be able to remove the linguistic barriers between people.³⁹ The printing press and the wheel had imprisoned individuals inside nation states. Televisions, telephones and computers were now linking the peoples of the world together. The 'electric global network' would create a global political system. The Net was about to unite a divided humanity into one.

'After three thousand years of specialist explosion and of increasing specialism and alienation in the technological extensions of our bodies, our world has become compressional by dramatic reversal. As electricity contracted, the globe is no more than a village. Electric speed in bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness and responsibility to an intense degree.'⁴⁰

This utopian vision of world unity inspired McLuhan's most famous catchphrase: the 'global village'.⁴¹ The technological convergence of television, satellites and computers into the Net would – at one and the same time – create a single social system for the whole of humanity and restore the intimacy of living in a tribal community. The best of the new would be combined with the best of the old. This feel-good prophecy contributed greatly to the huge popularity of *Understanding Media*. Readers were

³⁵ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pages 170-178.

³⁶ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 204; and Eric Norden, 'The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan', pages 18-19.

³⁷ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pages 308-337.

³⁸ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 256.

³⁹ 'Today computers hold out the promise of a means of instant translation of any code or language into any other code or language. The computer, in short, promises by technology a ... condition of universal understanding and unity.' Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 80.

⁴⁰ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, page 5.

⁴¹ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 92-93.

delighted to be told that the rapid pace of technological innovation would lead to peace and prosperity for all. Ironically, in private, McLuhan was much more pessimistic about the prospects for humanity than he admitted in his writings. As a devout Catholic, he believed that there were no technological fixes for the problems of this world.⁴² However, in *Understanding Media*, these caveats were so well hidden that most of McLuhan's readers missed them entirely. Instead they saw what they wanted to see.⁴³ Led by Tom Wolfe, admirers of *Understanding Media* took the most optimistic interpretation of its analysis and turned it into a distinctive ideological position: *McLuhanism*.⁴⁴

According to this new orthodoxy, human history was a succession of cybernetic systems created by feedback from different types of media. This analysis meant that the convergence of television, telecommunications and computing was inevitably leading to the emergence of a new social system. People would soon be living, thinking and working in completely different ways. Above all, the McLuhanites believed that this prophecy of the future explained what was happening in the here-and-now. Five years before it was invented, portents of the Net could already be seen in the present. At the 1964 New York World's Fair. RCA's colour television sets, Telstar communications satellites and IBM's mainframe computers were all harbingers of the marvelous hi-tech society to come. In turn, the full potential of these machines could only be comprehended by envisioning humanity living in a world where the liberating process of technological convergence had been completed. Just like IBM's obsession with artificial intelligence, the advocates of McLuhanism were dedicated to the promotion of their own imaginary future: *the information society*.

⁴² Writing to a priest friend, McLuhan even suggested that the new media might be the work of the Devil: 'Electric information environments being utterly ethereal fosters the illusion of the world as spiritual substance. It is now a reasonable facsimile of the mystical body, a blatant manifestation of the Anti-Christ. After all, the Prince of this World [Satan] is a very great electric engineer.' Marshall McLuhan, 'Letter to Jacques Maritain'.

⁴³ See Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author'.

⁴⁴ 'Wolfe shaped McLuhan like a pop Pygmalion sculpting his statue, creating an image [that] he and his sophisticated, hip, well-heeled, and well-educated audience of the mid-1960s could love.' Donald Theall, *The Virtual Marshall McLuhan*, page 87. For the founding text of McLuhanism, see Tom Wolfe, 'What If He Is Right?'.

The Cold War Left

Understanding Media was a publishing sensation built upon a paradox. A professor of English literature had written a book which had become a best-seller because it told its readers that they should be watching television instead of reading books. Ironically, McLuhan needed the printed word to become the prophet of the imminent demise of print culture. For over three centuries, writing an important book had been the prerequisite for becoming a prominent intellectual. The worth of the thinker was measured by the quality of the text. During the twentieth century, the iconic role of the book within intellectual life was reinforced by the growth of the mass media. McLuhan's own career demonstrated how newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television channels were eager to disseminate new ideas coming out of the universities among the general public and – as in his case – to transform some academics into celebrities. Contrary to the assumptions of McLuhanism, the famous book remained the signifier of the influential intellectual in the age of the electronic media.

In the early-1960s, McLuhan achieved a degree of public recognition beyond that of almost any other academic within the American sphere of influence. *Understanding Media* was one of the rare books which crossed over from the specialist university market into the best-seller lists. Crucially, its worldwide popularity wasn't the result of a short-lived fad. As Tom Wolfe had quickly realised, McLuhan's writings provided the theoretical source material for the construction of the new ideology of McLuhanism. By removing the ambiguities and qualifications from *Understanding Media*, its analysis could be reinterpreted as an enthusiastic celebration of the imaginary future of the information society. Best of all, this prophecy foretold the inevitable triumph of the USA over its Cold War enemies. The American empire was the prototype of the emerging global village.

McLuhanism was a sophisticated example of the specific type of ideology developed for the Cold War struggle. Because the two superpowers had no desire to fight a war with nuclear weapons, the military confrontation between them on the European continent was largely symbolic.⁴⁵ Despite being sold as the struggle against an external enemy, the Cold War was – first and foremost - aimed at internal opponents. Each side needed the threat of attack by its rival as the justification for imposing discipline at home. At the outbreak of the Cold War in 1948, the leader of the Republican opposition in the legislature had urged US president Truman to 'scare the hell out of the American people' with lurid fantasies about ruthless Russian totalitarians plotting to take-over the world.⁴⁶ Admiration for the Red Army's victory over Nazi Germany

⁴⁵ See Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, pages 226-227.

⁴⁶ Arthur Vandenberg in Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, page 151. In a 1950 report which defined US diplomatic and military strategy for the next four decades, the Truman administration admitted to itself that: 'The whole success of the proposed program [for maintaining the USA's control over its sphere of influence] hangs ultimately on the recognition by ... the American people ... that the cold war is in fact

had to be quickly replaced with fear of the ‘Red Menace’ overwhelming Western civilisation. During the 1950s, show trials of Russian spies, public humiliations of political dissidents, political purges of state institutions, civil defence drills and loyalty oaths were all used to terrify the US population into the new ideological orthodoxy.⁴⁷ From sci-fi films about alien invasions to TV shows with secret agents as heroes, American popular culture became dominated by the imagery of Cold War mythology.⁴⁸ In an electoral democracy like the United States, the inculcation of paranoia and patriotism was the most effective method for winning the consent of the many to the hegemony of the few.

‘Everyone realises how praiseworthy it is for a prince to ... be straightforward rather than crafty in his dealings; nonetheless contemporary experiences shows that princes who achieved great things have been those who have ... known how to trick men [and women] with their cunning and who, in the end, have overcome those abiding by honest principles.’⁴⁹

During the economic crisis of the 1930s, an upsurge of radical trade union and political struggles had challenged the social order in the USA. But, in contrast with their European comrades, American working class militants had never been able to establish their own independent mass political party.⁵⁰ This failure to escape from the sectarian ghetto had disastrous consequences in the 1950s. Once the Cold War was underway, it became almost impossible to advocate any form of socialism in America. Already marginalised, the US Left was now tainted by its ideological affinities with the nation’s foreign enemy.⁵¹ Back in the 1920s and 1930s, American radicals - like their European and Asian comrades - had argued passionately over the political implications of the 1917 Russian revolution. While Social Democrats believed that the new regime had betrayed its Marxist principles by abolishing parliamentary democracy, Communists claimed that a one-party dictatorship was the only way to modernise a backward country in the interests of the masses. When Stalin and Trotsky later fell out over the direction of Russia’s economic and foreign policies, the American admirers of the 1917 revolution also split into rival factions of Stalinists and

a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake.’ Departments of State and Defence, ‘NSC-688’, page 27.

⁴⁷ See Frank Donner, *The Un-Americans*; and Joel Kovel, *Red Hunting in the Promised Land*, pages 87-136.

⁴⁸ See Todd Gitlin, ‘Television’s Screens’ and Tom Engelhardt, ‘Ambush at Kamikaze Pass’.

⁴⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, page 99. Also see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, pages 158-173, 229-272; and Perry Anderson, ‘The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci’, pages 18-29.

⁵⁰ See Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, pages 3-7, 55-69; and Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn’t Happen Here*, pages 203-235.

⁵¹ Ever since the 1917 Russian revolution, the American elite had delighted in denouncing their left-wing opponents – including Social Democrats – as traitors to their country. See Joel Kovel, *Red Hunting in the Promised Land*, pages 14-38.

Trotskyists. At the end of the Second World War, the US Left remained bitterly divided over the meaning of socialism. Differences between parties had become symbolised by incompatible interpretations of the same political ideal.⁵²

Within Western Europe, these ideological disputes took place within large and powerful labour movements. No one group could monopolise the theoretical analysis of the Left. Socialism didn't always mean Stalinism and some Communists were fervent anti-Stalinists. In contrast, the American Left was far too weak to protect its own ideological integrity.⁵³ Because Social Democrats and Trotskyists had little political influence in America, the US elite had no problems in adopting the terminology of its Cold War enemy. Socialism was synonymous with Stalinism and all Communists were Stalinists. At the beginning of the 1950s, the American Left found itself ideologically dispossessed. If Russian totalitarianism was the only form of socialism, it was almost impossible to advocate any radical alternative to capitalism in the USA. Even worse, the political language of the Left had become tainted by the rhetoric of Stalinist propaganda. Criticising capitalism literally sounded unpatriotic. After the exposure of Russian spies in the heart of the establishment, the treachery of the Left had been proved beyond doubt for a large section of the US population. All forms of socialism were inherently un-American. For conservatives, the Red Menace provided the long-awaited opportunity for clamping down on trade union and political activism.⁵⁴ Initially, their opponents were thrown into confusion. While some prioritised defending civil liberties at home, most of them were convinced that the first priority of the American Left was to prove its anti-Stalinist credentials in the Cold War confrontation. Since socialism – in all its interpretations - was a dangerous foreign concept, a more patriotic form of radical politics had to be developed. During the long period of conservative rule of 1950s, this aspiration became the rallying-call for a new movement of progressive intellectuals: *the Cold War Left*.

‘... one cannot pretend to be neutral or indifferent in regard to the world struggle. ... Between the West and “ourselves” there is, not a full identity of interest, but a sharing of certain limited goals, the realisation of which requires

⁵² In 1944, a prominent participant in these ideological disputes explained that: ‘... the overriding issue was always the Russian question. ... The attitude towards that revolution is today, as yesterday, and as in the beginning, is the decisive criterion in determining the character of a political group.’ James Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism*, pages 100-101.

⁵³ In 1946, the Socialist Workers Party – the leading Trotskyist group in the USA – only recruited 1,470 activists out of the 145 million citizens of America. Once the Cold War started, its miniscule cadre declined even further reaching a nadir of 399 members by the end of the 1950s. See Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, page 300; and Donald White, *The American Century*, page 52.

⁵⁴ See Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, pages 82-101.

us to depend upon Western power and also to put forward a variety of radical proposals.⁵⁵

The Cold War Left's political project was finally vindicated when Kennedy won the 1960 US presidential elections. For over a decade, its thinkers had been developing a distinctively American form of radicalism. During the 1950s, they lamented that the Republican administration epitomised many of the worst aspects of their nation's culture: philistinism, parochialism and bigotry.⁵⁶ As well as exacerbating social problems at home, these attitudes damaged the US position abroad. Because of the nuclear stalemate in Europe, the most important front in the Cold War was the propaganda battle. Each superpower dedicated massive resources to the task of convincing people across the world of the righteousness of its cause: 'psychological operations'.⁵⁷ In this struggle, the symbol of the racist and narrow-minded American was a propaganda disaster.⁵⁸ What was needed instead was the creation of a more positive and attractive image for the USA. Since conservatives were incapable of fulfilling this task, left-wing intellectuals seized the opportunity to invent new ideologies for the American empire. By taking this key role in the Cold War, they demonstrated that the Republican party was no longer the most effective opponent of Stalinism. Above all, by becoming the public face of the USA overseas, the American Left was able to prove its fitness for national office once again. When Kennedy was elected US president, its intellectuals were ready and waiting to take their places in the new administration.

In the ideological struggle against the Russian enemy, the most important achievement of the Cold War Left was reconciling the irreconcilable: the liberal ideals of the 1776 American revolution with the imperial ambitions of the 1950s American ruling class. Back in the late-eighteenth century, the founders of the United States had believed that the primary purpose of constitutional government was to provide a legal framework for the spontaneous activities of property-owning individuals.⁵⁹ According to the writings of John Locke and his English Whig admirers, this form of social organisation promised a degree of freedom unprecedented in human history.⁶⁰ When

⁵⁵ Irving Howe, *Steady Work*, page 238. Also see Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 311-343.

⁵⁶ See Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, pages 1-23.

⁵⁷ 'After a protracted examination [in the early-1950s], the problem of psychological warfare came to be conceived primarily as the task of making and executing a policy that would dramatise the areas of overlap between the purposes of the United States and those of other nations.' W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, page 165. Also see Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*.

⁵⁸ See Benjamin Mays, 'Race in America'; and Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 190-198.

⁵⁹ See Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, *The Federalist*, pages 13-83; Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, pages 3-17; and David Ericson, *The Shaping of American Liberalism*, pages 10-26.

⁶⁰ See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, pages 374-427.

the American revolutionaries finally won their nation's independence, the principles of liberalism were enshrined in the constitution of the new republic: minimal government, the rule of law and laissez-faire economics.⁶¹ Compared to the absolute monarchies of Europe and Asia, the United States was the homeland of personal liberty. Yet, at the same time, freedom remained circumscribed. Women were second-class citizens.⁶² Some individuals were the property of other individuals. The indigenous population of America was subjected to a ruthless campaign of extermination.⁶³ Liberalism meant freedom for some of the people not for all of the people.

Despite all its faults, this creed served the Americans well as their republic grew from a narrow strip of settlements on the east coast of the continent to the dominant power within its hemisphere.⁶⁴ Liberalism was flexible enough to be reinterpreted by each generation to fit their needs without having to question its philosophical fundamentals. But, by the middle of the twentieth century, circumstances had dramatically changed. However pliable liberalism was as an ideology, its believers were now faced by the intractable problem that two of its central principles - minimal government and laissez-faire economics – had become impossible to put into practice. When the Royal Navy had dominated the world's oceans, the United States had been protected from external aggression.⁶⁵ But, as the British empire disintegrated, America's isolation came to an end. For the first time, the nation needed a large military establishment to protect its interests. By the end of the Second World War, the USA possessed the most powerful army, navy and air force on the planet.⁶⁶ Any hope of military demobilisation after the victory over Germany and Japan disappeared when Russia quickly moved from being an ally into an enemy. In the age of nuclear weapons, even conservatives gave up advocating a return to isolation. Yet, the possession of large and expensive armed forces was incompatible with minimal

⁶¹ Thomas Jefferson - the drafter of the American declaration of independence and third US president - argued that: '... a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain people from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement ...' Thomas Jefferson, 'First Inaugural Address', pages 2-3.

⁶² See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America Volume 2*, pages 222-225.

⁶³ See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America Volume 1*, pages 343-432.

⁶⁴ See Daniel Boorstin, *The National Experience*.

⁶⁵ George Washington – the military leader of the American revolution and first president of the USA – declared that: 'Our detached and distant [geographical] situation invites and enables us to pursue a ... course ... [of] neutrality ... It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any part of the foreign world ...' George Washington, 'Farewell Address 1796', page 9.

⁶⁶ See Donald White, *The American Century*, pages 59-64.

government. The Cold War mobilisation of American military power had forced the abandonment of one of the fundamental principles of liberalism.⁶⁷

The expansion of the US state was also encouraged by the spread of Fordism. Big business was dependent upon big government to oversee and direct the national economy. In the early-nineteenth century, it had been possible for a small caste of politicians, entrepreneurs and financiers to run the country in an intimate and informal manner.⁶⁸ But, now that America was the world's leading economy, unregulated markets and unashamed corruption looked like relics from another age. In their place, both capitalist corporations and the US state were using rational and efficient managerial bureaucracies to administer their affairs.⁶⁹ Personal contacts had become less important than formal hierarchies. Market competition had been supplemented with top-down planning. Like minimal government, laissez-faire economics was an anachronism in Cold War America. Fordism had replaced liberalism.⁷⁰

The bureaucratisation of both business and politics transformed the make-up of the American ruling class. Although political office and inherited wealth still guaranteed membership, new routes into the US elite had opened up. The managers of the huge corporate and state bureaucracies were now among the most important decision-makers in the nation. Generals, admirals and spy chiefs exercised immense power both at home and abroad.⁷¹ For the first time, significant numbers of academics also found themselves admitted into the inner circles of the American elite. During the Second World War, scientists had been mobilised to develop new military technologies. With the invention of the atom bomb, these intellectuals had dramatically demonstrated their vital importance to the modern state. While earlier generations of scientists had

⁶⁷ In the late-1930s, a prophet of American liberalism had warned that: 'The waging of war must be authoritarian and collectivist.' Walter Lippmann, *The Good Society*, pages 91.

⁶⁸ See H. Wayne Morgan, *Unity and Culture*, pages 11-74; and Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, pages 164-185.

⁶⁹ In the early-twentieth century, Max Weber – a German conservative sociologist much admired by the Cold War Left – had explained that: 'Modern officialdom ... is the principle of fixed and official jurisdictional areas, which are generally ordered by ... laws or administrative regulations. ... It does not matter for the character of bureaucracy whether its authority is called 'private' or 'public'. Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, pages 196-197.

⁷⁰ See Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*, pages 215-272; and Alain Lipietz, *Mirages and Miracles*, pages 29-46.

⁷¹ 'There is no longer, on one hand, an economy, and, on the other hand a political order containing a military establishment unimportant to politics and money-making. There is [instead] a political economy linked, in a thousand ways, with military institutions and decisions. ... As each of these domains has coincided with the others, the leading men in each of the three domains of power – the warlords, the corporation chieftains, the political directorate – tend to come together, to form the power elite of America.' C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, pages 7-9.

been haphazardly absorbed into the ruling class, the US government now began systematically recruiting their successors into leadership positions. As well as working on advanced weaponry and teaching their students, prominent academics were expected to manage large organisations, contribute to military planning, participate in fact-finding committees and create Cold War propaganda. The intellectual in the ivory tower had morphed into the scientist-warrior-bureaucrat.⁷²

‘... they are ... leaders of a new type ... academic entrepreneurs, who know how to raise money, and put an organisation together and get results in the outside world.’⁷³

In the opening phases of the Cold War, military spending was concentrated on the development of hi-tech armaments. As the superpower confrontation became institutionalised, increasing amounts of money were also committed to research into the social sciences. Locked into a propaganda struggle with the Russians, the US government recruited intellectuals to boost its psychological operations across the world. Above all, America urgently needed a credible replacement for laissez-faire liberalism. In the same way that natural scientists were employed to invent new weaponry, social scientists now received funding to develop new ideologies.⁷⁴ Even when the Republicans were in power in the 1950s, the US government accepted that the success of this mission depended upon the participation of left-wing intellectuals. Although they were critics of conservatism at home, radicals possessed the knowledge needed to convince sceptical foreigners that the America empire represented progress and modernity.⁷⁵

Back in the 1930s, left-wing intellectuals in the United States had lived an impoverished existence on the margins of society. Except for a lucky few with private incomes, the peak of their career was having a badly—paid job as a journalist, organiser or teacher. Despite these hardships, the American Left had fostered an intellectual renaissance which inspired some of the most innovative theorists, writers and artists of the decade.⁷⁶ This brief moment of creativity was cut short by the outbreak of another world war. Fearful of a Nazi victory, most of the American Left rallied to the anti-fascist cause. Those who had once been excluded now became an integral part of the military effort. After Germany was defeated, this reconciliation with mainstream society was consolidated by the Cold War. Heavily influenced by Trotsky’s critique of totalitarianism, most of the leading intellectuals of the American

⁷² See Stuart Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science*; and André Schiffrin, *The Cold War and the University*.

⁷³ Christopher Rand, *Cambridge U.S.A.* page 4.

⁷⁴ By 1952, the Department of Defence was providing 96% of government funding for social science research. See Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, page 52.

⁷⁵ See Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins*; and Irving Louis Horowitz, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States*, pages 258-278.

⁷⁶ See Daniel Bell, *Sociological Journeys*, pages 119-137; and Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 27-192.

Left had long been anti-Stalinist. When the Cold War began, this hostility towards Russian imperialism convinced many of them that radicals should continue to support American imperialism. No longer content with criticising impotently from the sidelines, these thinkers believed that they should shape US policy at home and abroad in a progressive direction. The Trotskyist Left had grown up and become the Cold War Left.⁷⁷

‘[The] ... men of power ... need a way of perceiving the consequences of what they do if the actions are not to be brutal, stupid, bureaucratic but rather intelligent and humane. The only hope for humane government is through the extensive use of social sciences by government.’⁷⁸

For the American ruling class, these radical intellectuals possessed an invaluable asset: an intimate knowledge of Marxism. At the outbreak of the Cold War, the US government found itself facing an opponent which claimed that its imperial ambitions coincided with progress towards the socialist future.⁷⁹ Because laissez-faire liberalism was an anachronism in the epoch of Fordism, the Americans unexpectedly found themselves at a disadvantage in the propaganda war with the Russians. Despite its economic inferiority, political authoritarianism and military weakness, their Stalinist enemy enjoyed superiority on the all-important ideological battlefield. This moment of crisis for the American empire created an opportunity for disillusioned Social Democrats and repentant Trotskyists to enter into the inner sanctum of the US elite. Just like nuclear physicists during the war against Germany and Japan, they were the only people with the esoteric knowledge which could ensure victory for the United States. Once military money began to pour into social science research, these intellectuals quickly emerged as the gurus of the interdisciplinary teams developing the ideological weapons for psychological operations against the Russian enemy.⁸⁰ The US state had discovered that the most effective way of creating attractive alternatives to Marxism was to employ former Marxists to do the job.

‘The final struggle [for global hegemony] ... will be between the Communists and the ex-Communists.’⁸¹

⁷⁷ See Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 193-225, 267-310; Daniel Bell, *Sociological Journeys*, pages 119-137; and Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 7-56.

⁷⁸ Ithiel de Sola Pool, ‘The Necessity for Social Scientists Doing Research for Governments’, page 111. Also see Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, pages 28-29.

⁷⁹ At the outbreak of the Cold War in 1948, the Stalinist dictator of Bulgaria claimed that: ‘The Great October [1917] Socialist Revolution [in Russia] opened for mankind the way to true democracy, socialism, the road to wiping out the exploitation of man by man.’ Georgi Dimitrov, *Collected Works Volume 3*, page 282.

⁸⁰ See Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*; and Irving Howe, *Steady Work*, pages 315-324.

⁸¹ Ignazio Silone, ‘The Initiates’, page 118.

The Chosen Few

James Burnham was the pioneer of the move by left-wing intellectuals from the margins into the mainstream of US society. During the 1930s, along with James Cannon, Max Schachtman, and C.L.R. James, he had been one of the paramount leaders of the American Trotskyist movement. But, by the end of the 1930s, he had become increasingly sceptical about revolutionary politics. After a bitter theoretical quarrel with Trotsky, he suddenly announced that he was quitting the movement and that 'I [can] no longer regard myself ... as a Marxist.'⁸² Soon afterwards, Burnham published a book which proposed a new theory of social evolution: *The Managerial Revolution*. In this best seller, he argued that Marx's prediction that laissez-faire capitalism would be replaced by a classless socialist society had been disproved by recent history. Although market competition was rapidly disappearing, the workers who formed the majority of the population were no nearer to becoming the masters of society.⁸³ On the contrary, as could be seen not only in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, but also in Fordist America, the managers who directed the state and corporate bureaucracies were becoming the new ruling class.⁸⁴ Using ideas taken from some of the most advanced Marxist theorists of the time, Burnham had challenged the theoretical credibility of Marxism itself.⁸⁵

'The Russian revolution was not a socialist revolution – which, from all the evidence, cannot take place in our time – but a managerial revolution. ... [Marxism-]Leninism ... is not a scientific hypothesis but a great social ideology rationalising the social interests of the new rulers and making them acceptable to the minds of the masses ... the task of the ideology is to give fitting expression to the [Russian managerial] regime of ... purges, tyrannies, privileges and aggressions.'⁸⁶

This intellectual achievement was Burnham's entrance ticket into the top echelons of the US elite. During the Second World War, he began a long career as a consultant and

⁸² James Burnham, 'Letter of Resignation of James Burnham from the Workers' Party', page 257. Also see Leon Trotsky, *In Defence of Marxism*, pages 56-80, 91-119, 232-256; Daniel Kelly, *James Burnham and the Struggle for the World*, pages 63-89; and Sean Matgamna, 'The Russian Revolution and Marxism', pages 88-109.

⁸³ See James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, pages 20-61, 78-87.

⁸⁴ See James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, pages 73-77, 188-245.

⁸⁵ In particular, Burnham's hypothesis drew upon – and generalised to cover all industrial societies – the work of Marxists who argued that the Stalinist bureaucracy had become the new ruling elite in post-revolutionary Russia. See Karl Kautsky, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*; Rudolf Hilferding, 'State Capitalism or Totalitarian State Economy?'; Leon Trotsky, *The Class Nature of the Soviet Union*; Joseph Carter, 'Bureaucratic Collectivism'; and C.L.R. James, 'The USSR is a Fascist State Capitalism'.

⁸⁶ James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, pages 200-201.

propagandist for the American intelligence services.⁸⁷ One of Burnham's most urgent tasks was finding a theoretical underpinning for his managerial analysis which couldn't be traced back to Marxism. Because laissez-faire liberalism was also unusable, he turned to a group of political thinkers whose ideas were popular in fascist Italy: Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels and Vilfredo Pareto.⁸⁸ In the work of these theorists, Burnham found a hard-headed approach which explained why the domination of one class over another was inevitable within human societies. The rise of the managerial elite in the twentieth century could now be interpreted as the modern manifestation of an eternal sociological imperative.⁸⁹ However, because Michels and Pareto had supported fascism, he had to adapt their ideas for an American audience. Emphasising their concept of the 'circulation of elites', Burnham argued that class domination was – paradoxically – the precondition of electoral democracy. The masses might not be able to rule themselves, but they could choose which minority was going to rule over them.⁹⁰ According to Burnham's reinterpretation, elite theorists were no longer apologists for America's fascist enemy in Italy. Instead, as the subtitle of his 1943 book *The Machiavellians* proclaimed, they had become the 'defenders of freedom'.⁹¹

As soon as Germany and Japan were defeated, Burnham launched himself into a campaign to warn his fellow-citizens about the dangers of Russian totalitarianism. Educated in the Trotskyist movement, he had no illusions about the imperialist ambitions of America's erstwhile ally. In *The Struggle for the World* and *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, Burnham advocated an all-out effort by the United States to liberate the peoples of Europe and Asia from Stalinist tyranny.⁹² Being a lapsed Trotskyist, he was well aware that the credibility of this democratic crusade was threatened by Lenin's celebrated dissection of global power politics in *Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism*.⁹³ To meet this challenge, Burnham turned to a

⁸⁷ See Daniel Kelly, *James Burnham and the Struggle for the World*, page 121, 149-150.

⁸⁸ See Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Elite*; Robert Michels, *Political Parties*; and Vilfredo Pareto, *Sociological Writings*.

⁸⁹ See James Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, pages 164-175.

⁹⁰ See James Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, pages 115-118, 175-189; and Vilfredo Pareto, *Sociological Writings*, pages 111-114, 275-278.

⁹¹ Burnham asserted that: '... we must, from a scientific point of view, believe that democratic self-government is ruled out for the future as it has been absent from the past' and – at one and the same time - that: 'Political liberty ... is a safeguard against bureaucratic degeneration, a check on errors and a protection against revolution.' James Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, pages 174, 199.

⁹² See James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, pages 181-199, 242-246; *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, pages 135-148, 272-278.

⁹³ Lenin emphasised that the building of empires was founded upon authoritarianism both at home and abroad: 'Imperialism is ... everywhere the tendency to domination, not freedom. The result is reaction all along the line, whatever the political system, and an extreme intensification of all [social] antagonisms. Particularly acute becomes the yoke of national oppression ...' V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism*, page 142.

theoretical celebration of the civilising mission of world empires: Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Living through the collapse of British imperial power, this English Classics professor had sought to explain his country's dramatic reversal of fortune by making comparisons between his own times and those of the ancient world. According to Toynbee, the history of humanity was comprised of a recurrent succession of predetermined cycles: a 'Universal State' was founded; stability led to stagnation; the old order collapsed into a 'Time of Troubles'; and, completing the process, a new 'Universal State' took over.⁹⁴ Far from being something extraordinary, the ebbing of British hegemony in the early twentieth century could now be understood as the latest iteration of this transcendent temporal rhythm. The crisis engulfing the modern *profit-making* world economy was completely analogous with the fall of the *tribute-extracting* 'world empires' of antiquity.⁹⁵ Luckily, as in the past, the painful period of interregnum between imperial systems would only be temporary. The collapse of one global empire was inevitably followed by the rise of a new - and more advanced - Universal State.⁹⁶

For Burnham, this sweeping theory of human history provided a flattering explanation of the USA's recently acquired mastery over the world system. In the same way that Rome had replaced Greece after a long period of instability, the American empire was the new Universal State emerging victorious from the Time of Troubles unleashed by the fall of the British empire. Above all, this theory implied that the United States was not only the inheritor of the best of European culture, but also the creator of a new and much improved version of 'Western Civilisation'.⁹⁷ Out of Toynbee's writings, Burnham developed a compelling theory of geopolitics for America's ideological struggle in the Cold War. Like Marx's anticipation of the classless society, Lenin's call for the abolition of imperialism was dismissed as a utopian fantasy. Instead, in the same way that voters had to decide between competing political elites in elections, the peoples of the world were forced to choose which Universal State was going to rule over them: democratic America or totalitarian Russia.⁹⁸ In the epoch of the Cold War, there was no other option.

'The reality is that the only alternative to the communist World Empire is an American Empire which will be, if not literally worldwide in formal boundaries, capable of exercising decisive world control.'⁹⁹

⁹⁴ See Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, pages 12-34, 187-208, 555-558.

⁹⁵ Toynbee admitted that: '... if we in our generation were to permit ourselves to judge by the purely subjective criterion of our own feelings about our own age, the best judges would probably declare that our 'time of troubles' has undoubtedly descended upon us.' Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, page 245.

⁹⁶ See Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, pages 318-319.

⁹⁷ See James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, pages 40-55, 134-135, 187-199; *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, pages 44-59.

⁹⁸ See James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, pages 53-55, 140-143, 221; *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, pages 18-19.

⁹⁹ James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, page 182.

Where Burnham led, large sections of the American Left followed. Just like him, many others also found that anti-Stalinism – the politics of their revolutionary youth - was now driving them towards a rapprochement with the US elite. Fearing the victory of Russian totalitarianism, leading left-wing intellectuals felt that it was their duty to rally to the defence of American democracy.¹⁰⁰ As Burnham had discovered, this apostasy had its material rewards. The US military and the CIA – the new intelligence agency set up to fight the Cold War - were providing academic jobs and research money for repentant socialists. Publishing anti-Marxist books could bring fame and fortune to disenchanted revolutionaries. Like Burnham, they might even get the chance to become influential members of the US elite. Crucially, many of them believed that helping themselves could be combined with helping others. As advisors to the ‘Modern Prince’, progressive intellectuals would be able to improve the lives of ordinary people both at home and abroad.¹⁰¹ Ironically, despite being the founder of this new and increasingly influential Cold War Left, Burnham soon became disillusioned with his own creation. By the mid-1950s, he had abandoned any pretence of radicalism and moved to the extreme-right of American conservatism.¹⁰² With Burnham having discredited himself, other thinkers had to take over the role of building upon the ideas with which he had launched the Cold War Left in the early-1940s.

The primary task of these American intellectuals was to continue the theoretical demolition of Marxism. Like Burnham, they faced the conundrum that the materialist conception of history was first proposed by two of the greatest liberal philosophers: Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson. Back in the late-eighteenth century, these Scottish thinkers had realised that human societies were constantly evolving. Living on the borderline between the tribal Highlands and proto-industrial England, the contrast between tradition and modernity had been stark.¹⁰³ Rejecting the prevailing belief in the immutability of human nature, these two philosophers argued that changes in the methods of creating wealth inevitably led to a transformation of the whole social structure. In a flash of brilliance, Adam Smith summarised the process of history as

¹⁰⁰ Burnham explained that: ‘The anti-communism of an individual who has successfully cured himself of communism is usually of a different [and better] order from the anti-communism of one who ... had never even felt its immense attraction to the dishevelled modern soul.’ James Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, page 268.

¹⁰¹ Someone who himself made this transition commented that: ‘In contradistinction to the intellectual as a man of passion, or the intellectual as transcendental intellect, we have the intellectual as the man concerned with relevant policy.’ Daniel Bell, *Sociological Journeys*, page 124. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*; pages 488-493; and Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, pages 5-14, 147-158.

¹⁰² See Daniel Kelly, *James Burnham and the Struggle for the World*, pages 183-237.

¹⁰³ See Christopher Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, pages 1-19, 74-90.

the movement through four successive stages of economic development: hunting herding, agriculture and commerce.¹⁰⁴

In the early-nineteenth century, this analysis became one of the principle theoretical inspirations of the emerging labour movements. While Adam Smith had ended his investigations with the advent of commerce, the European Left began to argue that human evolution would continue onto a further stage: socialism.¹⁰⁵ In their 1848 pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels popularised this new interpretation of the materialist conception of history. Like Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, they also welcomed the destruction of feudalism by capitalism. Yet, at the same time, they were keenly aware of the suffering and exploitation caused by this new economic system. In a masterpiece of prophecy, they looked forward to a time when the majority of the population would use the productive powers of modern technology to create a truly democratic and equalitarian society.

‘The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of modern industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.’¹⁰⁶

During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, Marxism provided a distinctive ideological identity for the increasingly powerful parliamentary socialist parties and industrial trade unions in Europe. Their day-to-day struggles for reforms within capitalism were inevitably leading to the revolutionary moment of socialist emancipation.¹⁰⁷ However, like laissez-faire liberalism, the credibility of this optimistic prophecy was fatally weakened by the Time of Troubles precipitated by the implosion of the British empire. Political and economic turmoil rapidly led to theoretical confusion. During the 1920s and 1930s, bitter divisions inside the

¹⁰⁴ See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations Volume 1*, pages 401-445; *Volume 2*, pages 213-253. Also see Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, pages 74-146; and Christopher Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, pages 91-119.

¹⁰⁵ See Robert Owen, *A New View of Society*; and Henri Saint-Simon, *Selected Writings on Science, Industry and Social Organisation*.

¹⁰⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, page 35. Also see Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, 927-930.

¹⁰⁷ In 1892, the leading theoretician of the German Social Democratic party declared that: ‘The teaching of Marx and Engels gave the class struggle of the proletariat an entirely new character. ... Now the proletariat has a goal toward which it is struggling, which it comes nearer to with every battle. Now all features of the class struggle have meaning, even those that produce no immediately practical results.’ Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, pages 199, 202.

European labour movements were expressed through incompatible interpretations of Marxism. Although Social Democrats and Communists quoted the same authors and the same texts, the two sides drew completely different conclusions from them. As Europe headed towards another catastrophic war, Marxism was – at one and the same time – the theory of parliamentary reformism and that of revolutionary dictatorship.¹⁰⁸

Lacking mass working class parties, these ideological disputes in the United States had taken place outside of mainstream politics. Unlike in Europe, debates about the correct interpretation of Marxism weren't going to decide the fate of the nation. Yet, it was the relative safety offered by this life on the margins which encouraged the theoretical creativity of American left-wing intellectuals. In the late-1930s, New York became the centre of the international Trotskyist movement. With weak party discipline, American thinkers were free to experiment with the most avant-garde versions of historical materialism.¹⁰⁹ When they abandoned their belief in revolutionary politics, this innovatory spirit soon became focused on finding alternatives to Marxism in all of its many varieties.

In *The Managerial Revolution* and *The Machiavellians*, Burnham had begun the task of constructing a specifically American version of the materialist conception of history. Once the Cold War had started, the geopolitical importance of these books became clear. Both superpowers were in agreement on the terminology of their ideological confrontation: Marxism meant Stalinism and all Communists were Stalinists. Instead of arguing over the correct interpretation of socialism like the European Left had done in the 1920s and 1930s, the imperial rivals wanted to champion their own distinctive versions of historical materialism. For Russian propagandists, the problem was how to impose a rigid orthodoxy upon Marx's subversive analysis of human social evolution. In contrast, for their American rivals, the challenge was how to create a credible version of the materialist conception of history without admitting any debt to their Russian opponent's favourite theorist. For the members of the Cold War Left charged with this task, Burnham had shown the way forward. Any theory from any social theorist – including those who were Marxists - could be adapted for the task as long as the final product wasn't explicitly Marxist in inspiration. While Russian intellectuals were forced to work within the confines of the one true faith of Stalinism, American academics were able to explore a multiplicity of different approaches. With nothing theoretically in common except their rejection of Marxism, the thinkers of the Cold War Left became the gurus of a new philosophical position: *un-Marxism*.

¹⁰⁸ See Karl Kautsky, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, and V.I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

¹⁰⁹ One resident during this time reminisced that: '[New York] ... became the most interesting part of the Soviet Union. For it became the one part of that country in which the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky could be openly expressed, and was! And how!' Lionel Abel in Michael Wreszin, *A Rebel in Defence of Tradition*, page 46. Also see Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 101-192.

‘My generation was raised [in the 1930s] in the conviction that the basic motive power in political behaviour is the economic interest of groups ... However much we importance we continue to attach to economic interests ... we are still confronted from time to time with a wide range of behaviour for which the economic interpretation of politics seems to be inadequate or misleading or altogether irrelevant. It is to account for this range of behaviour that we need a different conceptual framework ...’¹¹⁰

For the successors of Burnham, their intellectual mission was aided by the increasing availability of technological tools for carrying out research. Ever since the Second World War, US academics working on military projects had been organised in interdisciplinary teams. What began in the natural sciences soon spread to the social sciences as the universities were mobilised to fight the nation’s new Russian enemy. By the early-1950s, these collaborative ventures had already become the cutting edge of intellectual research in America. As well as weakening traditional academic rivalries, this form of working was also designed to encourage a common methodology across disciplines. Since the practitioners of social science in the USA had long been insecure about its epistemological status, many of them enthusiastically embraced the techniques of their colleagues in the natural sciences.¹¹¹ Just like physicists or chemists, they too would discover the truth by measuring, surveying and quantifying. Above all, they also would use the new technology of computing to make sense of their findings.¹¹² By adopting this methodology, American social scientists claimed that their research had become as ‘value free’ as that of natural scientists. There was nothing ideological about the results of survey data processed through a computer.¹¹³ Yet, at the same time, these academics were also promoting their work as a vital part of the Cold War struggle. Expensive computers and large numbers of data-collectors were needed to verify the different theories of un-Marxism which proved the USA’s superiority over its Russian opponent. In the social science departments of 1950s America, there was nothing more qualitatively ideological than quantitative ‘value free’ research carried on computers.

The disingenuous nature of US academics’ hi-tech impartiality was revealed by their continued devotion to the cult of the famous book. As had happened for centuries, leading intellectuals were still expected to provide the theoretical framework for other

¹¹⁰ Richard Hofstadter, ‘Status Politics’, page 191. Hofstadter used ‘the economic interpretation of politics’ as a euphemism for Marxism.

¹¹¹ See Christopher Rand, *Cambridge U.S.A.*, page 101; and Jamie Cohen-Cole, *Thinking about Thinking in Cold War America*, pages 154-213.

¹¹² In 1960, one group of enthusiastic economic historians praised computers as the ‘power shovels and bulldozers’ of their profession which allowed them to sort and analyse ‘mountains of paper records’. Lance Davis, J.R.T. Hughes and Stanley Reiter, ‘Econometrics’, page 452. Also see Christopher Rand, *Cambridge U.S.A.*, pages 129-158; and Steve Heims, *The Cybernetics Group*, pages 1-13, 164-179, 248-272.

¹¹³ See Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, pages 63-93.

less influential academics to draw conclusions from their empirical research. Although these gurus had to back up their arguments with references from quantitative studies, their books and articles only became essential reading if they were identified with a specific qualitative judgement about human societies.¹¹⁴ In Cold War America, the ultimate goal of any ambitious social scientist was writing a canonical text of un-Marxism. As Burnham had shown, discrediting the ideological authority of the Russian enemy wasn't only a patriotic duty, but also an excellent career move. Among all the difficulties facing US academics working on un-Marxism in the 1950s, the most intractable problem was devising a credible theory for the analysis of economic history. Although quantitative surveys and empirical studies could challenge the minor details in Marx's writings, American social science lacked a replacement for his 'grand narrative' explaining the rise of capitalism.¹¹⁵ Surprisingly, their colleagues in the economics departments were completely incapable of solving this problem. From the late-nineteenth century onwards, liberal economists had concentrated on celebrating the mathematical perfection of the immutable laws of market competition. Ironically, in their enthusiasm to discredit socialist interpretations of Adam Smith's labour theory of value, these ideologues had also abandoned the materialist conception of history pioneered by the founding father of their profession. Because they believed that private enterprise reflected the eternal verities of human nature, anything unfamiliar about life in pre-capitalist societies was dismissed as nothing more than a nascent form of capitalism.¹¹⁶

In 1950s America, this ahistorical interpretation of liberalism remained the orthodoxy within academic economics.¹¹⁷ Yet, when this theory was applied to other social sciences, its spatial and temporal limitations were quickly revealed. In the mid-

¹¹⁴ In the early-1960s, Louis Althusser – the chief philosopher of French Stalinism – idealised this intellectual division of labour as the rational process for producing knowledge. Post-graduate researchers worked on the raw data (Generalities I) which the tenured professors then turned into theories of specific areas of interest (Generalities II) under the guidance of the master thinkers who were responsible for formulating the overall philosophical world-view (Generalities III) of the entire academic discipline. See Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, pages 182-193; *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of Scientists*, 71-165. Also see E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, pages 197-205.

¹¹⁵ According to Jean-François Lyotard, modernity is defined through its dependence upon: '... [the social] science that legitimises itself with reference to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of the Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth.' Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition*, page xxiii.

¹¹⁶ See Rudolf Hilferding, 'Böhm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx'; and Nikolai Bukharin, *Economic Theory of the Leisure Class*.

¹¹⁷ In a chapter entitled 'Central Problems of Every Economic Society', the most popular undergraduate textbook of the period repackages neo-classical price theory as the eternal laws of scarcity and diminishing returns. See Paul Samuelson, *Economics*, pages 14-35.

twentieth century, the majority of the world's population was still living in pre-capitalist societies. Within the most advanced economies, laissez-faire liberalism was no longer the dominant paradigm. For American academics wanting to analyse contemporary social reality, the invention of a patriotic version of historical materialism was a top priority. In *The Managerial Revolution*, Burnham had begun the task of constructing an un-Marxist account of the development of capitalism. But, because his book was focused on the transition from liberalism to Fordism, he didn't formulate a specifically American grand narrative for understanding the emergence and evolution of market economies. Since Burnham had never turned his managerial analysis into an all-encompassing approach, the completion of this theoretical assignment was left to other thinkers of the Cold War Left.

In 1960, Walt Rostow – a prominent academic from the CIA-funded CENIS research centre at MIT – published the book which finally provided the American empire with its own distinctive grand narrative of modernity: *The Stages of Economic Growth*.¹¹⁸ Just like Burnham, this intellectual had also used his Marxist past as an entry into the US elite. As the child of Russian-Jewish émigrés, he had been brought up within a socialist milieu.¹¹⁹ While studying at Yale in the late-1930s, he had 'argued the virtues of communism' to his classmates.¹²⁰ Like many other American leftists, it was the Second World War that transformed this outsider into an insider. After working with the US intelligence services in the anti-fascist struggle, Rostow went on to a successful career as an academic analyst and propagandist for the CIA.¹²¹ During the early-1950s, his research team at MIT produced both classified reports and academic books on the totalitarian systems of Russia and China.¹²² Even though he'd broken with Marxism and was now funded by the CIA, Rostow still identified himself as a leftist. Unlike Burnham who was advocating a return to laissez-faire liberalism by the late-1950s, his research into economic history was inspired by a progressive vision of America as an advanced welfare democracy. Rostow was convinced that the Cold War Left would not only prevail in the struggle against Russian totalitarianism overseas, but also succeed in constructing a fairer and more humane society at home.

¹¹⁸ The Centre for International Studies (CENIS) was set up with CIA money in 1950 and pioneered the use of both interdisciplinary teams and computers in American social science research. See Victor Marchetti and John Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, page 181, 224-225; Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, pages 81-84; and Christopher Rand, *Cambridge U.S.A.*, pages 95-105.

¹¹⁹ See W.W. Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, pages 2-7. Rostow's parents named him after Walt Whitman - the radical American poet.

¹²⁰ See Michael Carson, 'David Dellinger'. Later on, Rostow disingenuously claimed that he was never a Marxist during this period of his life despite all the evidence to the contrary. See W.W. Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, pages 9-26.

¹²¹ See W.W. Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, pages 28-58.

¹²² See W.W. Rostow and Edward Rozek, *The Dynamics of Soviet Society*; W.W. Rostow, *The Prospects for Communist China*; and Bruce Cumings, 'Boundary Displacement', page 172.

‘... the agenda of American domestic life for ... [the 1960s] consists in large part of issues where the problem is ... for the community to act ... as a collectivity on an expanded range of common interests. This is the case with the problem of inflation; with school buildings and teachers’ salaries; with enlarged road building programmes; with the rebuilding of old cities, including the clearance of slums; with public health; with care of the aged.’¹²³

In *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Rostow proposed his own replacement for Adam Smith’s and Karl Marx’s abstract schemas of social development. As in *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Communist Manifesto*, human history was explained as the movement from one economic paradigm to another. First and foremost, this approach allowed Rostow to theorise the existence of traditional societies which existed before capitalism. Unlike his colleagues in the economics departments, he understood that market competition was a historical creation rather than an immutable law of nature.¹²⁴ According to Rostow, this insight explained why the opening phase of the transition from a traditional society to capitalism was a complex and lengthy process. But, once certain socio-psychological preconditions for modernisation were met, then a country would experience the rapid ‘take-off’ of economic growth.¹²⁵ Within a relatively short period, the nation would reach the stage of industrial maturity with factory production, the rule of law, free markets and constitutional government.¹²⁶ Inspired by Burnham, Rostow emphasised that this liberal phase of capitalism wasn’t the culmination of the process of modernisation. In the next stage of growth, a nation evolved into a mass consumption society where the benefits of industrialisation were extended to the majority of the population. Under Fordism, workers became car-owning, suburban-dwelling, TV-watching inhabitants of a democratic and pluralist welfare state.¹²⁷ At the end of the grand narrative of human history, the social programme of the Cold War Left would be realised across the entire world.¹²⁸

As soon it appeared, *The Stages of Economic Growth* became one of the canonical texts of un-Marxism. In the sub-title to his book, Rostow proudly announced that he had written the ‘non-communist manifesto’. For the first time, an American social scientist from the Cold War Left had created a plausible version of the materialist conception of history.¹²⁹ Best of all, Rostow had directly challenged Marx on his own

¹²³ W.W. Rostow, ‘The National Style’, page 131.

¹²⁴ See W.W. Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth*, pages 1-3.

¹²⁵ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 17-58.

¹²⁶ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 58-72.

¹²⁷ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 73-92.

¹²⁸ Rostow believed that his theory was ‘... an injunction to hasten the day when all [of humanity] can share in the choices open in the stage of mass consumption and beyond ...’ W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, page 166.

¹²⁹ In the book’s introduction, Rostow declared that: ‘The stages-of-growth are designed to ... constitute an alternative to Karl Marx’s theory of modern history ...’ W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, page 2. Rostow had begun this task

intellectual territory. In *Capital*, the economic modernisation of England had provided the empirical evidence for Marx's theoretical analysis of the rise of capitalism and, in turn, its eventual replacement by socialism. In his book, Rostow had examined the same history to draw entirely different conclusions. Both of theorists were in agreement that England had pioneered the model of modernity which the rest of world had to follow.¹³⁰ But, while Marx had emphasised class conflicts as the driving force of capitalist development, Rostow concluded that social consensus was the best way to encourage rapid economic growth.¹³¹ Above all, instead of the grand narrative culminating in socialism, he argued that the process of modernity led to welfare Fordism. In the ideological battle of the Cold War, the United States now possessed an attractive alternative to the Stalinist interpretation of Marxism. After a long wait, its propagandists finally had the theoretical proof that the USA was the hope of humanity.

‘American domestic political skills and social habits are accommodated to achieving order and direction from situations of diffused power, where regional, class, cultural and economic interests clash and intertwine in complex patterns. If the [US] nation can evoke and sustain the best in its own interests and experience, it ought to do reasonably well in a world where history is likely to impose a larger version of [American] continental politics as the working basis for international life.’¹³²

For Rostow, his analysis of the economic history of England wasn't just needed to discredit the Russian icon of Marx's *Capital*. By showing how the industrial society had been supplanted by the mass consumption society, he also explained why the British empire had been replaced by the American empire. Minimising the past rivalries between the two countries, Rostow told the story of how nineteenth century English liberalism had gradually and harmoniously evolved into twentieth century US Fordism. Although Europeans were now forced to imitate the Americans, they too would soon be enjoying the benefits of the mass consumption society. Like social consensus at home, international cooperation was rewarded by faster economic growth.¹³³ In contrast with English liberalism, Stalinism was denounced as the pathology of modernisation. By fermenting nationalist revolts in developing countries, its proponents sabotaged the ‘take-off’ of their economies. By promoting class conflicts within industrialising nations, they delayed the advent of the mass

in his first published book. See W.W. Rostow, *British Economy of the Nineteenth Century*.

¹³⁰ See Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, page 90; and W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 33-35.

¹³¹ See W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 65-78.

¹³² W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, page 442.

¹³³ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 87-88; *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 214-217.

consumption society.¹³⁴ By initiating the Cold War, the Russian patrons of this aberrant ideology had forced the nations of the American-led 'Free World' to divert scarce resources from welfare into warfare.¹³⁵ Marxism wasn't simply an obsolete version of the materialist conception of history. Worst of all, this dangerous theory encouraged irrational and violent opposition to modernisation across the globe.¹³⁶

Although Stalinism was in ascendancy in some parts of the world, Rostow was convinced that this was only a temporary phenomenon. In the long run, the inherent logic of modernity would prevail. Every nation had a different history and a different culture, but, sooner or later, all of them would have to follow the path of progress pioneered first by England and then by the United States. The stages of growth were a universal model applicable to the whole of humanity. This meant that Stalinism was a historical dead end. In the grand narrative of progress, all countries were heading towards convergence with the American model of modernity. It was inevitable that – at some point in the future - even Russia and China would evolve into US-style mass consumption societies.¹³⁷ However, Rostow had difficulties in providing an explanation of why all the nations of the world were progressing through the stages of growth to the promised land of welfare Fordism. In both liberalism and Marxism, human subjectivity – in the form of either self-interest or class conflict – was celebrated as the driving force of modernity. In contrast, Rostow described this history as a process without a subject. People might create the conditions for the 'take-off' of industrialisation but, from then on, capitalism developed through the stages of growth according to its own internal rationale.¹³⁸ Computer modelling at CENIS provided scientific proof that the economy operated like an autonomous machine.¹³⁹ The hubris of Stalinism was daring to tamper with this transcendent

¹³⁴ Rostow claimed that '... Communists ... seek to divert ... the energies of the people away from concrete tasks of development into disruptive revolutionary activity, while heightening a sense of disappointment with the pace and the unevenness of economic progress and while forestalling the emergence of an effective national consensus.' W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 100-101.

¹³⁵ W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 141-3, 515-518.

¹³⁶ The penultimate sub-heading of Rostow's key text declared: 'Communism: a disease of the transition'. See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, page 162.

¹³⁷ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 133-137; and *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 423-430.

¹³⁸ While Rostow emphasised the cultural and psychological preconditions for the 'take-off' of an economy, the speed of progress through the stages of growth from then on was determined by the rate of capital investment. See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 36-58; and *The Process of Economic Growth*, pages 274-306.

¹³⁹ A visitor to CENIS noticed that: 'Experts at the centre have ... programmed a computer to simulate "an economy in the early stages of development" and have then watched it tick off changes in response to economic measures – also simulated, of course – that have fed into it.' Christopher Rand, *Cambridge U.S.A.*, page 100.

mechanism. Freedom and prosperity could only be achieved by humanity submitting itself to the impersonal priorities of capitalist modernisation. In Rostow's canonical text, commodity fetishism had become the driving force of social evolution.

‘Proceeding from itself as the active subject ... the direct production process indeed appears determined by its movement as capital, independent of its relation to labour – capital relates to itself as self-increasing value, i.e. ... it relates as well spring of production to itself as product; it relates as creating value to itself as produced value.’¹⁴⁰

As well as promoting America as the prototype of the Fordist future of the rest of the world, *The Stages of Economic Growth* also provided the grand narrative which justified the Cold War Left's rewriting of the history of the United States itself. During the first half of the twentieth century, most intellectuals had believed that the gargantuan bureaucracy of the modern American state had little in common with the minimal government of the early years of the republic. Even if they argued about the reasons, they agreed that there had been a radical break in recent US history.¹⁴¹ In the early-1950s, the Cold War Left set out to refute this accepted wisdom. In their histories, there was no dramatic discontinuity between America's agrarian past and its Fordist present. According to their remix of the 'Whig interpretation of history', the evolution of the USA had been a linear and uninterrupted process from the war of independence to global dominance.¹⁴² Although political, social and economic conditions had changed out of all recognition, the principles of the 1776 revolution still defined modern America.¹⁴³ For the Cold War Left, the primary purpose of this historical analysis wasn't to provide a more accurate interpretation of the facts of American history. Far more important was the ideological role of this 'invented tradition'.¹⁴⁴ By denying that there had been a radical break in recent American history, the Cold War Left was able to argue that there was no incompatibility between liberalism and Fordism. Even if minimal government and laissez-faire economics had disappeared, the ideological foundations of America remained

¹⁴⁰ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, page 746. Also see E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, pages 252-255.

¹⁴¹ For traditionalists in the 1930s, the interventionist economic policies of the Roosevelt administration violated the liberal principles of the 1776 American revolution. See Walter Lippmann, *The Good Society*, pages 19-21, 183-325.

¹⁴² In Victorian England, the academic orthodoxy among historians was: '... to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and produce a story which is ... the glorification of the present.' Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, page v.

¹⁴³ See W.W. Rostow, 'The National Style'; and Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, pages 315-352.

¹⁴⁴ For the European pioneers of this political technique, see Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Invention of Tradition'.

unchanged. Like Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*, the Cold War Left insisted that liberalism meant what they wanted it to mean.¹⁴⁵

For the promoters of un-Marxism, this redefinition was essential. Because Stalinist totalitarianism claimed to be socialist, the Cold War Left didn't want to be identified as socialists. Needing an alternative, they instead described themselves as liberals. By the end of the 1950s, the Cold War Left had succeeded in capturing this political term. Since the eighteenth century, liberalism had meant advocating minimal government and laissez-faire economics. Now, in the mid-twentieth century America, this word defined supporters of the militarised state and welfare Fordism. For the Cold War Left, adopting the moniker of liberalism didn't just demonstrate their anti-Stalinist credentials. It also symbolised their search for an un-Marxist ideology of progressive politics to replace working class forms of socialism. Looking across the Atlantic, many of them believed that they'd found the answer in a faction of the British Labour party: the Fabians. Set up in the late-nineteenth century, this group of intellectuals had always rejected revolutionary politics in favour of cautious reforms. Just like the Cold War Left, they too had simultaneously supported social improvements at home and imperial expansion overseas. Above all, the Fabians provided a model of how progressive intellectuals could influence events by the 'permeation' of the institutions of the establishment. As civil servants, politicians, academics, artists and journalists, their members had acted as an enlightened elite overseeing the building of the British welfare state.¹⁴⁶ In their un-Marxist version of socialism, Fabians were better at organising the lives of workers than the workers were themselves.

'If ... we lose the delusive comfort of belief in that magic giant, the Proletariat, who will dictate, arrange, restore and create, ... we clear the way for the recognition of an elite of intelligent ... people ... and for a study of the method of making this creative element effective in human affairs against the massive oppressiveness of selfishness and unimaginative self-protective conservatism.'¹⁴⁷

During the 1950s, the Cold War Left adapted the Fabians' bureaucratic ideology to create its own distinctively American version of progressive politics. The third way thinkers would also provide guidance on how to introduce reforms at home and to protect the nation's interests abroad. However, unlike the Fabians, the Cold War Left never organised themselves into a formal political faction. Since many of them were

¹⁴⁵ "The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be the master – that's all." Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, page 223. The Cold War Left had already encountered this form of semiotic trickery in their youth. After the 1917 Russian revolution, apologists of the new regime redefined socialism as bureaucratic dictatorship rather than workers' democracy.

¹⁴⁶ See Sidney Webb, 'Introduction to the 1920 Reprint'; and Henry Pelling, *Origins of the Labour Party*.

¹⁴⁷ H.G. Wells, *The Open Conspiracy*, page 56.

former Trotskyists, these intellectuals had an instinctive distrust of party discipline. Instead, they created a diffuse elite linked together by academic institutions, government departments, specialist journals, art galleries, corporate foundations, military projects, political patrons and personal ties.¹⁴⁸ What distinguished them from their fellow Americans wasn't formal membership of a faction, but a shared ideology and a common culture. For most members of the Cold War Left, devotion to the theories of un-Marxism was synonymous with an appreciation of Abstract Expressionist paintings, jazz music, Freudian psychoanalysis, subtitled films, new American novels, International Style architecture, ethnic cuisine and foreign travel. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many intellectuals of the US elite had held insular and conservative attitudes. Fifty years later, the thinkers of the Cold War Left took pride in their cosmopolitan and modern outlook.¹⁴⁹ There was no need for a conspiratorial organisation when cultural sophistication was as efficient as any party card in marking out the members of their movement.

This group cohesion amplified their influence within the US elite. Although each pursued their own individual careers, these intellectuals were united by a common goal: advocating progressive policies for the American empire. By writing canonical texts of un-Marxism, they demonstrated that the adoption of the Cold War Left's social and foreign policies was inevitable. By processing their findings through the latest computers, they proved that their political programme was backed up by impartial research. As Rostow had shown, both their conservative opponents at home and their totalitarian enemies abroad were vainly resisting the onward rush of the grand narrative of human history. Above all, although it might seem that laissez-faire liberalism and Stalinist Marxism had nothing in common, these obsolete ideologies produced the same results when put into practice: social instability and global confrontation. If the American empire wanted to avoid these dangers, the US government would have to implement the progressive policies of the Cold War Left. Under its guidance, the modernisation of the political and economic system at home and abroad would create the conditions for consensus and cooperation across the world.

¹⁴⁸ After his experience of faction fights inside the Fabian Society, H.G. Wells had recommended that intellectuals should organise themselves in 'ad-hoc associations'. See H.G. Wells, *The Open Conspiracy*, pages 110-111; and Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie, *The First Fabians*, pages 317-352.

¹⁴⁹ The group cohesion of the Cold War Left was reinforced by the leading role in the movement of a group of intellectuals who had grown up together in New York's Jewish community. See Daniel Bell, *Sociological Journeys*, pages 118-137; and Irving Howe, *Steady Work*, pages 349-364.

Free Workers in the Affluent Society

In the 1949, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., produced the political manifesto of the new American pragmatism: *The Vital Centre*. Rejecting the two obsolete ideological extremes of tooth-and-claw capitalism and messianic totalitarianism, this prophet of the Cold War Left claimed to have discovered a new third way to modernity. Instead of being polarised into rival camps, political parties were increasingly learning to work with each other. Competing for votes was now combined with finding rational solutions for common problems. Toleration of different viewpoints had created a bipartisan consensus over most major issues.¹⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, Schlesinger argued that America provided the best model for this pluralist political system. The imposition of outdated laissez-faire and Marxist dogmas was impossible under the US constitution. However much Republicans and Democrats might disagree, the two parties had to collaborate when power was divided between the executive and the legislature. In the USA, political decisions were arrived at through informed debate and impartial investigation.¹⁵¹ Now that modern techniques of consensus management were available, the ideologies of class confrontation were no longer relevant. Schlesinger was convinced that this pragmatic dispensation was the modern iteration of the principles of the 1776 revolution. Even though minimal government and laissez-faire economics had been discarded, modern America was still the global champion of liberalism.¹⁵²

‘The spirit of the centre ... [is] the spirit of human decency against the extremes of tyranny. ... The new radicalism, drawing strength from a realistic conception of ... [humanity], dedicates itself to problems as they come, attacking them in terms which ... best secure the freedom and fulfilment of the individual.’¹⁵³

During the 1950s, the Cold War Left transformed the pragmatic politics of the ‘Vital Centre’ into a personal philosophy. Because many of its leading members were disillusioned Marxists, the absence of firm convictions became an important symbol of the movement. Capturing the zeitgeist, Daniel Bell announced in *The End of Ideology* – an essential text of the Cold War Left - that the increasing irrelevance of laissez-faire liberalism and Stalinism marked the imminent disappearance of all forms

¹⁵⁰ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Centre*, pages 11-34, 51-91, 131-156.

¹⁵¹ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Centre*, pages 157-218.

¹⁵² Schlesinger proclaimed that: ‘The new radicalism [of the Cold War Left] ... has returned ... to the historic philosophy of liberalism – to a belief in the integrity of the individual, in the limited state, in due process of law, in empiricism, in gradualism.’ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Centre*, pages 156. For the 1930s intellectual milieu which pioneered this reinterpretation of liberalism, see Judy Kutulas, *The Long War*, pages 32, 36, 112-113.

¹⁵³ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Centre*, page 256.

of political partisanship.¹⁵⁴ Like Burnham and Rostow, this guru had been a fervent socialist in the 1930s and had acquired a detailed knowledge of Marxist theory in the process. When he lost his faith in the workers' revolution, Bell redirected his learning into the advocacy of class compromise as the only credible form of politics in the modern world.¹⁵⁵ Echoing Schlesinger, he argued that social consensus had removed any need for revolutionary intransigence. If the class war was over, then class parties were also obsolete.¹⁵⁶ Now that progressive politics were focused on making pragmatic improvements in public administration, no intelligent person could believe in a redemptive ideology like socialism. Modern left-wing intellectuals were proud of their scepticism about belief systems. Instead of being slaves to a defunct ideology, they decided their position on each issue on its merits.¹⁵⁷ However, as in other examples of 'value free' social science, this un-Marxist celebration of consensual politics and administrative efficiency disguised a deep commitment to the self-interested policies of the American empire. A lack of convictions meant unquestioning loyalty to one side in the superpower confrontation. The Cold War Left had invented a belief system which denied its own existence: the 'ideology of the end of ideology'.¹⁵⁸

In his analysis, Bell applied the Marxist argument of the primacy of economics to explain the triumph of political consensus. Like Burnham and Rostow, he'd also learnt from his socialist teachers that the concentration of ownership under capitalism was an integral part of the system. The economy of small businesses had already evolved into one dominated by large corporations. Like his two peers, Bell also explained why this disappearance of laissez-faire liberalism hadn't led to the socialist revolution. Back in the 1930s, Stalinist state planning may have seemed like an attractive option when the only alternative was mass unemployment and widespread poverty under free market capitalism. Fortunately, in the 1950s, ordinary people were no longer required to give up their personal freedom in return for economic security. As in politics, America had discovered a third way between the two obsolete ideologies of laissez-faire liberalism and Stalinist Marxism. On the one hand, the US state regulated markets to prevent another slump and provided welfare for the poor. On the other

¹⁵⁴ See Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, pages 39-45, 75-94, 275-314, 393-407.

¹⁵⁵ Bell reminisced that: 'I ... joined the Young People's Socialist League in 1932, at the precocious age of thirteen ... in the late-thirties, I was already the veteran of many factional wars [within the American Left].' Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, page 299.

¹⁵⁶ Bell argued that the struggle between capital and labour had been replaced in the USA by the competition between 'new prosperity-created "status groups" ... for recognition and respectability'. Daniel Bell, *The Radical Right*, page 39. Also see Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, pages 103-123.

¹⁵⁷ Bell declared that: 'The "end-of-ideology" school ... is pragmatic ... it assumes the inextricable relation of ends and means; and it believes that values, like empirical proposition, can be tested on the basis of their claims.' Daniel Bell and Henry David Aiken, 'Ideology – a Debate', pages 261-262.

¹⁵⁸ See C. Wright Mills, 'Letter to the New Left'.

hand, the American economy was dominated by private businesses and powered by entrepreneurial innovation. In the USA, capitalists and workers might have their quarrels, but they also collaborated to ensure that everyone got richer.¹⁵⁹ Bell argued that the political consensus was founded upon this economic compromise. Instead of bitterly fighting each other for control over the means of production, the two sides had a mutual interest in improving efficiency and raising output. Partisan ideologies had disappeared because class enemies had become social partners.

‘Few serious minds believe any longer that one can ... through “social engineering” bring about a new utopia of social harmony. ... Few “classic” liberals insist that the State should play no role in the economy ... In the Western world, therefore, there is today a rough consensus among intellectuals on political issues: the acceptance of a Welfare State; the desirability of decentralised power; a system of mixed economy and of political pluralism.’¹⁶⁰

Although reconciled with capitalism, the Cold War Left contemptuously dismissed the theoretical presuppositions of liberal economics as anachronistic. During the 1930s, the old dogmas of self-correcting markets had been discredited by the worst slump in American history. This economic disaster had driven the founders of the movement to embrace revolutionary socialism in their youth. Even those who were anti-Stalinists had argued that the only alternative to the failed system of market competition between private enterprises was state planning of publicly owned monopolies.¹⁶¹ When they finally realised that this panacea threatened the life and liberty of every citizen, these intellectuals were left without an economic model. Looking again at the New Deal policies of US president Roosevelt during the 1930s, they discovered that state intervention could be used to manage the business cycle and improve workers’ living standards. From its earliest days, the Cold War Left had championed this pragmatic solution as the third way beyond market instability and planned tyranny. During 1950s, their programme of class compromise was vindicated by the rapid growth of the US economy. Prosperity had become a permanent feature of American life.¹⁶²

What the Cold War Left found difficult to explain was how the economics of welfare Fordism operated. Back in the 1930s, Michael Kalecki – a Polish Marxist – had written a pioneering analysis of the new policies of state intervention which had been introduced to counter the disastrous impact of the slump. This theorist argued that - as capitalism had expanded and concentrated - rising production hadn’t been matched

¹⁵⁹ See Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, pages 75-94, 211-226.

¹⁶⁰ Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, pages 402-403.

¹⁶¹ In 1941, the leader of the main American Trotskyist group argued that: ‘[War and unemployment] ... are the forces that are driving [US] society to ... the nationalisation of industry, the elimination of competition and the abolition of private ownership.’ James Cannon, *Socialism on Trial*, page 14.

¹⁶² See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 75-81, 154-155; *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 8-12, 515-529.

by increasing consumption. Since market competition was incapable of regulating this process, the state had been forced to provide the 'effective demand' whose absence had precipitated the catastrophic crisis.¹⁶³ Luckily for the Cold War Left, John Maynard Keynes – an English mandarin – had been working along similar lines on his own explanation of this phenomenon. In an impressive piece of scholasticism, he managed to preserve the appearance of orthodoxy while abandoning the substance of liberal economics.¹⁶⁴ By quoting Keynes rather than Kalecki, the Cold War Left was able to analyse Fordism without any danger of contamination by Marxism. While macro-economics explained the need for state intervention, micro-economics celebrated the wonders of market competition.¹⁶⁵ Although theoretically inconsistent, this approach was ideologically comforting. The Cold War Left now had an un-Marxist theory to describe the innovative economics of Fordism.¹⁶⁶

During the 1950s, John Galbraith – a Canadian economist who had worked for the Roosevelt administration – published the key text of American Keynesian analysis: *The Affluent Society*. Echoing Rostow and Bell, this academic argued that the United States had combined the best elements of both market competition and state intervention into a new system: planned capitalism.¹⁶⁷ Under government supervision, a virtuous circle had been created between mass production and mass consumption. With more money to spend, workers were buying more goods and services. With profits rising, capitalists were paying higher dividends, increasing wages and creating employment. As a result, ordinary Americans were experiencing an unprecedented rise in their standard of living. For the first time, the majority of the population who produced wealth was also consuming it.¹⁶⁸

Like Rostow, Galbraith was convinced that 1950s America was pioneering the economic model for the rest of world. In the same way as the English had launched the process of industrialisation, the United States was creating the first consumer society in human history. In addition, despite the opposition of laissez-faire ideologues, the federal government was steadily improving the scope and extent of its welfare

¹⁶³ See Michael Kalecki, *The Last Phase in the Transformation of Capitalism*, pages 65-97. For the antecedents of this analysis, see J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, pages 71-93; and Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, pages 120-170.

¹⁶⁴ See J.M. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, pages 3-34, 245-254, 372-384.

¹⁶⁵ This doublethink underpins the popular American undergraduate primer of the period: Paul Samuelson, *Economics*.

¹⁶⁶ Rostow explained that: 'It is no accident that Keynes felt himself consciously an enemy of Marx and believed that his doctrine might open the way to relatively steady full employment without large direct interference of the state in economic life and in the economic decisions of individuals. This remains the aspirations of the great majority of the economists and citizens of the non-Communist world.' W.W. Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth*, pages 224-225.

¹⁶⁷ See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, pages 91-137.

¹⁶⁸ See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, pages 138-164.

services.¹⁶⁹ According to Galbraith, this social transformation had been made possible by the increasing cooperation of big business and big government. With the aid of Keynesian theory and computer modelling, the ‘technostructure’ of private and public bureaucracies was now able to plan for a continual expansion in output without – as had happened in the past - being destabilised by the cycle of boom and bust. Just like an IBM mainframe, the Fordist economy was a programmable machine.¹⁷⁰ According to its admirers, the new prosperity of America would inevitably spread beyond its shores. Sooner or later, every country would imitate the US system of planned capitalism which ensured that ordinary people not only owned family homes, motor cars and television sets, but also were provided with universal education, high-quality health care and generous pensions. Welfare Fordism meant the good life for everyone: the ‘affluent society’.

‘The [Marxist] revolution was to be catalysed by the capitalist crisis – the apocalyptic depression which would bring the already attenuated structure down in ruins. But the industrial system has, as an integral requirement, an arrangement for regulating aggregate demand which, while permitting it to plan, gives promise of preventing or mitigating depression. ... Everything on which the revolution seemed to depend, and even the revolution itself, has disintegrated.’¹⁷¹

In American Cold War propaganda, the lesson of Keynesian economics was clear. Stalinism had promised to build a socialist paradise, but the Russian people remained impoverished as their leaders concentrated resources on heavy industry and the arms race. In contrast, planned capitalism in the USA had created unprecedented prosperity not just for employers, but also, more importantly, for workers as well. According to Rostow’s calculations, this difference in living standards proved that America was thirty to forty years ahead of its superpower rival in economic development.¹⁷² Instead of being duped by backward Marxist ideology, the nations of the world should copy the up-to-date American model of political consensus and economic compromise. Eventually, even Russia would have to abandon totalitarianism so it

¹⁶⁹ Demonstrating his Cold War Left credentials, Galbraith criticised the 1950s Republican administration for failing to preserve the ‘balance’ between the private and public sectors because of its reluctance to increase taxes to pay for a faster expansion in publicly provided education, health care and pensions. See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, pages 221-257.

¹⁷⁰ See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, pages 117-134, 184-237. Galbraith blamed the reluctance of US politicians and business leaders to regulate the economy for the financial speculation which precipitated the 1930s depression. See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Great Crash 1929*, pages 51-6, 186-208.

¹⁷¹ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, page 294. Galbraith derived this interpretation of Marx from Russian economists of the 1920s and 1930s. See Richard Day, *The ‘Crisis’ and the ‘Crash’*.

¹⁷² See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 93-105; *The Process of Economic Growth*, pages 317-325.

could evolve into a US-style consumer society.¹⁷³ However, the feel-good message of this propaganda campaign was tarnished by the widespread realisation that the Cold War itself was the foundation of economic prosperity in the United States. Back in the 1930s, most American employers had bitterly opposed the New Deal's reflationary policies of trade union recognition, public works schemes, banking controls and regulating competition. Even the worst slump in US history hadn't dented their faith in the dogmas of laissez-faire liberalism.

By the 1950s, the Right's attitudes towards state regulation of the economy had completely changed.¹⁷⁴ Unlike welfare measures, military spending on the Cold War created effective demand without weakening the power of capital over labour. When orders were slack, buying more weapons and increasing the size of the armed forces was the business-friendly method of managing the economic cycle. For companies like IBM, the advantages of military orders were obvious. Taxpayers' money had subsidised its rise to dominance over the computer industry. The direct benefits to defence contractors also led to the stimulation of the wider economy. The makers of weapons were purchasers of goods and services from other sectors. As part of the struggle against the Red Menace, conservatives now even accepted that the US state should build motorways, finance education and subsidise academic research.¹⁷⁵ In earlier times, the ruinous costs of fighting foreign wars had inevitably led to cutbacks at home. However, as Kalecki had explained, the situation under Fordism was very different. In Cold War USA, the 'permanent arms economy' was providing both large profits for capital and high wages for labour.¹⁷⁶

During the 1950s, this military-funded economic compromise underpinned the growing influence of the Vital Centre within American society. When Kennedy became US president in 1961, the long march of this movement through the institutions was finally over. Emerging from obscure Trotskyist sects in the early-1940s, the Cold War Left had spent two decades reaching the pinnacles of power. Former revolutionary socialists like Rostow and Bell were now the confidants of the

¹⁷³ See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 423-425.

¹⁷⁴ Bell pointed out that the election of Eisenhower as US president in 1952 hadn't lead to a revival of laissez-faire liberalism: 'The international system imposes the same imperatives on Republicans as on Democrats, and the semi-war that is made necessary by it inevitably casts government in the role of controller and dominator of the economy.' Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, page 94.

¹⁷⁵ From the 1950s onwards, the US defence budget acted as ideological camouflage for state planning of key sectors of the economy. See Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations*, pages 61-62.

¹⁷⁶ Rostow observed that: 'An America ... with the welfare state at high and rising levels of income and an America which was the fortress base in an intense Cold War ... has made, indeed, a curious mix.' W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, page 450. Also see Michael Kalecki, *The Last Phase in the Transformation of Capitalism*, pages 65-97; and Michael Kidron, *Western Capitalism Since the War*, pages 48-64.

rulers of the world's dominant empire. More than anything else, the Cold War Left had been responsible for defining the ideological style of this new Democratic administration. During the long period of conservative hegemony, its thinkers had devoted themselves to developing a patriotic and pragmatic form of progressive politics. Rejecting both laissez-faire liberalism and totalitarian Stalinism, they had discovered the third way to modernity: political consensus, economic compromise and efficient administration. Imitating the Fabians, the Cold War Left had successfully undertaken the 'permeation' of the institutions of the US elite. Even under the Republicans, its members had become prominent academics, public officials, military strategists and geopolitical experts. In particular, this elite of left-wing intellectuals associated with the Democratic party had demonstrated their loyalty and energy by taking charge of the propaganda struggle against the Russian enemy. They were the only people who were capable of inventing the un-Marxist grand narrative of history which proved that the American present was the world's future. After a long apprenticeship, the Cold War Left was ready to take office. Under its tutelage, America would become a truly modern and progressive empire.

'We who now bear a measure of responsibility in ... [the Democratic administration] are building on all those who have gone before. ... We are the trustees of the principles of national independence and human freedom all over the globe, and ... this is a proud and natural responsibility.'¹⁷⁷

At the head of the new administration was the charismatic figure of John F. Kennedy. This skilful politician personified many of the virtues prized by the Cold War Left: youthful energy, cultural sophistication and social tolerance. While his Republican predecessor had been formal and traditional, the new US president cultivated his image as an open-minded man of the modern world.¹⁷⁸ For the Cold War Left, the new president had another major asset: his distinguished military record. Always anxious to prove their patriotism, they were delighted to have a war hero as their leader. Best of all, Kennedy was a master of the new technology of television. Many pundits at the time believed that he had won the presidential election because of his superb performance during the televised debates with his opponent. With a glamorous wife and photogenic children, Kennedy epitomised the political leader as media celebrity.¹⁷⁹

Not surprisingly, when the new government was formed, the authors of the canonical texts of un-Marxism were rewarded with important jobs. Rostow became a presidential advisor. Schlesinger was an intimate of the Kennedy family. Galbraith was appointed US ambassador to India. Alongside these gurus, many of their

¹⁷⁷ W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, page 53.

¹⁷⁸ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 113-117, 725-729, 739-749; and Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 274-275.

¹⁷⁹ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 69, 885-87, 664-671, 715-716; Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 127-128, 225, 285-286 335-336, 479; and Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire*, pages 160-170.

followers were also recruited into the new administration.¹⁸⁰ Under the American system, a change of regime required the appointment of party loyalists to direct the government bureaucracy. As recommended by the Cold War Left, the Kennedy administration also fostered political consensus by giving top posts to people who weren't card-carrying Democrats. The prize recruit of the new government was Robert McNamara: the managing director of the Ford motor company. During the presidential campaign, the two candidates had competed over who was more determined to achieve military superiority over the Russian enemy. Once in office, Kennedy neutralised this controversy by putting McNamara in charge of the Department of Defence. Run by 'an IBM machine on legs', managerial efficiency rather than ideological fervour would determine the priorities of the US military.¹⁸¹

The resilience of the new Democratic administration was demonstrated when Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Apart from a few minor changes, Lyndon Johnson – his successor as US president – kept the government team intact.¹⁸² Although their new leader lacked Kennedy's modern image, the Cold War Left was equally enthusiastic about Johnson. During his five years in power, his administration dedicated itself to the implementation of the movement's twin-pronged programme: social reform at home and imperial expansion overseas. At Johnson's side at the most critical moments of his time in office was his personal choice as National Security Advisor: Walt Rostow.¹⁸³ This former Marxist had been given his chance to prove that the American empire could act as a modern and progressive force in the world.

'It is out of the intermediate and higher ranges of abstraction that new ways of looking at things emerge which embrace but transcend what is already known; and it is from new ways of looking at things that new paths of action emerge. To help define these paths, the intellectual must be prepared to enter ... into the world of operational choice.'¹⁸⁴

Both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were convinced that state intervention could deliver large increases in the production of both 'guns and butter' if the correct economic policies were adopted. Under their Republican predecessor, a respect for the shibboleths of laissez-faire liberalism had constrained the ambitions of the US

¹⁸⁰ A contemporary witness remembered that after Kennedy's election victory that: '... the word went out quickly around the Eastern seacoast, at the universities and in the political clubs, that the best men were going to Washington. Things were going to be done and it would be great fun; the challenge awaited and these men did not doubt their ability to meet this challenge.' David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, page 38. Also see Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 150-152; and Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 308-309.

¹⁸¹ See Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, pages 13-25; Errol Morris, *The Fog of War*; and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 131-133.

¹⁸² See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 15-26.

¹⁸³ See David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 635-636.

¹⁸⁴ W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, page 490.

government. After the Cold War Left came to power, these inhibitions disappeared. As Rostow and Galbraith had demonstrated in their celebrated books, the US state had a duty to ensure that effective demand kept pace with the growth in the productive potential of the economy. Determined to win support from both sides of the class divide, the new Democrat administration shared its budgetary munificence between capital and labour. For benefit of big business, the military budget was significantly increased. McNamara's purchases of hi-tech weaponry were soon filling the order books of the defence contractors. For those companies which hadn't directly gained from this stimulation of the private sector, the Democrats also reduced taxes on profits and dividends. Under the Cold War Left, the business community would have no reason to complain.

At the same time, the Kennedy administration also began a rapid expansion in welfare spending to raise the living standards of those people who had missed out on the economic boom of the previous decade: the 'war on poverty'. After he won the 1964 presidential election, Johnson built upon this initiative with an ambitious programme of improvements in public health care, pension provision, social housing and environmental protection.¹⁸⁵ Because its up-to-date Keynesian policies were successful in boosting US economic growth rates, the Cold War Left now had the resources to realise its long-term social goals. As poverty was abolished and prosperity was extended to all, America was becoming the most advanced welfare democracy on the planet. In 1964, US president Johnson prophesied to a university audience that:

'The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use ... [our] wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilisation ... we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society. ... It is a place where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but [also] the desire for beauty and the hunger for community.'¹⁸⁶

In the early-1960s, the Cold War Left acted to remove the most intractable problem in America: legalised racism. Despite its self-image as the bastion of democracy, the United States was still not a fully-fledged democracy when Kennedy was elected president. In the south of the country, millions of its African-American citizens were denied the right to vote. For the Cold War Left, the failure of the previous Republican administration to deal decisively with this outrage wasn't only morally reprehensible, but also strategically dangerous. In the propaganda battle with the Russian enemy, television coverage of racist police beating unarmed demonstrators in the US South

¹⁸⁵ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 136-150, 313-335; Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 575-606; and Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 27-42, 82-113, 156-306.

¹⁸⁶ Lyndon Johnson, 'Remarks at the University of Michigan', pages 1-2.

severely weakened the American cause.¹⁸⁷ Yet, once they were in power, the new Democrat government also initially hesitated. Political compromise was difficult to achieve when the most vocal opponents of universal suffrage were the leaders of the southern wing of its own party. As the crisis deepened, a new generation of young activists emerged to challenge the pragmatic and consensual strategy of the Cold War Left.¹⁸⁸ The overwhelming victory of Johnson in the 1964 presidential and legislative elections headed off this split within the Democratic party. A century after the abolition of slavery, the US government finally extended the franchise to all Americans. In its Vital Centre redefinition, liberalism really did mean freedom for all of the people.¹⁸⁹

What had begun an international embarrassment had ended as a Cold War propaganda victory. Contrary to the predictions of its critics, America had demonstrated the capacity to reform itself. The excluded had been included. In the battle to win over global public opinion, the granting of the vote to all Americans contrasted strongly with the absence of any form of electoral democracy in Russia. Under the leadership of the Cold War Left, the USA was remedying its last remaining political and economic problems. The American system had proved itself to be the social model for the whole of humanity. Nowhere else did ordinary people enjoy so much freedom and prosperity. No other nation was so successful in turning esoteric new technologies into ubiquitous household items. There could be no doubt which superpower represented progress and modernity. The long and arduous process of social evolution had culminated in the most advanced and sophisticated civilisation in human history: the Great Society of the USA.

¹⁸⁷ A black supporter of the Cold War Left argued that: ‘The American race problem cannot exist in isolation. ... The way that the United States handles Negroes and other minorities here makes its impact upon the coloured peoples of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. And it does not help us in Europe and South America. It makes it difficult for the peoples in these lands to trust us when we expound our democratic principles.’ Benjamin Mays, ‘Race in America’, pages 68. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 64-67.

¹⁸⁸ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 924-977; and Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 380-388, 492-495.

¹⁸⁹ See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 43-81.

The Prophets of Post-Industrialism

By the early-1960s, the Cold War Left had acquired a pivotal role within the US elite. The movement provided ideological leadership for the propaganda struggle against the Russian enemy. Its intellectuals had created a sophisticated American version of historical materialism. Their theoretical abstractions had become indispensable for transforming quantitative data into qualitative conclusions. By subcontracting the task of thinking about society to the Cold War Left, the US elite had allowed this movement to exert a decisive influence over the political agenda. From the early-1950s onwards, this group of intellectuals had promoted their programme of political consensus, economic compromise and efficient administration by producing evidence that these principles were already shaping American society. By the time that Kennedy became US president, the Cold War Left's research projects had helped to restore the intellectual hegemony of the Democratic party. Impartial social science had proved the case for introducing a wide range of political, social and economic reforms. Above all, American voters could now have confidence that the policies of the US government had been devised by the best minds in the country.

With the Democrats in power, the Cold War Left believed that the remaining serious domestic problems in their country were in the process of being resolved. Soon every American would have the vote and no one would be living in poverty. Compared to its Russian opponent, the United States already had the more advanced social system. After the Democrats' reforms were implemented, it would become obvious to the whole world that only America could create the good society. Yet, at same time, the Cold War Left realised that this achievement wouldn't deliver the decisive victory in the global propaganda struggle. It was relatively easy to prove that the American present was superior to the Russian present. What was much more difficult was prevailing in the ideological contest over which superpower owned the future. Unfortunately for the Cold War Left, its programme only offered improvements to the existing system of welfare Fordism. In contrast, Stalinist propagandists claimed that the Russian regime was building the entirely new civilisation of socialism. From the 1917 revolution onwards, its apologists had argued that any imperfections in the Communist system – such as mass murder and class exploitation – were temporary expedients adopted to speed up the arrival of the earthly paradise.¹⁹⁰ However inferior the Russian present might be compared to the American present, Stalinism still had ownership of the future. Spatial comparisons had been trumped by temporal prophecies.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ In 1934, Stalin justified his brutal rule by producing statistics of large rises in industrial output which he claimed measured Russia's rapid progress towards the socialist utopia. See Joseph Stalin, 'Report to the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B) on the Work of the Central Committee'. For the theoretical inspiration for this assertion, see Nikolai Bukharin, *Economics of the Transformation Period*.

¹⁹¹ See Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, pages 2-39.

As the leading theorists of the US elite, the Cold War Left had the responsibility for neutralising this ideological threat. Having been Trotskyists in their youth, the founders of the movement understood the emotional appeal of the promise of the socialist future. Emphasising the superiority of the American present alone would not be enough to discredit the libertarian prophecies of their nation's enemies. They knew that the pragmatism of the third way only offered a timid substitute for Marx's visionary synthesis of liberalism and socialism. Instead of cherry-picking from two incompatible ideologies to propose a better present, he explained that modern capitalism was an unavoidable historical epoch which was leading towards proletarian emancipation. Far from being the opposite of socialism, liberalism was its necessary precondition. Free trade between nations was uniting the workers of the world.¹⁹² The joint-stock company was pioneering the collective ownership of capital.¹⁹³ The extension of the franchise created the conditions for socialists to intervene within the political process.¹⁹⁴ Cuts in the working week were freeing time for people to learn how to run their own lives.¹⁹⁵ After a long incubation inside capitalism, socialism would finally emerge as a fully-fledged and distinct civilisation. Only then would bourgeois liberalism have fulfilled its historical mission: the triumph of proletarian communism.¹⁹⁶

‘The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production which has flourished alongside and under it. The centralisation of capital and the socialisation of labour reach a point when they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. ... The death knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.’¹⁹⁷

Back in the 1870s, Karl Marx had been convinced that American workers would be at the forefront of the international struggle to create the new society of freedom, equality and prosperity. As the most liberal nation on earth, the USA must also be the furthest advanced along the path towards socialism.¹⁹⁸ Many decades later, the gurus

¹⁹² See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, pages 12-34.

¹⁹³ See Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, pages 567-573.

¹⁹⁴ See Karl Marx, ‘The Chartists’; ‘The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers’ Party’.

¹⁹⁵ See Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, pages 389-416; *Grundrisse*, pages 707-711.

¹⁹⁶ Meghnad Desai emphasised that Marx was the prophet of ‘Socialism *beyond* Capitalism’ in contrast with the self-styled Marxists of the twentieth century who were either Social Democrats advocating ‘Socialism *inside* Capitalism’ or Stalinists championing ‘Socialism *outside* Capitalism’. See Meghnad Desai, *Marx's Revenge*, pages 144-147.

¹⁹⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, page 929.

¹⁹⁸ Arguing in favour of moving the headquarters of the global socialist movement from London to New York, Karl Marx explained that: ‘... America is becoming the world of the workers *par excellence*; ... every year half a million men, workers emigrate to the other continent ... the International [Working Men's Association] must vigorously

of the Cold War Left resurrected Marx's analysis to prove that the United States – not Russia - was the paradise of the proletariat. In the heartland of capitalism, the overwhelming majority of workers enjoyed the benefits of full employment, high wages, welfare services and consumer luxuries. Ironically, communism was much closer to being realised in Fordist America than in Stalinist Russia.¹⁹⁹ Although they enjoyed this political paradox among themselves, the Cold War Left's intellectuals had no intention of publicly disputing the Stalinists' ideological monopoly over Marxism. On the contrary, they had invented their own versions of the materialist conception of history to refute this theory in all of its competing interpretations.

More than anything else, the Cold War Left's grand narrative was designed to prove that the class struggle was now obsolete. In the laissez-faire past, US workers had been forced to fight for political emancipation and economic justice against fierce conservative opposition. But, in modern America, demanding democracy and prosperity for all was no longer controversial. Under welfare Fordism, social conflicts had become disputes over group status rather than fights for class power.²⁰⁰ According to the Cold War Left, the decline of economic liberalism was also responsible for another welcome paradox: the growth of political liberalism. Unlike Russian totalitarianism, American democracy had been founded upon the principles of free speech, social tolerance and ideological pluralism. Yet, for most of US history, the exercise of these rights had been restricted to a minority of the population. Fortunately, the advent of welfare Fordism had finally created the conditions for every American to enjoy the benefits of these constitutional principles.²⁰¹

In the same way that it had appropriated useful concepts from socialism, the Cold War Left had also separated the virtues of political liberalism from the vices of laissez-faire economics. However impressive, this theoretical legerdemain still remained trapped within a perpetual present. Welfare Fordism could be improved, but never superseded. In this form, the ideology of the Vital Centre was incapable of depriving the Russian enemy of ownership of the future. If the geopolitical threat posed by the Marxist prophecy of communism was to be overcome, the leaders of the USA had to commit the resources and skills needed to construct a plausible alternative vision of the shape of things to come. After the Democrats came to power, the Cold War Left was finally able to raise the money for this priority project. In 1964, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences was given a large grant to set up an interdisciplinary team of experts dedicated to inventing the un-Marxist vision of the non-communist future: *The Commission on the Year 2000*.²⁰²

take root in that soil where the worker predominates ...' Institute of Marxism-Leninism, *The Hague Conference of the First International*, page 35.

¹⁹⁹ See W.W. Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth*, pages 328-331.

²⁰⁰ See Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, pages 103-123.

²⁰¹ See W.W. Rostow, 'The National Style', pages 272-295.

²⁰² For the background history of the project, see Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 1-13.

Daniel Bell – the intellectual doyen of the Cold War Left - was placed in charge of this top-level assignment. Like the chair, the majority of the commission's 42 members were also recruited from elite universities. Following the established model in military-sponsored research, the project drew upon a wide range of expertise. Among its members were not only economists, sociologists and political scientists, but also geographers, biologists and even a professor of Biblical Studies. Joining these academics on the project team were colleagues from the Democratic administration, career civil servants, corporate scientists and the sages of military think-tanks.²⁰³ By recruiting intellectuals representing different disciplines and interest groups, the sponsors of the Bell commission had ensured that every section of the US elite would be involved in inventing the new imaginary future of the American empire.

Between 1964 and 1968, these Cold War Left experts wrote papers and participated in seminars on a common theme: what would the United States look like in thirty to forty years time? Sharing their knowledge and debating their hypotheses, they slowly but surely reached a consensus on their predictions for the year 2000. As in the New York World's Fair, technological innovation provided the starting-point for the commission's enquiry into the shape of things to come. What existed in mid-1960s could be easily extrapolated forward to the first decade of the next century. Contemporary technologies were already being promoted as imaginary futures: NASA rockets, atomic power stations and IBM mainframes were the precursors of space tourism, unmetered electricity and artificial intelligence. Following the same approach, Herman Kahn and a colleague from the military-funded Hudson Institute compiled an audacious list of 100 imminent inventions for the Bell commission.²⁰⁴ Over the next forty years, American scientists would not only develop space liners, free energy and sentient computers, but also discover – among other things - how to control the weather, put human beings into hibernation, make holographic movies, programme people's dreams, build individual flying platforms and use nuclear bombs for construction projects. Looking at the impressive achievements of the previous twenty years, the Bell commission was convinced that these technological fantasies would become everyday realities over the next four decades.²⁰⁵

‘... the world of the year 2000 has already arrived, for the decisions which we make now, in the way we shape our environment and thus sketch the lines of constraints, the future is committed. ... The future is not an overarching leap into the distance; it begins in the present.’²⁰⁶

²⁰³ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 382-386.

²⁰⁴ Kahn first achieved notoriety in the 1950s for his work at the RAND think-tank which claimed that America could win a nuclear war against Russia. By the 1960s, ‘... he was considered [in the USA to be] “one of the world's greatest intellects”, “a mental mutation” possessing “an incredibly high, stratospheric I.Q.” ... “a provocateur in the sedate world of ideas” ...’ Paul Aligica, ‘Herman Kahn’.

²⁰⁵ Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 79-84; and Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, pages 66-117.

²⁰⁶ Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 1.

In Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth*, the past evolution of capitalism had been presented as a process without a subject. Although each nation's origins were different, their paths of development after 'take-off' became almost identical. In the same way that this economic determinism explained the history of modernity, the Bell commission argued that technological innovation had become the impersonal force driving humanity towards the future. As in earlier stages of growth, people were spectators of an evolutionary movement outside of their control. Crucially, Bell and his colleagues had made an important modification to Rostow's canonical theory. In their futurist version, the process of modernity now had a highly visible object as its subject: the machine.²⁰⁷ Rather than humans deciding their own destiny, new technologies determined what was going to happen. Commodity fetishism had been transformed into sci-fi social prophecy. By 2000 at the latest, the self-expansion of fixed capital would have recreated humanity in its own hi-tech image.²⁰⁸

The final step in the Bell commission's construction of a new imaginary future was devising a post-capitalist social utopia for the American empire. What the Cold War Left required was an un-Marxist version of Marx's prognosis of libertarian communism. Fortunately for the Bell commission, they could find exactly what they were looking for in Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. Just like Marx, this prophet had also foreseen that the next stage of modernity would sweep away the most disagreeable manifestations of capitalism: national rivalries, industrial exploitation and social alienation. As in proletarian communism, peace, prosperity and harmony would reign in the global village. What made McLuhan so much more attractive than Marx for the Cold War Left was that the message of this oracle was technological determinism. Confirming the insights of the Bell commission, he too dismissed the role of human decision-making within social evolution and instead made the machine into the subject of history. For the Cold War Left's purposes, McLuhan's prophecy – especially when stripped of its caveats – was perfect. At one and the same time, it promised the all of rewards of socialism without any of the dangers of working class activism. Above all, his predictions celebrated the American present as the prototype of the imaginary future of the information society. The Bell

²⁰⁷ In a seminar held by the Bell commission, Ithiel de Sola Pool – a leading member of CENIS – argued that: '... technological prognoses ... provide a useful basis for predicting non-technological developments too. ... All predictions of a non-technological kind merely extended current trends into the future. Among the technological predictions, however, were some startling ones that probably contained the causes of reversals of the simple trend projections in the non-technological field.' Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 24.

²⁰⁸ This ideological fantasy had been encouraged by the class structure of industrial capitalism for over a century: 'The combination of ... labour appears ... as subservient to and led by an alien will and an alien intelligence ... as its material unity appears subordinate to the *objective unity of machinery*, ... which, as *animated monster*, objectifies the scientific idea, and is in fact the coordinator ... [of combined labour].' Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, page 470.

commission had successfully completed its mission to find a credible alternative to communism. The American empire now had its own futurist ideology: McLuhanism.

Much to their delight, the Bell commission also realised that the third way was the fastest route to the information society. Back in the 1950s, Rostow and Galbraith had argued that America was pioneering the new stage of growth of mass consumption. At the time, the Cold War Left had emphasised that the advent of the affluent society was the cure for the evils of industrialisation: class hatred, ideological extremism and economic instability. A decade later, the leaders of the movement believed that the Johnson administration was on the verge of completing the transformation of the USA into an advanced welfare democracy. Both Rostow and Galbraith argued that the satisfaction of material wants would soon lead to the emergence of a new political agenda: post-scarcity desires.²⁰⁹ In its Great Society programme, the Democratic government anticipated this shift in public opinion by introducing limited measures for environmental protection and community development.²¹⁰ The task of the Bell commission was much more ambitious. Its members had been charged with planning the transition from mass consumption to the new stage of growth of post-industrialism. Illuminated by the un-Marxist theory of McLuhanism, they knew that they had discovered the long-term trends shaping the future of America.²¹¹ In two interim reports, the Bell commission confidently predicted the social changes which would take place over the next forty years. The production of goods would be supplanted by the production of services.²¹² The nation state would be subsumed into the process of global unification.²¹³ This dramatic change within the economy would lead to the emergence of a new post-industrial culture.²¹⁴ The lesson of the Cold War Left's version of the materialist conception of history was clear. The affluent society was inexorably evolving into the information society. Best of all, it was America which was leading the rest of the world towards the marvellous future.²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ See W.W. Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth*, pages 326-328; *The Diffusion of Power*, 528; and John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, pages 323, 367-368.

²¹⁰ See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 261-306.

²¹¹ In a paper for the Bell commission, Leonard Duhl explained that its members' task as planners of the future was '... instituting change in an orderly fashion, so that tomorrow something will be different from today.' Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 149.

²¹² See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 5-6; and Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, pages 185-188.

²¹³ Ithiel de Sola Pool predicted that: 'In ... circa 2010 ... [an] open-frontiers treaty will be signed by many countries establishing an absolute right of travel and conversation by nationals of any country.' Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 323.

²¹⁴ See Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, pages 189-193, 198-202; and Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 95-96.

²¹⁵ In their report for the Bell commission, Kahn and Wiener produced a chart of "surprise-free" projections for 2000 showing the USA as the first nation reaching the

‘No more would man have to live by the sweat of his brow. The promise of automation and technology could be fulfilled throughout the world, and all would share in the fruits of modern science – all who choose to could soon live in a post-industrial culture.’²¹⁶

Thanks to McLuhanism, the Bell commission had identified three key technologies which would determine the future of humanity: computing, media and telecommunications. In their list of 100 inventions of the year 2000, Kahn and Wiener had foreseen that amazing discoveries would be made by every discipline within the natural sciences. However, like the rest of the Bell commission, the gurus of the Hudson Institute were convinced that information technologies were the demiurges of the new social order.²¹⁷ The ideological prioritisation of these specific machines was a new phenomenon. Along with space rockets and atomic power stations, computers had been promoted as an iconic technology of modernity among the general public since the early-1950s. Within the academy, social scientists had been inspired by cybernetics and communications theory for over a decade.²¹⁸ Yet, until the mid-1960s, the convergence of computing, media and telecommunications was just one of many eagerly anticipated technological advances. It was only after the publication of *Understanding Media*, that this process acquired prophetic significance. Inspired by McLuhan’s anticipation of the transforming power of the Net, the Bell commission eulogised the determinant role of information technologies. In their opinion, the full impact of electronic media upon humanity would only be felt when television had fused with computing and telecommunications. Believing that these three types of machines had become the subject of history, every advance in information technology was heralded as another step towards the information society. The Cold War Left was now convinced that – as the process of convergence was implemented - humanity was moving towards its utopian destiny.²¹⁹

new stage of post-industrialism. See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 98; and Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, page 11.

²¹⁶ Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, page 378.

²¹⁷ In 1967, they confidently proclaimed that: ‘If the middle third of the twentieth century is known as the nuclear era, and if past times have known as the age of steam, iron, power, or the automobile, then the next thirty three years will be known as the age of electronics, computers, automation, cybernation, data-processing, some related idea.’ Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, page 86.

²¹⁸ See Steve Heims, *The Cybernetics Group*; and Jamie Cohen-Cole, *Thinking about Thinking in Cold War America*, pages 300-308.

²¹⁹ In a summary of its findings, the Bell commission emphasised the predictability of this process of social evolution: ‘Since the present basic design of the digital computer is not likely to be superseded for one or two decades (computers will, however, be able to do many more things and do them faster than at present), it may be possible to anticipate with somewhat more confidence the development of computer technology than that of other scientific and technical fields. Thus it may also be possible to

Like many of their peers in the US elite, the Bell commission never doubted that computers would one day evolve into conscious beings. They too looked forward to a future where factory labour would be carried out by robots, office jobs would be automated and routine management done by sentient mainframes.²²⁰ But, in contrast with Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, the Bell commission was much more pessimistic about the timeframe needed to achieve this technological miracle. Tellingly, Kahn and Wiener excluded the advent of ‘true’ artificial intelligence from their list of likely 100 inventions by the year 2000.²²¹ Relegating the creation of electronic brains to a long-term aspiration, the Bell commission instead emphasised the McLuhanite path of development for information technologies: computer-mediated-communications. By 1966, three years before the first two hosts were connected together, the project team had convinced itself that the arrival of the Net redeemer was imminent. They confidently predicted that the majority of Americans would have access to on-line databases and libraries within the next decade.²²² This technological advance would not only radically transform the workplace, but also have profound social and cultural effects. In place of homogenised mass media, people would be informed and entertained by ‘electronic newspapers’ which were tailored to their personal preferences.²²³ Instead of education being confined inside schools and universities, individuals would improve their minds with ‘on-line learning’ courses.²²⁴ As well as choosing political leaders in elections, citizens would express their opinions through ‘instant referendums’ held on the Net.²²⁵ As McLuhan had foreseen, the limitations of industrialism were about to be overcome by the wondrous technologies of post-industrialism.

The Bell commission’s conviction that the Net would create the information society was confirmed by ARPA’s pioneering research into computer-mediated communications. In 1957, after the Russians had launched the first satellite into space, the American government had set up this institution to fund the development of esoteric military technologies. Never again would the USA be publicly humiliated by

anticipate some of the social consequences of the widespread use of electronic intellectual and information systems.’ Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 376.

²²⁰ See Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, pages 52, 91-94; and Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 31, 80, 308, 353.

²²¹ See Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, page 55.

²²² Bell foresaw that: ‘We will probably see a national information-computer-utility system, with tens of thousands of terminals and offices “hooked” into giant central computers providing library and information systems, retail ordering and billing services and the like.’ Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 4. Also see Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000*, page 83.

²²³ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 303-304.

²²⁴ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 83, 260-262.

²²⁵ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, pages 52, 145, 352.

the scientific achievements of its Cold War enemy.²²⁶ At its 1966 ‘future of technology’ seminar, the Bell commission was given a progress report on ARPA’s work by J.C.R. Licklider.²²⁷ During his two years at the agency, he had prioritised research into the convergence of computing, media and telecommunications.²²⁸ As a result, ARPA in the early-1960s provided the resources for Paul Baran and his colleagues at RAND to develop methods of transmitting data by packet-switching which enabled users in different locations to ‘time-share’ expensive mainframes. It was this research which created the systems architecture used for the Net when it was launched in 1969.²²⁹

While the RAND team concentrated on integrating computers with the telecommunications infrastructure, Licklider also funded academics investigating the potential of ‘the computer as a communications device’.²³⁰ When he had worked as a psychologist on a study of the staff operating SAGE missile control system in the late-1950s, he had realised that the mainframe was more than a calculating machine. Now that he had ARPA’s resources at his command, Licklider urged his researchers to make computer-mediated-communications accessible to everyone: the ‘intergalactic network’.²³¹ Military money for weaponry had been cleverly diverted for civilian purposes.²³² Inspired by the ideas of McLuhan and Norbert Wiener, Licklider was convinced that - within a decade at most - every typewriter would be transformed into a terminal connected to a global network of mainframes. People would soon be able to access information from on-line data banks regardless of their geographical location. Once computer consoles were combined with interactive television broadcasting, citizens would directly participate in the democratic decision-making process. Using their terminals, individuals would have the opportunity to form virtual communities with like-minded people from across the world. Above all, the users of networked

²²⁶ For the background of ARPA’s involvement in computing, see Ronda Hauben, ‘Creating the Needed Interface’.

²²⁷ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 379. ARPA stood for the Advanced Research Projects Agency.

²²⁸ Licklider justified spending US taxpayers’ money on this project as the development of “real time” information systems for the battlefield: ‘[The] ... problems of command and control were essentially problems of man computer interaction ...’ J.C.R. Licklider in Ronda Hauben, ‘Creating the Needed Interface’, part 4, page 9. Also see J.C.R. Licklider, ‘Man-Computer Symbiosis’, pages 4-7; Michael Hauben and Ronda Hauben, *Netizens*, pages 96-101; and Katie Hafner and Matthew Lyon, *Where Wizards Stay Up Late*, pages 11-42.

²²⁹ See Paul Baran, ‘On Distributed Communications’; and Internet Society, ‘A Brief History of the Internet’, pages 2-8.

²³⁰ For his manifesto on the social implications of network computing, see J.C.R. Licklider, ‘The Computer as a Communications Device’.

²³¹ Derived from McLuhan’s ‘electric global network’, the ‘intergalactic network’ was Licklider’s nickname for ARPA’s prototype of the Net. See Michael Hauben and Ronda Hauben, *Netizens*, pages 96-101.

²³² See Mark Geise, ‘From ARPAnet to the Internet’, pages 126-132.

computers would be able to work together in more productive and efficient ways: ‘cooperative creativity’.²³³ After listening to Licklider’s presentation, the Bell commission could have had no doubts that the McLuhanite prophecy was on the verge of being realised. Even if the Canadian guru’s claims that television was transforming humanity had been exaggerated, the preliminary results of ARPA’s research programme proved that the convergence of computing, media and telecommunications was going to be the catalyst for ‘important sociological changes.’²³⁴ Far from being a sci-fi fantasy, the imaginary future of the information society already existed in the present.

Between 1967 and 1968, the Bell commission presented their initial findings in two hefty books: Herbert Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000: a framework for speculation*; and Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000: work in progress*. In the former, the doyens of the Hudson Institute published the report which had been used as the starting point for discussions among members of the project. In the latter, the chair of the commission provided an edited version of his team’s papers and seminars. Despite the importance of their subject, neither of these books made any significant impact outside the inner circle of the Cold War Left. The Hudson Institute’s report was written in a tortuous bureaucratic style. Bell’s book was a hodgepodge of transcripts and interventions with no single authorial voice. Quite deliberately, both publications had been designed for the committed few rather than for the average reader.

While the Bell commission was carrying out its research work, this exclusivity wasn’t a problem. But, once the project team had agreed upon the new imaginary future for the American empire, their findings had to be presented in a more accessible form. Bureaucratic reports and edited transcripts would no longer suffice. If it was to complete its mission successfully, the Bell commission had to produce a canonical text of un-Marxist theory: the definitive codification of the information society prophecy. Ironically, even though it had provided the first iteration of this imaginary future, *Understanding Media* couldn’t fulfil this vital role. In his writings, McLuhan had taken delight in promiscuously combining insights from modernist literature and Catholic theology with ideas taken from cybernetics, behavioural psychology, information theory and quantum physics. Despite being extremely popular with the general public, this exuberant style appalled the Cold War Left.²³⁵ McLuhan’s intuitive thought probes offended against the accepted methodology of intellectual labour. In academic texts and government reports, evidence must be carefully collated and sources have to be diligently referenced. In order for McLuhanism to become the

²³³ See J.C.R. Licklider, ‘The Computer as a Communications Device’, pages 30-33, 37-40; and Katie Hafner and Matthew Lyon, *Where Wizards Stay Up Late*, pages 34-35.

²³⁴ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 379.

²³⁵ Even though the Bell commission was very obviously theoretically indebted to McLuhan, Kahn and Wiener never mentioned his writings in their book while the chair’s collection of essays and seminars only contained three passing references to the first prophet of post-industrialism.

new faith of the American empire, the Cold War Left had to reconcile McLuhan's idiosyncratic technique with these professional requirements. Literary musings about society had to be turned into hardnosed social science. Oracular pronouncements had to be backed up with 'value free' research. Only after making these corrections would the Cold War Left's intellectuals have completed the construction of their new intellectual orthodoxy: McLuhanism without McLuhan.

Zbigniew Brzezinski – an up-and-coming geopolitical analyst at Columbia university – was the first member of member of the Bell commission to take on the task of rewriting *Understanding Media*. In 1968, he published an article promoting his new interpretation of the information society prophecy which was then followed in 1970 by his big book: *Between Two Ages*. In contrast with McLuhan, Brzezinski meticulously observed the pieties of his profession by including statistics, footnotes and a bibliography in his publications. Just as importantly, he replaced the wacky catchphrases of *Understanding Media* with his own more sober neologisms. The paradoxical image of the global village was replaced by the more credible concept of the 'global city'.²³⁶ Above all, *Between Two Ages* was focused upon the analysis of the shift from Fordism to the 'technetronic' society.²³⁷ By toning down the populist style of *Understanding Media*, Brzezinski was able to endow its visionary prediction of the information society with an aura of academic respectability. Even better, by incorporating Rostow's stages of growth into the analysis, he had added some theoretical rigour to McLuhan's impressionistic overview of history. In the Brzezinski remix of *Understanding Media*, the imminent arrival of the post-industrialism was proved by objective analysis rather than by subjective assertion. Prophesising the future had become impartial social science.

Yet, this image of 'value free' theoretical knowledge derived from careful empirical research was a sham. In his article and book, Brzezinski acted as a booster for the McLuhanite catechism. The 'electronic global network' might have been renamed the 'global information grid', but the prophecy was exactly the same.²³⁸ Technology was the driving force of human history.²³⁹ The convergence of computing, media and telecommunications into the Net was creating a new social system.²⁴⁰ The production

²³⁶ Criticising McLuhan's celebrated catchphrase, Brzezinski pointed out that: '... the mutual confidence and reciprocally reinforcing stability that are characteristic of village intimacy will be absent from the process of "nervous" interaction [in the global communications systems].' Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, page 19.

²³⁷ Brzezinski invented his 'technetronics' neologism by combining the words 'technology' and 'electronics' together. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, page xiv.

²³⁸ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, page 299.

²³⁹ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', pages 16-19; *Between Two Ages*, pages 9-23.

²⁴⁰ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', pages 16-17, 22; *Between Two Ages*, pages xiv, 9-10.

of goods was being supplanted by the provision of services.²⁴¹ Representative democracy would soon be supplemented by on-line voting.²⁴² The nation state was being integrated into the process of world unification.²⁴³ The linear thought patterns of literacy were being replaced by the fragmented consciousness of audiovisual communications.²⁴⁴ Even when these assertions were justified by statistics, graphs and references, Brzezinski's advocacy of McLuhanism was founded upon faith not reason. Facts proved what had already been agreed upon as the transcendent goal of human history: the information society.

'In the course of the work [of writing the book], I have expressed my own opinions and exposed my prejudices. This effort is, therefore, more in the nature of a "think-piece" backed by evidence, than of a systematic exercise in social-science methodology.'²⁴⁵

Brzezinski's firm belief in the information society prophecy came from his fervent patriotism. The Bell commission had been set up to seize the future for the American empire from its Russian rival. Like most of its members, Brzezinski believed that the project team had successfully completed their vital mission. The USA now possessed its own imaginary future for the Cold War propaganda struggle. When the Russians proclaimed the inevitable triumph of communism, the Americans could counter by predicting the imminent arrival of the information society. Crucially, having entered into this media war over which superpower represented the destiny of humanity, the USA had to convince the peoples of the world that its imaginary future was more modern than that of the Russian empire. In his book, Brzezinski devoted many pages to proving that Communism was an obsolete ideology from the industrial epoch.²⁴⁶ It was America - not Russia – that was leading humanity towards the post-industrial utopia.²⁴⁷

As an advocate of un-Marxism, Brzezinski also needed to demonstrate that Marxism was incapable of providing a credible analysis of the next stage in human evolution. By admitting its important contribution in the past to the social sciences, he was able to dismiss this theory as a relic from the industrial past. In its place, McLuhanism

²⁴¹ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', page 18; *Between Two Ages*, pages 10-11.

²⁴² See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, page 59.

²⁴³ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', pages 26; *Between Two Ages*, pages 3-5, 14.

²⁴⁴ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', pages 18; *Between Two Ages*, pages 12-13, 20-22, 59-60, 117.

²⁴⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, page xvi.

²⁴⁶ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, pages 72-75, 77-84, 123-193.

²⁴⁷ In 1968, Brzezinski claimed that: 'What makes America unique ... is that it is the first society to experience the future. ... Today, America is *the* creative society; the others, consciously or unconsciously, are emulative.' Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', page 23.

was heralded as the up-to-date method for understanding the transition to the information society.²⁴⁸ Best of all, this technological determinist approach accurately foretold the direction of social, political and economic changes. Like Licklider, Brzezinski also confidently predicted that the 'global information grid' would be fully operational by the mid-1970s.²⁴⁹ Because of this technological marvel, the treasured policies of the Cold War Left would spread across the whole world. Rigid ideologies would be supplanted by pragmatic solutions. Monolithic parties would be replaced by pressure groups. Class confrontation would give way to partnership between the public and private sectors.²⁵⁰ Since the USA was most technologically advanced country on the planet, the rest of the world would inevitably have to imitate what was already happening there. The information society future was an improved and globalised version of the American present.²⁵¹

Despite his best efforts, Brzezinski's attempt to create the master theory of McLuhanism was only partially successful. As Bell pointed out, his writings placed too much emphasis on technological determinism. Excited by the geopolitical significance of the 'global information grid', Brzezinski had failed to provide a detailed analysis of what the social structure of post-industrialism would look like.²⁵² Even worse, his appropriation of McLuhan's imaginary future was primarily a celebration of contemporary America. If the USA was to win the propaganda struggle against Russia, its boosters had to offer their own vision of the emancipated society. Brzezinski's reiteration of the programme of the Vital Centre was insufficiently futurist to fulfil this purpose. Fortunately, Bell had also begun work on his interpretation of McLuhanism. Beginning with a couple of articles in 1967 and 1968, he devoted himself to writing the important book which would codify the findings of his commission.²⁵³ He would crown his career by becoming the intellectual who had provided the definitive un-Marxist theory for analysing the social implications of technological convergence. Like Brzezinski, Bell devoted himself to translating the Canadian oracle's inspired hunches into the rational discourse and footnoted evidence

²⁴⁸ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, pages 72-84, 115-125. McLuhan had anticipated this criticism of Marx in his own writings. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pages 37-38.

²⁴⁹ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, pages 32, 59, 299.

²⁵⁰ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, pages 258-265.

²⁵¹ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'America in the Technetronic Age', pages 25-26; *Between Two Ages*, pages 274-309.

²⁵² See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 38-39. In an early meeting of his commission, Bell had complained that predictions of the future concentrated too much on the wonders of new technologies instead of examining the 'more significant social changes' caused by rising incomes and greater access to education. See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 22.

²⁵³ See Daniel Bell, 'Notes on the Post-Industrial Society (I)'; 'Notes on the Post-Industrial Society (II)'.

of social science.²⁵⁴ After years of effort, the job was finally finished. In 1973, Bell published the canonical text of the Cold War Left's imaginary future: *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*.

As soon as it was published, this classic book became the leading academic justification of the McLuhanite prophecy. First and foremost, Bell remained faithful to the theoretical core of *Understanding Media*: information technologies were making the information society.²⁵⁵ Like Brzezinski, he also claimed that the manufacture of goods was being replaced by the provision of services; national independence was giving way to global interdependence; and new forms of media were creating a new culture.²⁵⁶ From Licklider's participation in the discussions of his commission, Bell knew that the convergence of computing, media and telecommunications would be the driving force of social transformation. By the end of the 1970s at the latest, most American homes and businesses would be connected to the Net and have access to its incredible variety of on-line services. In the same way that the steam engine had produced the industrial era, the computer was building the post-industrial future.

‘The major social revolution of the latter half of the twentieth century is the attempt to master [the] “scale” [of political and economic institutions] by new technological devices, whether it be “real-time” computer information or new kinds of quantitative programming.’²⁵⁷

According to Brzezinski, McLuhanism was hard-line technological determinism. The machine was the subject of history. In contrast, Bell wanted to fuse this new orthodoxy with the more familiar theory of economic determinism. Social evolution was a process without a subject.²⁵⁸ As a leading member of the Cold War Left in the 1950s, Bell had helped to invent the American version of the materialist conception of history.²⁵⁹ In his iconic book, he applied this un-Marxist theory to the analysis of post-industrialism. While Brzezinski had identified the technetronic society by its innovative machinery, Bell argued that the new social system should also be identified

²⁵⁴ As part of this process, like the earlier publication from his commission, Bell's great work on McLuhanism deliberately ignored McLuhan's own writings except for a throwaway remark about ‘his pixyish gift for paradox.’ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 199.

²⁵⁵ See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 27-33.

²⁵⁶ See Daniel Bell, ‘Notes on the Post-Industrial Society (I)’, pages 27-28; ‘Notes on the Post-Industrial Society (II)’, pages 109-111; *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 14-15, 126-128, 483-486.

²⁵⁷ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, page 42.

²⁵⁸ See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 12-14, 114-115.

²⁵⁹ Reassuring his American readers, Bell excused the repeated references to Marx's ideas in his canonical text as proof that: ‘... we have all become post-Marxists.’ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, page 55.

by its novel economic goals.²⁶⁰ In his interpretation of McLuhanism, the shift from the production of goods to the provision of services was elevated into the defining feature of the post-industrial future. Under capitalism, both employers and workers were focused upon the accumulation of material wealth. In contrast, the principle activity of the information society was the creation of knowledge. Scientists in their research laboratories were prefiguring the communal and democratic methods of working of the future.²⁶¹

In Bell's opinion, there was plenty of evidence that this social transformation was already underway. In 1962, Fritz Machlup – a German émigré economist – had published detailed statistics showing that the industrial working class was fast disappearing. In its place, bureaucrats and technicians were becoming the most important members of the economy.²⁶² In his 1967 update of the affluent society thesis, Galbraith had also argued that increased automation and better education led to factory jobs being replaced with office work.²⁶³ Building on this research, Bell produced pages of tables for his great tome proving that manual labour was giving way to mental labour; the production of things was being superseded by the provision of services and an increasing proportion of the wages bill was devoted to scientific research.²⁶⁴ As Burnham, Galbraith and Rostow had explained, this shift in employment patterns had begun with the rise of Fordism. Bell now claimed that this transformation was accelerating as the US economy moved into the next stage of growth. The computerisation of production would soon remove the need for most forms of physical labour. By extrapolating from recent history, it was obvious that the white-collar employees of Fordism were the precursors of the paramount social group of post-industrialism: the *knowledge class*.²⁶⁵

‘If the dominant figures of the past hundred years have been the entrepreneur, the businessman and the industrial executive, the “new men” are the scientists,

²⁶⁰ ‘If an industrial society is defined by the quantity of goods as marking the accumulation of goods, the post-industrial society is defined by the quality of life as measured by the services and amenities – health, education, recreation and the arts – which are now deemed desirable and possible for all.’ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, page 127.

²⁶¹ See Daniel Bell, ‘Notes on the Post-Industrial Society (I)’, pages 28-29; *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 167-265, 343-345, 378-386.

²⁶² ‘It is a fact that the increase in factor productivity in American industry has been associated in the ratio of knowledge-producing labour to physical labour. And is very likely that the relationship has been a causal one.’ Fritz Machlup, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, page 41.

²⁶³ See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, pages 238-250.

²⁶⁴ See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 16-19, 130-142, 212-265.

²⁶⁵ See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 27-33, 167-265. Also see Fritz Machlup, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, pages 377-400.

the mathematicians, the economists and the engineers of the new intellectual technology.²⁶⁶

In their remixes of *Understanding Media*, Brzezinski and Bell had transformed McLuhan's leaps of imagination into sober academic analysis. Inspired by Licklider, they had proved that the Net was the demiurgic machine. Drawing on the latest research, they had examined the social and economic impact of post-industrialism in much greater depth. Yet, their pages of theoretical discussions, detailed statistics and meticulous footnotes were just the background detail for their initial leap of faith: information technologies were creating a new social system. Despite Brzezinski and Bell refusing to acknowledge their mentor, both of them remained completely dependent upon McLuhan's oracular pronouncements. The Cold War Left had lacked an imaginary future of its own so it had been forced to borrow one from someone else. Although McLuhan's ecstatic visions had provided the un-Marxist alternative to communism, the credibility of his speculations was undermined by the unorthodox methodology which had allowed him to foresee the shape of things to come. Remixing *Understanding Media* was essential to ensure that the flaky intellectual origins of the information society prophecy were kept well hidden. Thanks to Brzezinski and Bell, it was now possible to be a McLuhanite without having to quote McLuhan.

For the Cold War Left, *Understanding Media* had endowed the American empire with a transcendental goal: the advent of the post-industrialism. The greatest blessing of McLuhanism was that the class struggle played no part in the creation of this utopian future. Because the new society would be made in the image of the new media, social emancipation could arrive without any conscious human intervention. By elevating Bell's remix of McLuhan into the canonical text for analysing the transition to the future, American academics were able to recuperate Marx's historical materialism. The dangerous ideas had been dismissed as anachronisms from the steam-powered industrial past. The harmless concepts had been repackaged for the computerised post-industrial future. Above all, there was no longer any need to read subversive books like *Capital* as the founders of the Cold War Left had done in their youth. What was worth saving had been incorporated within Bell's un-Marxist theoretical masterpiece. For patriotic American intellectuals, everything that they needed to know about the future evolution of humanity could be found in the learned sentences and detailed diagrams of *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*.

By the early-1970s, the Cold War Left's reworking of McLuhan had spawned its own academic discipline: futurology. Equipped with Bell's canonical text as a theoretical guide, its adepts confidently wrote articles, spoke at conferences and taught courses about what had not yet happened.²⁶⁷ This self-assurance was founded upon their gurus' clear vision of the information society. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan had only given a vague idea of what the global village would look like. By emphasising the

²⁶⁶ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, page 344.

²⁶⁷ See Irving Louis Horowitz, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States*, pages 113-130; and William Kuhns, *The Post-Industrial Prophets*, pages 247-261.

imminent disappearance of social, political and cultural differences, he focused his readers' attention instead upon the benefits of superseding the negative attributes of modernity. In contrast, the Bell commission had promoted a positive description of the post-industrial future. Above all, the team's publications explained that – if you looked carefully enough - the shape of things to come could be discerned in the present. In *Between Two Ages*, Brzezinski claimed that the centrist policies of the Cold War Left were prefiguring the information society. In *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Bell argued that the managerial and academic employees of Fordism were already working within a post-industrial economy. What was ultra-modern in contemporary America was a premonition of what life would be like in the year 2000.

More than any other institution, the Bell commission believed that the university was the forerunner of the information society. Ever since the 1940s, higher education had been a boom sector of the US economy. For the Cold War Left, the university had long been the epitome of the third way. With their income coming from a variety of public and private sources, American campuses combined the best features of the state and the market. Their administrators exemplified the virtues of the Vital Centre: efficiency, consensus and open-mindedness.²⁶⁸ According to Brzezinski and Bell, the American universities were now also the precursors of the future information society in the present. Their students were acquiring the skills needed to join the knowledge class. Their social scientists were using computers to analyse current problems and predict future developments. Their research labs were inventing most of the new information technologies.²⁶⁹ Above all, academics were the quintessential members of the emerging knowledge class: makers of ideas not things.²⁷⁰ When the futurologists wanted to know what post-industrialism would be like, they just had to look out of their office windows and envisage the whole of society remodelled as a giant campus.

‘Perhaps it is not too much to say that if the business firm was the key institution of the past hundred years, because of its role in organising production for the mass creation of products, the university will become the central institution of the next hundred years because of its role as the new source of innovation and knowledge.’²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, pages 367-368, 372-378; and Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, pages 29-41.

²⁶⁹ See Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000*, page 6, 32, 342-344; *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 116-117, 212-265, 409-411, 423; and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages*, pages 200-205. In the early-1960s, the head of California's universities believed that the campus was the core institution of the emerging 'city of intellect'. See Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, pages 85-126.

²⁷⁰ Bell turned the job description of the Cold War Left intellectual into the 'axial principle' of the post-industrial society: 'the centrality of theoretical knowledge as the source of innovation and of policy formation for society.' Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, page 14.

²⁷¹ Daniel Bell, 'Notes on the Post-Industrial Society (I)', page 30.

This imaginary future appealed to an influential and appreciative audience within Cold War America. As well as the large numbers of people who were studying or working at universities, a growing proportion of the population were graduates from these institutions. As Machlup and Bell emphasised in their studies, a degree had become the prerequisite of advancement within the managerial hierarchies of big business and big government.²⁷² It was very flattering for white-collar workers to be told that they were the hope of the future rather than the factory labourers.²⁷³ Within the rapidly expanding media and technology sectors, the prophecy of post-industrialism had even more resonance. Their employees were delighted when they were praised as builders of the hi-tech future. Just as the factory had been the icon of industrialism for their grandparents, the university was the symbol of post-industrialism for these modern Americans.

The Cold War Left's prophets were eager to lead the emerging knowledge class into the computer paradise. Contradicting their own theoretical assertion that technology was the subject of history, these intellectuals saw themselves as the moving spirits of the transition to the utopian future. Like entrepreneurs in the early days of capitalism, they were inventing the new methods of working and new ways of living. Their interdisciplinary research teams showed how knowledge would be produced in the post-industrial future. Their colleagues were directing the academic institutions which would become the powerhouses of the information society. Their tastes and aspirations would be the culture of post-industrialism. Like the Fabians in late-Victorian England, the Cold War Left was – most importantly – developing new policies for the government so it could successfully manage the transition into the future. Above all, the gurus of the movement were writing the canonical texts that defined the shape of things to come. Like the theorists of the Leninist vanguard party, their unique understanding of the grand narrative of modernity had given them leadership over the social group which embodied the promise of universal emancipation.²⁷⁴ Under the firm guidance of the Cold War Left, the knowledge class would build the imaginary future of post-industrialism.

²⁷² See Fritz Machlup, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, pages 77-100; and Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 213-242.

²⁷³ Proving his un-Marxist credentials, Bell emphasised that the increasing proportion of the US workforce employed in the service sector had disproved Marx's vision of proletarian emancipation. Since the industrial working class was no longer the driving force of social change, the knowledge class now had the responsibility for creating the utopian future. See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 123-129.

²⁷⁴ More tactfully, Bell compared the leadership role of the Cold War Left with the promotion of industrial modernisation by the Saint-Simonist movement in the early-nineteenth century. See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, pages 346-351.

In 1930s Russian propaganda, the dedicated party militant had been celebrated as the Nietzschean 'New Man' of the Stalinist utopia.²⁷⁵ Thirty years later, the thinkers of the Cold War Left now proclaimed themselves as the ideal citizens of America's global village. Cosmopolitan and sophisticated, the members of this movement combined the liberal virtues of education, tolerance and enquiry with the modern advantages of jet airplanes, colour television, long-distance telephony and mainframe computers. Although only a few intellectuals enjoyed this privileged existence in the present, everyone would be able to live like them in the post-industrial future. The gurus of the Cold War Left had discovered the embryo of the new society in their own academic workplaces. They themselves were already living in the imaginary future of post-industrialism. Having seen the coming of the American hi-tech utopia, it was now their mission to preach the good news to the expectant peoples of the world: the First Coming of the Net Messiah.

²⁷⁵ See Bernice Rosenthal, *New Myth, New World*, pages 233-350; and Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity*, pages 84-85.

The Leader of the Free World

During the 1950s, the Cold War Left became the mentors of a new generation of ambitious young American scholars. Encouraged by government subsidies, the top US universities had embarked upon a rapid expansion of their social science departments. For go-getting academics and students in these institutions, the third way philosophy of the Cold War Left provided an up-to-date and sophisticated replacement for the tired old ideologies of laissez-faire liberalism and Stalinist socialism. In the lecture halls and research institutes, the gurus of the movement found an eager audience for their new orthodoxy of un-Marxist theorising and ‘value free’ investigation. Under the tutelage of these master thinkers, the members of the nascent knowledge class learnt how to guide the American empire in a progressive and enlightened direction. In return, these adepts collated data, programmed computers, gave conference papers, and wrote journal articles which proved the theoretical conclusions of the movement’s canonical texts. Ironically, the success of their careers inside and outside the academy depended as much upon ignorance as education. Unlike their mentors, this younger generation had no experience of revolutionary politics and little knowledge of Marxism. In American social science departments, the only modern way of thinking was the third way.²⁷⁶

The intellectual ascendancy of the Cold War Left at home was the movement’s reward for its outstanding services to the US state in Western Europe. The mentors of the new generation of American social scientists had won their prominent positions within the nation’s elite by winning a decisive round in the ideological struggle against Stalinism on the partitioned continent. Inside its sphere of influence, the American empire had encountered few problems in winning the loyalty of local elites and conservative voters. Looking at what was happening in Eastern Europe, it was obvious that Stalinism threatened the greatest achievements of bourgeois civilisation: civil rights, the rule of law and political pluralism. More importantly, the US military and the CIA were defending the property of the privileged against expropriation by either Russian invaders or home-grown radicals.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ The Cold War Left’s privileged access to military funding was the foundation of its intellectual hegemony over the social sciences in the USA: ‘This was not a “conspiracy” in the hackneyed sense of that word. It was rather a “reference group” or informal network which is known so well to sociologists. ... Projects that advanced their conception of scientific progress and national security enjoyed a chance to gain the financial support that is often a prerequisite to academic success ... projects that did not meet these criteria were often relegated to obscurity, and in some cases actively suppressed.’ Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, pages 61-62. Also see Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, pages 23-129.

²⁷⁷ According to the ideologues of European liberalism, socialist reforms at home were preparing the way for the imposition of Stalinist rule over the whole continent. See F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*; and Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*.

What was much more difficult to achieve was persuading the Left to collaborate with the American occupation of Western Europe. For any self-respecting socialist in the late-1940s, the USA was still – despite its major contribution to the defeat of fascism - the imperialist enforcer of capitalist exploitation.²⁷⁸ Yet, within a few years, this negative image of America had been successfully overturned. Funded by the CIA, the Cold War Left had organised a propaganda campaign to re-brand the United States as the friend of progressive causes: the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). By the mid-1950s, admiration for America had become the leitmotif of modern socialism in Western Europe. After this triumph overseas, the Cold War Left quickly consolidated its ideological dominance over the social science departments of American universities. No other intellectual tendency could match its winning combination of group cohesion, international recognition, theoretical ambition and military funding. The rise to power of the Cold War Left had begun.

Like many other aspects of the movement, the Congress for Cultural Freedom had its origins in American Trotskyism. Back in the late-1930s, a group of New York activists had set up the prototype of the CCF to protest against the Stalinist persecution of modern art.²⁷⁹ In solidarity with this initiative, Leon Trotsky himself had helped André Breton – the French ‘pope’ of Surrealism - and Diego Rivera – the Mexican Communist muralist – to write an impassioned defence of the role of avant-garde experimentation in the revolutionary struggle.²⁸⁰ However, by the mid-1940s, the founders of the CCF had become disillusioned with Trotskyism. Like Burnham, their opposition to Russian totalitarianism soon reconciled them with American capitalism. In an opening move of the Cold War, these ex-Trotskyists worked with the US intelligence services to disrupt a cultural conference held by Stalinist sympathisers in New York. Emboldened by this success, they decided to revive the CCF with money provided by the newly founded CIA. The Trotskyist Left had evolved into the Cold War Left.²⁸¹

While its predecessor had been designed to attack domestic apologists of the Russian regime, this new iteration of the CCF was – right from the outset - focused upon the propaganda struggle inside Western Europe. In stark contrast with America, Stalinism

²⁷⁸ One English socialist who admired the USA complained that: ‘... anti-Americanism ... [was] an almost universal left-wing neurosis ... [in early-1950s Britain].’ Anthony Crosland *The Future of Socialism*, page 127.

²⁷⁹ The first version of the CCF was called the *Committee* for Cultural Freedom. See Judy Kutulas, *The Long War*, pages 154-163; and Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 139-147.

²⁸⁰ See their ‘Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art’ in Leon Trotsky, *Art & Revolution*, pages 115-121.

²⁸¹ ‘Those surprised by the CIA’s use of Trotskyists ... forget the agency’s cynical realists knew that the most dedicated enemies of the Communist party were those who hated it long before the Cold War.’ Andrew Roth, ‘Melvin Lasky’. Also see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 45-56; and S.A. Longstaff, ‘The New York Intellectuals and the Cultural Cold War 1945-1950’.

had emerged from the Second World War as the dominant force on the Left across most of the continent. The Russian army had won the military victory over Nazi Germany. Stalinists had led the most effective resistance movements in occupied Europe. During the post-war afterglow, millions of people sincerely believed that Russian totalitarianism was leading humanity towards the socialist utopia.²⁸² Well before most of the US elite, the organisers of the CCF had – as ex-Trotskyists – realised that the mass movements of the Stalinist Left threatened American hegemony over Western Europe. When backed by the well-organised support of a large section of the population, Russian sympathisers could seize power in a country without any need for direct intervention by their superpower sponsor. If the US government didn't act quickly, the Cold War would be lost in Europe almost before it had started.²⁸³

In the late-1940s, the American empire formed military alliances and provided economic subsidies to consolidate its control over the western half of the continent.²⁸⁴ As the partition lines hardened, the propaganda battle between the superpower rivals became ever more intense. Despite its economic and military superiority, the USA's favourable position on the continent was endangered by the suspicion of American intentions among the European Left. At this moment of crisis, the repentant Trotskyists of the CCF came to the rescue. Unlike conservative Americans, they possessed the skills to persuade left-wing Europeans to reject Stalinism. As former Trotskyists, they knew how to run a Communist-style campaign to undermine support for the Communist parties of Western Europe. With CIA money and advice from US media companies, the CCF embarked on an ambitious programme of publishing books, setting up magazines, making broadcasts, hosting conferences and sponsoring exhibitions. Just like its 1930s Communist antecedents, this front organisation was devoted to the promotion of a single idea. But, instead of praising Stalinism, the CCF used Stalinist techniques to expose the hypocrisy of Stalinism.²⁸⁵

‘The United States, as against the communists, has a peculiar potential advantage in mass propaganda. ... United States propaganda could be, and would benefit by being, for the most part true, or close to the truth.’²⁸⁶

²⁸² Immediately after the Liberation, ‘... with 26% of the vote in [the] 1945 [elections], the French Communist party became the leading party in France, a leap in support even more remarkable because women – most of whom supported conservative or moderate parties – had just become [voting] citizens.’ Serge Halimi, *Sisyphus est Fatigué*, page 251.

²⁸³ See James Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, pages 182-195; Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 267-280; and Giles Scott-Smith, ‘The Organising of Intellectual Consensus (Part 1)’, pages 8-12.

²⁸⁴ See Kees van der Pilj, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*, pages 138-177; and Martin Walker, *The Cold War*, pages 29-58.

²⁸⁵ See James Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, pages 165-181; Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 85-278; and Giles Scott-Smith, ‘The Organising of Intellectual Consensus (Part 1)’.

²⁸⁶ James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, page 178.

In the same way that Stalinist parties had created their own cultural milieu, the CCF also set out to build its own space within the minds of the West European Left. Ideology had to become common sense.²⁸⁷ European radicals must become convinced that American capitalism was much more equalitarian, progressive and democratic than Russian socialism. Not surprisingly, the stars of the CCF were the American founders of the Cold War Left. As the conduit for CIA funds, Burnham politically dominated the organisation until he stormed out in a rage in the early-1950s. Schlesinger's *The Vital Centre* became the manifesto of its propaganda offensive. Bell promoted the 'end of ideology' thesis at CCF conferences and in its media outlets during the late-1950s.²⁸⁸ Although almost openly funded by the CIA, the CCF kept up the pretence that it was an independent initiative of concerned left-wing American intellectuals.²⁸⁹ Like Stalinist militants in 1930s, its ex-Trotskyist founders enjoyed the ambiguities between the life of a revolutionary and that of a spy. In the looking-glass world of the Cold War, the Left and the Right had become almost indistinguishable.²⁹⁰

As in other CIA missions, the best proof of success was the turning of enemy agents. In CCF-sponsored books like *I Chose Freedom* and *The God That Failed*, former believers in the false Russian utopia publicly repented the sins of their Marxist past.²⁹¹ From such celebrated texts, the Cold War Left created an anti-Stalinist catechism. Modern socialists knew that – if Social Democracy in Western Europe had to choose between socialism and democracy - then Fordist democracy was preferable to Stalinist socialism. Given what was happening in the Russian half of the continent, the success of the CCF's propaganda offensive was almost inevitable. Needing liberal

²⁸⁷ Gramsci had defined this hegemonic ambition of the 'Modern Prince': 'There is ... the necessity for new popular beliefs, that is to say a new common sense and with it a new culture and a new philosophy which will be rooted in the popular consciousness with the same solidity and imperative quality as traditional beliefs.' Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, page 424.

²⁸⁸ See Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, page 63; and Giles Scott-Smith, 'The Organising of Intellectual Consensus (Part 2)', pages 19-20.

²⁸⁹ 'Over ... seventeen years, the CIA was to pump tens of millions of dollars into the Congress for Cultural Freedom and related projects. With this kind of commitment, the CIA was in effect acting as America's Ministry of Culture.' Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, page 129. Also see Giles Scott-Smith, 'The Organising of Intellectual Consensus (Part 1)', pages 12-13; (Part 2)', pages 15-18.

²⁹⁰ Marx had foreseen that the sectarian politics of American Trotskyism could lead to this fate: 'Espionage is one of the chief occupations of the conspirator. No wonder, therefore, that the small jump from routine conspirator to paid police spy is made so frequently, encouraged as it by distress and imprisonment, threats and promises.' Karl Marx in Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx*, page 228.

²⁹¹ See Victor Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom*; and Richard Crossman, *The God That Failed*. Also see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 64-66, 136; and Giles Scott-Smith, 'The Organising of Intellectual Consensus (Part 1)', page 12.

freedoms to protect socialist and trade union activism, the majority of the Left in Western Europe had good reason to fear the Stalinist enemy in the East. At the outbreak of the Cold War in 1948, George Orwell – who later became the CCF’s favourite socialist novelist once he was safely dead - explained the predicament of the British Labour party:

‘From the point of view of the Russians and the Communists, Social Democracy is a deadly enemy ... The reason is clear enough. Social Democracy, unlike capitalism, offers an alternative to Communism. ... It will not do to give the usual quibbling answer, “I refuse to choose [between Russia and America].” ... We are no longer strong enough to stand alone, and, if we fail to bring a western European union into being, we shall be obliged, in the long run, to subordinate our policy to one Great Power or the other. And ... everyone [on the Labour Left] knows in his [or her] heart that we should choose America. The great mass of people ... would make this choice almost instinctively.’²⁹²

The CCF helped to transform this short-term tactical alliance into a long-term strategic dependency. The Cold War Left shared the same intellectual and political background as the West European Left. Under its guidance, open-minded socialists soon discovered the third way to modernity beyond tooth-and-claw capitalism and Marxist totalitarianism. After three disastrous decades of wars, genocide and economic collapse, the ‘ideology of the end of ideology’ seemed very attractive to large numbers of people within the West European Left. In his 1956 celebrated text *The Future of Socialism*, Anthony Crosland – a former admirer of Stalinist Russia - demonstrated how the consensual politics of the Vital Centre could be successfully adapted for the other side of the Atlantic. First and foremost, he dismissed Russian Marxism as a theoretical anachronism. In its place, American un-Marxism was praised as the up-to-date analysis of society.²⁹³ The political implications of this switch in loyalties were clear. Class struggle and ideological extremism were no longer relevant. Social partnership and status politics were the only way forward.²⁹⁴ Since the Russian system had lost its allure, the West European Left must instead imitate the modernity of America: consumer prosperity, class mobility, mass education and economic efficiency.²⁹⁵ By the end of the decade, Crosland’s analysis had become the new orthodoxy of parliamentary socialism. At its 1959 Bad Godesberg conference, the German Social Democratic party – the party founded by Marx’s inner circle –

²⁹² George Orwell, ‘In Defence of Comrade Zilliacus’, pages 451, 453.

²⁹³ See Anthony Crosland *The Future of Socialism*, pages 2-7, 23-26, 60-69, 104-133, 325-327.

²⁹⁴ See Anthony Crosland *The Future of Socialism*, pages 29-42, 76-80, 111-122, 328-340.

²⁹⁵ See Anthony Crosland *The Future of Socialism*, pages 151, 155-159, 179-187, 195-207, 248-251.

publicly renounced its allegiance to Marxism.²⁹⁶ The West European Left had been a diligent student of its American teacher.

Any Social Democrat who doubted their party's allegiance to the United States only had to look at the fate of their comrades in the Stalinist East. Like the colonies of the old European empires, the nations inside the Russian sphere of influence were in thrall to a foreign despotism. Dissident socialists and trade union activists were murdered, tortured and imprisoned. Even leaders of the East European satellites who were too independent-minded ran the risk of becoming victims of a show trial.²⁹⁷ The death of Stalin in 1953 eased conditions, but it didn't end the repression. When Hungarian workers and students rose in revolt in 1956 against their Stalinist oppressors, the Russian army ruthlessly crushed their revolution.²⁹⁸ The blatant contradiction between this repressive reality and the libertarian promises of proletarian communism was a propaganda gift for the CCF. Far from being the workers' state, the Stalinist system had proved itself to be the dictatorship against the proletariat.

By exposing the crimes of Russia in the East, the CCF emphasised the advantages for the Left of collaborating with the American rulers of the West. Socialists inside the US sphere of influence could not only campaign openly, but also, in some countries, form the government. In stark contrast with the East, trade unions in the West were treated as social partners and were often consulted about economic policies. The United States even publicly supported some of the most cherished dreams of the European Left. During the Time of Troubles of the mid-twentieth century, both Social Democrats and Communists had advocated the unification of the continent as the progressive alternative to the belligerent rivalry of autarchic nationalisms.²⁹⁹ When the Cold War started in the late-1940s, the American empire proclaimed itself as the new champion of this Left arcadia. Under its sponsorship, the nations inside the US sphere of influence were already being bound together through military alliances and economic agreements. As the CCF propaganda emphasised, the United States provided the most

²⁹⁶ Pointedly omitting the historical materialist critique of capitalism, the party declared that: 'Democratic Socialism ... in Europe is rooted in Christian ethics, humanism and classical philosophy ...' Social Democratic Party, 'Basic Programme of the Social Democratic Party of Germany', page 275.

²⁹⁷ See François Fejtö, *A History of the People's Democracies*, pages 7-25; and Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Dowling, *Cold War*, pages 116-119.

²⁹⁸ See François Fejtö, *A History of the People's Democracies*, pages 29-123; and Andy Anderson, *Hungary '56*.

²⁹⁹ At the meeting of the Communist International in 1923, Leon Trotsky advocated: '... the slogan of "The United States of Europe" ... [as] a transitional slogan, indicting a way out, a prospect of salvation, and furnishing at the same time a revolutionary impulse for the toiling masses.' Leon Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International Volume II*, page 343.

progressive model for the eventual political unification of Europe. The future of socialism lay to the West not in the East.³⁰⁰

Following the example of its first incarnation, the Cold War Left's CCF also promoted its political cause by championing artistic modernism. As its name suggested, denouncing the absence of cultural freedom was an effective method of exposing the political failings of Stalinism. This strategy had originally been developed in the late-1930s to discredit the apologists of Russian totalitarianism with New York's intellectual community. When the first CCF was founded, Trotskyist militants were already working closely with the pioneers of modern art in America. In journals like *Partisan Review*, writers from both milieus argued that political radicalism and cultural experimentation were inseparable.³⁰¹ But, by the time that the second iteration of the CCF was set up, this assumption was no longer valid. Like their Trotskyist comrades, the cultural bohemians were now also part of the establishment. During the early-1940s, the advocates of modernism had become the arbiters of the New York art world. Backed by important public and private patrons, they had founded the first authentically American avant-garde movement: Abstract Expressionism.³⁰² When the CCF was reborn, these artistic modernists had once again joined forces with their left-wing political friends to protest against the iniquities of Stalinist censorship. Yet, despite the similarity of its rhetoric, the second iteration of this cultural campaign had a very different political goal. In its exhibitions and publications, the CCF celebrated Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and the other stars of Abstract Expressionism as symbols of the US elite's devotion to individual freedom. Instead of serving the socialist revolution, the avant-garde was now working for American imperialism.³⁰³

In their Trotskyist youth, the founders of the Cold War Left had – correctly – identified artistic modernism with the moment of utopian creativity unleashed by the 1917 Russian revolution.³⁰⁴ Yet, by the end of the 1940s, they had succeeded in

³⁰⁰ As early as 1946, Rostow was telling an English audience that: 'In Tom Paine's phrase of 1776, for Europe, as it once was in America: "Now is the seed-time of Continental unity".' W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, page 21. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 214-217

³⁰¹ In their 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art' written for the first CCF, Trotsky, Breton and Riviera had ended with two inspiring slogans: 'The independence of art – for the revolution. The revolution – for the complete independence of art.' Leon Trotsky, *Art & Revolution*, page 121. Also see Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 139-147; and Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, pages 17-47.

³⁰² See Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture*; and Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, pages 49-124.

³⁰³ See Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 213-278; and Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, pages 139-194.

³⁰⁴ See John Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pages 87-261; Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism*; Helena Lewis, *Dada Turns Red*; and Jacques Aron, *Anthologie Bauhaus*.

breaking the historical link between the aesthetics and politics of the Communist avant-garde. Ironically, it was the cultural policies of the Russian state which had created the opportunity for the recuperation of modernism by its superpower rival. In the late-1920s and early-1930s, the Stalinist dictatorship had ruthlessly crushed the artistic avant-garde and revived the aesthetics of the old regime with a new message: Socialist Realism.³⁰⁵ Since the Russians had been foolish enough to abandon modernism, the Cold War Left gleefully seized its democratic hi-tech imagery for the West. When the first CCF championed the avant-garde, the new style had only appealed to a select few. By the time that the CCF was revived, these former Trotskyists had become important players within the US elite. Aided by their powerful patrons, they repackaged modernist aesthetics as the celebration of American modernity.³⁰⁶ Stripped of its subversive politics, the iconography of the avant-garde was popularised by the dream factories of New York and Hollywood. From architecture to furniture, Communist modernism became the house style of American Fordism.³⁰⁷ The new affluent society now had its sophisticated hi-tech look.

For the CCF, the image of a vibrant and innovative culture across the Atlantic was a powerful weapon in its ideological struggle against Stalinism in Western Europe. America was no longer a nation of philistines. Instead it had become the cultural home of the emerging knowledge class. New York had replaced Paris as the capital of the art world. Every major American city had its own well-funded opera house, orchestras, theatres and museums. Even the cultural rebels were made in the USA. However oppositional, cool jazz and beat poetry proved that artistic creativity was flourishing in America. The CCF's propaganda hammered home the political message of this cultural renaissance: modernity came from the West not the East. Far from threatening its core values, American hegemony was beneficial for European civilisation. The best of the old was being combined with the best of the new.³⁰⁸

The CCF's emphasis on high culture was designed to impress the educated minority among the West European Left. Even when they had been Trotskyists, the Cold War Left had distrusted the tastes of the majority of the working class. Having lost their

³⁰⁵ See A.A. Zhdanov, *On Literature, Music and Philosophy*; and John Bowl, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, pages 265-297.

³⁰⁶ In the mid-1950s, the chair of MoMA – New York's leading modern art gallery – declared that 'We know that where tyranny takes over, whether under Fascism or Communism, modern art is destroyed and exiled.' August Heckscher in Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, page 272.

³⁰⁷ See Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture*; and Paul Wood, *Varieties of Modernism Volume 4*.

³⁰⁸ In 1947, the leader of the second CCF proudly announced that: '... the United States ... enters into this irreconcilable conflict [against Russia] as the representative of Western Civilisation.' James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, page 134. Also see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 19-22, 115-120, 220-224, 244-278.

revolutionary faith, they instead emphasised the aesthetic mission of modernism. As the leaders of the new knowledge class, the avant-garde elite fought against not only the crudities of Stalinist totalitarianism, but also the banality of mass culture.³⁰⁹ Yet, it was Hollywood movies and rock 'n' roll records that had made by far the greatest contribution securing American hegemony over Western Europe. Crucially, these despised art forms appealed to the rank and file supporters of the Left. As working class incomes rose, increasing numbers of people imitated the fashions and lifestyles of the world's first mass consumption society in America. Nowhere were the ambiguities of this democratic popular culture more pronounced than in the impact of rock 'n' roll upon the youth of 1950s Europe. On the one hand, its American stars symbolised libertarian rebellion against patriarchal authority and moral conformity. On the other hand, its musicians encouraged admiration of the conformist consumer lifestyle of Cold War America.³¹⁰ Elvis Presley – the 'king of rock 'n' roll' - not only shocked the old folks with his sexy rockabilly blues, but also dutifully did a highly-publicised tour of duty with the US army in West Germany.³¹¹

The CCF thrived in a historical moment when pop stars were in the frontline of global geopolitics. At the end of earlier Times of Troubles, the new Universal State had restored order at home by conquering the known world. For Burnham, the lesson of Toynbee's historical analysis had been clear: America should liberate all of Europe and Asia from Russian totalitarianism.³¹² Yet, ironically, *The Struggle for the World* and *The Coming Defeat of Communism* were - in their own way - as utopian as any of his Trotskyist writings. Contrary to their original purpose, these impassioned pieces of propaganda soon became the founding texts of a very different world system: the armed peace of the Cold War. This new global order began as a diplomatic compromise designed to put an end to the imperial rivalries which had - for three traumatic decades - inflicted misery and destruction upon the peoples of the planet. In the closing months of the Second World War, US president Franklin Roosevelt and the Russian dictator Joseph Stalin had met at the Ukrainian seaside resort of Yalta to finalise the succession to the defunct British empire. As their first task, the non-European superpowers had to resolve the fate of Europe.³¹³

³⁰⁹ Some contemporary observers believed that: 'The ex-Marxists' deep disappointment at the failure of the working classes to achieve socialism bred a desire for revenge, which explained their obsessive interest in exposing the low state of popular taste.' Michael Wreszin, *A Rebel in Defence of Tradition*, pages 325-326. For the Leninist antecedents of this patrician snobbery, see Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pages 120-167.

³¹⁰ See George Melly, *Revolt into Style*, pages 36-47; and Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, pages 11-36.

³¹¹ See Mick Farren and Edward Barker, *Watch Out Kids*, pages 8-10.

³¹² See James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, pages 42-55, 181-199, 242-248; *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, pages 135-148, 208-221, 272-278.

³¹³ See Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Dowling, *Cold War*, pages 11-19.

The two wartime allies quickly decided to divide the troublesome continent between them: the Yalta agreement. Almost by accident, they had discovered a mutually beneficial solution. Under American and Russian occupation, the fratricidal Europeans were prevented from starting any more wars. What proved to be more difficult was agreeing on the exact demarcation of the truce line between their two spheres of influence. Soon both sides were claiming that the other had failed to respect the terms of Yalta agreement.³¹⁴ However, neither America nor Russia had any intention of escalating their quarrel into all-out war. Beginning in Germany, the two superpowers turned the temporary borders of the Yalta agreement into a permanent frontier: the 'Iron Curtain'. During the Victorian era, the British empire had overseen a single world system. In its place, two Universal States now shared the task of policing the planet. Permanent confrontation was the precondition of mutual collaboration. War was Peace.³¹⁵

‘In the past, the ruling groups of all countries ... did fight against one another, and the victor plundered the vanquished. In our own day, they are not fighting against each other at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact.’³¹⁶

As was tragically demonstrated during the 1945-50 Greek civil war and the 1956 Hungarian revolution, America and Russia had no compunction about using extreme violence when it was the most effective method for advancing their imperial interests. Yet, at the same time, both superpowers benefited from the maintenance of political and social stability within their spheres of influence. The constant threat of an imminent nuclear holocaust acted as the ultimate deterrent against internal dissent. If the Europeans didn't behave, the next Time of Troubles would inevitably lead to the destruction of the entire continent. As the Cold War became everyday normality, military violence was transubstantiated into a media spectacle. Avoiding an all-or-nothing confrontation in Europe now depended upon the masses believing in the nightmare of atomic armageddon. At the same time, because the nuclear arms race was – as a military strategy - literally MAD, America and Russia also had to prevent this irrational form of realpolitik inspiring rebellious thoughts of pacifism and defeatism

³¹⁴ Rostow claimed that the Cold War began when the Russians failed to fulfil their commitment under the Yalta agreement to hold democratic elections in Poland. See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 101-118, 128-131, 177-188.

³¹⁵ ‘The peculiarity of the Cold War was that, objectively speaking, no imminent danger of world war existed. More than this: in spite of the apocalyptic rhetoric on both sides, but especially on the American side, the governments of both superpowers accepted the global distribution of force at the end of the Second World War, which amounted to a highly uneven but essentially unchallenged balance of power.’ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, page 226.

³¹⁶ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, page 161.

among the citizens of their satellites.³¹⁷ In Cold War propaganda, the superpower confrontation was endowed with the highest aspirations of humanity: democracy, justice and equality. The survival of the species wasn't being put at risk over a petty territorial dispute between two greedy empires. On the contrary, America and Russia were engaged in a world-historical struggle to decide the destiny of humanity. According to the doublethink logic of the Cold War, the essence of freedom was voluntary submission to an imperialist superpower.

In the early-1950s, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was a pioneering institution of this new world order in the American half of Europe. Over on the other side of the Iron Curtain, a monolithic ideology was indoctrinated - with mixed results - into the minds of the masses. Stalinist orthodoxy was praised as the guarantor of political and economic stability within the Communist bloc. In contrast with this insistence on cultural uniformity, American hegemony thrived amongst heterogeneity and pluralism. The US-led Free World in Europe included Imperial Britain, Social Democratic Scandinavia, Catholic Italy, heterodox Stalinist Yugoslavia and the Fascist Spain. The CCF provided the American grand narrative of modernity which united these satellites in their diversity.³¹⁸ After terrifying them with nuclear nightmares, their citizens were seduced with promises of consumer prosperity and hi-tech futures. Political consensus, class compromise and efficient management at home would guarantee international cooperation and global peace. Under benevolent US guidance, the nations of Western Europe were steadily progressing through the stages of growth towards mass consumption and continental unity. Their long-term destiny was to become prosperous suburbs of the global city of the information society. The future of Europe was America.

³¹⁷ See Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, pages 42-65.

³¹⁸ At the same time that it was championing its own version of the materialist conception of history, the CCF – in the spirit of anti-Stalinist eclecticism – also promoted the writings of liberal philosophers who castigated Marxism for offering a ‘determinist’ understanding of social evolution. See Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, pages 41-117; and Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*.

The Great Game

The Cold War Left was convinced that the information society prophecy had dramatically shifted the international balance of power in America's favour. Marxism had been exposed as a defunct steam-age ideology. This meant that - for the first time since the 1917 revolution - Russia had lost ownership of the future. In the new computer-age, the United States was the vanguard of human progress. With its well-funded universities, it was the homeland of the emerging knowledge class. With its scientific expertise, it was building the prototype of the 'intergalactic network'. There was no doubt that America was the only nation capable of leading humanity towards the post-industrial utopia. This self-congratulatory analysis reflected a very special historical moment. In the mid-1960s, the prestige of the American empire had reached its peak. Within Western Europe, the USA no longer had to rely solely upon military might and economic supremacy to protect its interests. Across the continent, the American empire was idolised by a large proportion of its new subjects. Workers aspired to the consumer lifestyles of their peers in the USA. Intellectuals looked across the Atlantic for the latest trends in art, science and sociology. Young people imitated the fashions and mores of movie and pop stars from the United States. The majority of West Europeans had happily succumbed to American cultural hegemony: 'coca-colonisation'.

Not surprisingly, the CCF – and its CIA backers – believed that their psychological operations had played the decisive role in winning the hearts and minds of the peoples within the US sphere of influence. As former Trotskyists, the leaders of the Cold War Left were convinced that a committed group of intellectuals had the power to shape the minds of the masses.³¹⁹ The CCF had taken on the Stalinists on this all-important ideological battlefield - and decisively defeated them. But, at the same time, their Marxist training also told them that cultural hegemony was founded upon political and economic dominance. America had established its sphere of influence on the continent by helping Russia to defeat Nazi Germany in the Second World War. When the two superpowers subsequently fell out, the ruling elites of Western Europe had gratefully accepted US military protection against the new threat from the East. With their country's armed forces now integrated into an alliance under American command, modern socialists had welcomed the geopolitical message of the CCF's ideology: the dilution of national independence was a progressive step. Pragmatic self-interest had been endowed with world-historical significance.³²⁰

³¹⁹ Asserting the intellectuals' claim to monopolise the leadership of the Russian revolutionary movement, Lenin had argued that: 'Class consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, *only from outside* ... the sphere of relations between workers and employers.' V.I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?*, page 98. Also see George Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, pages 46-222, 295-342.

³²⁰ One historian of the CCF stressed that: '... it is important to recognise that the CIA involvement was centred on the promotion and manipulation of existing viewpoints on the Left [in Western Europe] ... and not the creation of them out of

‘[The intellectual] ... manages to transform the real collision [between individuals and their conditions of life], the prototype of his ideal copy, into the consequence of this ideological pretence.’³²¹

Reinforcing this geopolitical imperative, the leaders of parliamentary socialism soon realised that American rule also delivered full employment and rising living standards for their voters. As its decisive opening move in the Cold War, the US government had kick-started the revival of the Western European economy with generous subsidies and cheap credit. America’s half of the continent was once again open for business.³²² Within a few years, US companies and banks had taken a leading role within the various economies of Western Europe. From then onwards, their subsidiaries – and their local imitators – led the transition to welfare Fordism.³²³ Economic prosperity had a dramatic social impact. The need for consumption to increase in parallel with production soon started to undermine the traditional cultural hierarchies. For millennia, the rich had been the sole arbiters of taste within Europe. In contrast, the icons of US-style Fordism were mass produced commodities for sale to everyone: motor cars, t-shirts, hamburgers, cigarettes, fridges, washing machines and rock ‘n’ roll records.³²⁴ Not surprisingly, a growing proportion of the electorate of the West European socialist parties became enthralled by American popular culture. Across the Atlantic, workers enjoyed high wages, secure jobs, higher education and class mobility. When the dream of the West European proletariat was to live the American dream, socialist politicians needed an ideology which explained why the Left could manage welfare Fordism in the interests of the voters better than the Right.³²⁵

During the 1950s, one commodity above all others symbolised the arrival of the US-style affluent society: the TV set. Like the radio in the 1920s, this new media technology very quickly went from being a luxury to a necessity.³²⁶ Watching

thin air.’ Giles Scott-Smith, ‘The Organising of Intellectual Consensus (Part 1)’, page 8.

³²¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, page 304.

³²² See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 214-217; and Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*, pages 138-77.

³²³ See Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *The American Challenge*, pages 17-67; and Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*, pages 178-195.

³²⁴ See Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*., pages 151-208; and Stuart Ewen, *The Captains of Consciousness*, pages 51-76, 81-102, 177-184.

³²⁵ According to the English admirers of the Cold War Left, the disappearance of tooth-and-claw capitalism – coupled with the end of empire – meant that the advocates of third way socialism were now the ‘natural party of government’ in Western Europe. See Anthony Crosland *The Future of Socialism*, pages 1-80, 351-363; and Philip Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell*, pages 252-263.

³²⁶ Between 1957 and 1967, there was a ‘vertiginous growth’ from 6% to nearly 60% in the number of French households owning television sets. See Jérôme Bourdon, *Histoire de la Télévision sous de Gaulle*, pages 8-10.

television soon became the most important activity after working and sleeping. Being a member of a TV audience was the primary collective experience. National politics and international rivalries were now played out on the television screen. Production and consumption were harmonised through TV advertising campaigns. The latest fads and trends were hyped. New technologies were put on show. Modern lifestyles were praised.³²⁷ Above all, television provided entertainment for a mass audience. After a hard day's labour, the reward was sitting down to watch the box. Even if they weren't as well paid as Americans, West European workers still experienced the same fantasy world of glamour, prosperity, adventure and celebrity for a few hours each evening. Fordism had democratised capitalism.³²⁸

When the CCF had launched their propaganda offensive against Stalinism in late-1940s Western Europe, their task seemed daunting. Far from being identified with democracy, capitalism was held responsible for the sufferings of the previous three decades: war, fascism, genocide and mass unemployment. However, as the West European economies successfully moved from laissez-faire liberalism to welfare Fordism, public attitudes gradually began to change. By the mid-1950s, the programme of the Vital Centre had been vindicated. American capitalism had proved itself to be politically and economically superior to Russian socialism. In the late-1940s and early-1950s, the CIA had engaged in 'dirty tricks' to prevent the French and Italian Communist parties winning elections. US taxpayers' money had played a vital role in financing anti-Stalinist socialist parties and trade unions in Western Europe. At the moment of crisis at the outbreak of the Cold War, these covert operations had played an important role in stabilising America's rule over its half of the continent.³²⁹ However, what turned this short-term victory into long-term ascendancy was the economic revival of the region. The CIA might have financed the CCF to manipulate the West European Left in the interests of the American empire, but the parliamentary socialist parties embraced the new faith because they wanted to win votes from an increasingly prosperous electorate. In place of its own interpretation of Marxism, Social Democracy now had the 'ideology of the end of ideology' to distinguish itself from Communism.³³⁰

³²⁷ In the emerging 'bureaucratic society of controlled consumption', television extended the economic imperatives of the workplace into everyday life: '... you are at home, in your living room ... and you are being ... told how to live better ... in short how to exist.' Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, page 107. Also see Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, theses 1-54; and Raymond Williams, *Television*, pages 19-31, 44-118.

³²⁸ In 1967, Guy Debord explained that: '... the [rise of the media] spectacle indicates that ... [contemporary capitalism] has crossed the threshold of *its own abundance* ...' Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, thesis 39.

³²⁹ See William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 27-39, 61-64 104-108; and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, pages 49-53.

³³⁰ See Social Democratic Party, 'Basic Programme of the Social Democratic Party of Germany'; and Anthony Crosland *The Future of Socialism*, pages 43-60.

By the early-1960s, the leading nations of Western Europe had almost completed the transition to Fordism. Building on its success in the previous decade, the Cold War Left began promoting the information society as the next made-in-the-USA stage of growth for these satellites to imitate.³³¹ When they watched television, West Europeans were already living partially within the information society. When the TV news bulletins covered superpower summits and United Nations meetings, the continent's electronic media were prefiguring the global village in the present. Thanks to McLuhanism, the Bell commission was now able to project the social impact of television upon contemporary societies forward into the imaginary future. The accelerating convergence of media, telecommunications and computing would unleash changes as important in human history as the industrial revolution. The demiurge of the Net was going to liberate humanity without any need for class struggles. As in the late-1940s and early-1950s, West Europeans had to trust their imperial benefactor to lead them forward to the new stage of growth. Loyalty in the present would be rewarded by entry into the future utopia. Camouflaged by un-Marxist theory, the information society had become the American substitute for Marxist communism. As long as it owned time, the USA would maintain its control over the space of Western Europe.

In his classic 1916 pamphlet *Imperialism*, Lenin had warned that the twentieth century was the epoch of endless war and economic stagnation.³³² Yet, with remarkable speed, the US elite had succeeded in constructing a new – and more advanced - imperial system on the ruins of the old one. In the 1945 Yalta agreement, America and Russia had divided the defeated continent between them. By starting the Cold War, the two brother-enemies had consolidated their control over their new possessions. Under their joint hegemony, peace and prosperity finally returned to the continent after thirty years of chaos. At the Yalta conference, the two superpowers had also inadvertently created a framework for global governance. Because Western Europe and Japan had fallen inside its sphere of influence, the US elite was convinced that it had inherited responsibility for their defunct colonial empires. Burnham argued that America must seize this opportunity to take-over leadership of the 'English-speaking peoples'. By merging with Britain, the USA would not only dominate Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but also inherit its colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.³³³ Still in awe of Lenin's eloquence, Burnham had turned the

³³¹ After the rapid transition to Fordism during the previous decade, even Europeans hostile to US economic domination over Western Europe saw no reason to doubt the accuracy of this new prophecy. See Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *The American Challenge*, pages 36-39, 78-83, 111-116, 211-213.

³³² Lenin was convinced that: '[The] ... distinctive features of imperialism ... oblige us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism.' V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism*, page 147. Also see Richard Day, *The 'Crisis' and the 'Crash'*, pages 21-51.

³³³ Burnham insisted that: 'No matter what disputes between Britain and the United States arise ... the destiny of the two nations is fused.' James Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, page 246. Also see James Burnham, *The Struggle for the*

prescriptions of *Imperialism* upside-down. If the American empire was going to be a proper empire, it must a faithful copy of the paramount power of the 'highest stage of capitalism': the British empire.

'At the culmination of the Time of Troubles ... one state succeeds in eliminating its rivals and founding a Universal Empire, the extent of which coincides with the sphere of cultural influence attained previously by the [former dominant] civilisation.'³³⁴

In the late-1940s, Burnham's fantasies about an American colonial empire were already an anachronism. As the heirs of the 1776 revolution, the Roosevelt and Truman administrations didn't share his desire to repeat the mistakes of the former imperial master. Occupying other people's countries wasn't only immoral, but also, even worse, extremely expensive.³³⁵ Rather than imitating the British empire in its Victorian heyday, the US elite instead found its inspiration in the earlier liberal iteration of this imperial system. When the Royal Navy had policed the oceans and the City of London regulated the monetary system, free trade created 'perpetual peace' between the peoples of the world. Instead of fighting against each other, nations traded with each other.³³⁶ By specialising within the global marketplace, every region on the planet was becoming more prosperous.³³⁷ As scientific knowledge advanced, new technologies like railways, steamships and telegraphy were bringing the peoples of the world together.³³⁸ Wars between nations were an anachronism. Global liberalism was uniting humanity. Best of all, the dominant power in this world system didn't need a colonial empire when economic hegemony was a more efficient - and much cheaper - method of controlling other people's countries: the *imperialism of free trade*.³³⁹

World, pages 190-192, 194-197; and Christopher Hitchens, *Blood, Class and Nostalgia*, pages 252-291.

³³⁴ James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, pages 48-49.

³³⁵ This attitude reflected American disdain for the decadence of old-style European imperialism: 'Colonial rule ... had been an inferior mode of relationship of core and periphery, one occasioned by the strenuous late-nineteenth century conflict among industrial states but one no longer desirable from the point of view of the new hegemonic power.' Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy*, page 32. Also see Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire*, pages 7-31.

³³⁶ See Immanuel Kant, 'To Perpetual Peace'.

³³⁷ See David Ricardo, *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, pages 77-93.

³³⁸ When the first transatlantic telegraph cable was laid in 1858, two journalists proclaimed that: 'It is impossible that old prejudices and hostilities should longer exist, while such an instrument has been created for the exchange of thought between all the nations of the earth.' Charles Briggs and Augustus Maverick in Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet*, page 81.

³³⁹ See Ellen Meiskens Wood, *Empire of Capital*, pages 73-101; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, pages 53-104; and Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, pages 1-73.

At the end of the Second World War, the consensus among the US elite blamed the breakdown of the British-run system of global liberalism for precipitating three decades of death and destruction. When free trade had given way to tariff barriers, peaceful co-existence had been replaced by military aggression.³⁴⁰ Crucially, the Truman administration was convinced that this disaster could have been avoided. Lenin and Toynbee's analyses of imperialism were far too pessimistic. At the end of the First World War, US president Wilson had tried to rebuild the shattered global economy on more democratic principles, but he had been thwarted by short-sighted opposition at home and abroad.³⁴¹ Thirty years later, the Truman administration knew that it could succeed where its Democratic predecessor had failed. After another global conflagration, the Republican party had finally realised that America couldn't shirk its international responsibilities. More importantly, the US elite's ambitions were no longer constrained by powerful imperial rivals. Britain and France were bankrupt. Russia was severely weakened by its massive human and material losses during the war. Germany and Japan were under military occupation. China was engulfed in revolutionary turmoil. With the only undamaged industrial base and the largest armed forces in the world, America could reorder the world in its own interests.³⁴²

In the late-1940s, the US elite created the institutional infrastructure to manage their new empire. Rejecting old-style European colonialism, American hegemony was founded upon global institutions which indirectly limited the independence of their member states. On the one hand, there were the economic organisations binding the US sphere of influence together: the IMF, the World Bank, GATT, OECD and the Common Market. On the other hand, there were the military alliances protecting the boundaries of the new empire: NATO, ANZUS, SEATO and the Baghdad pact.³⁴³ Overarching these bodies was the United Nations which – at one and the same time – acted as an embryonic world government and a public platform for superpower rivalry. Just to remind everyone who was boss, the headquarters of the UN were in New York.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁰ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 133-134; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, pages 202-225; and Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, pages 203-279.

³⁴¹ See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 23-25; Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*, pages 50-61; and Donald White, *The American Century*, pages 22-23, 25-266.

³⁴² See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 43-88, 165-171; Donald White, *The American Century*, pages 17-64; and Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, pages 27-28, 100-101.

³⁴³ See Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*, pages 107-177; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pages 480-509; and Donald White, *The American Century*, pages 161-210.

³⁴⁴ Giving his reason for donating the land for this building, the public face of America's most powerful dynasty explained: "I wanted the U.N. to ... be in the

Like their former oppressors in Western Europe, the newly independent nations of the South soon found themselves conscripted into the US side in the Cold War. Having freed themselves from colonialism, they were now expected to join the military and economic institutions of the new world system. As the recent Time of Troubles had tragically proved, autarchic nationalism created war and poverty. Global liberalism was the sole guarantor of peace and prosperity.³⁴⁵ However, in stark contrast with Western Europe, embracing the American model wasn't clearly the preferable option out in the periphery of the world system. Imposed by the hated colonial master, capitalism had blocked the development of the indigenous economy for generations. In contrast, the Stalinist dictatorship had – in less than three decades - transformed an impoverished and defeated peasant nation into a victorious nuclear-armed industrialised superpower. For radicals in the new nations of the South, the Russian model represented the hope of turning formal independence into full sovereignty.

‘Politically, there must be a complete break with world capitalism ... during the period of reconstruction ... [the] Marxist-Leninist strategy ... [is the] transition to a self-reliant, self-sustaining economy.’³⁴⁶

In 1950, the Cold War suddenly flared up into a shooting war in East Asia. Blamed at home by their Republican opponents for failing to prevent the 1949 Chinese revolution, the Truman administration sent a US expeditionary force to protect the pro-American nationalists in Korea against their pro-Russian rivals. For the next three years, the two superpowers fought each other over whose dictator was going to oppress the Korean people.³⁴⁷ Contrary to expectations of the Democratic leadership, their decisive move against the advance of Communism in Asia was unpopular at home. In 1952, the Republican candidate won the US presidential elections for the first time since the late-1920s. Despite all the propaganda emphasising the vital necessity of resisting the Red Menace, American voters were unhappy that their nation's armed forces were fighting an anti-Communist land war in faraway East Asia.³⁴⁸

world's financial, cultural and communications capital.” Nelson Rockefeller in Ric Burns and James Sanders with Lisa Ades, *New York*, page 483.

³⁴⁵ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 108-121, 139-144; *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 250-258.

³⁴⁶ Mohamed Babu, ‘Development Strategy – Revolutionary-style’, pages 63-64. Also see Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, pages 346-352.

³⁴⁷ See Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Dowling, *Cold War*, pages 83-105; and William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 45-55.

³⁴⁸ According to Rostow, the main ‘negative’ outcome of the Korean war was that: ‘... the old fearful image of Asia as a terrain where the white man might be swallowed up by endless fatalistic hordes was reinforced.’ W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, page 242.

For the rest of the decade, the Democratic party found itself out of power. Traumatized by its defeat, its leadership desperately needed a new strategy for solving crises in the South like the Korean confrontation. With a credible programme of action, the Democrats could once again persuade the US electorate that the Left were better managers of the American empire than the Right. Unfortunately for them, the Eisenhower administration carefully avoided making the same mistake as its predecessor. The United States didn't need military force to punish insufficiently subservient satellites. When the British and French invaded Egypt without American permission in 1956, a combination of political pressure and economic sanctions quickly forced them back into line.³⁴⁹ Applying the lessons learnt in its covert operations against the West European Communist parties, the CIA also successfully removed unfriendly governments in Iran, Guatemala, Congo and other 'hotspots'.³⁵⁰ Under the Republicans, the American public could enjoy the material and psychic benefits of global hegemony without having to suffer the human and material costs of foreign wars.

In late-1950s, Kennedy – as he prepared his bid for the US presidency – was well aware that electoral victory depended upon the Democrats regaining their reputation as the champion of America's interests in the South. As a first step, he needed a devastating critique of the foreign policy of his Republican opponents. Having cast doubt on their competence, he then had to provide a credible – and more dynamic – strategy for managing the American empire. Kennedy knew exactly where to find the intellectuals who could help him to win the forthcoming election: the CENIS think-tank at MIT.³⁵¹ Building upon its successes in Western Europe, the CIA had recruited intellectuals from the Cold War Left to lead the ideological struggle against Communism in the South. In the mid-1950s, the CCF expanded its area of operations outside Western Europe. To provide the theoretical justification for this initiative, the CIA funded Rostow and his CENIS colleagues to hone their un-Marxist materialist conception of history in research work on the emerging nations of the South.³⁵²

As the decade progressed, the Cold War Left became increasingly frustrated with the failings of the Eisenhower administration. Just like its European predecessors, the American empire was becoming identified with the authoritarian rule of the privileged minority who had done well out of the old colonial system: the landowners and merchants. Fearing social unrest, the members of the traditional elite were eager to

³⁴⁹ US intervention achieved its goal: 'The British and the French learned that they ... were second-rate powers incapable of independent action.' Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, page 253.

³⁵⁰ See William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 64-83, 156-163; and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, pages 81-117.

³⁵¹ See W.W. Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, pages 188-253; and Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 220-226.

³⁵² See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 108-109; Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, pages 347-351; and Victor Marchetti and John Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, pages 224-225.

cooperate with the new American overlord who protected their wealth and power. Already wealthy, they also unfortunately had a vested interest in delaying economic modernisation.³⁵³ In the short-term, the Republican party's policy of sharing power with traditional elites might be cheap and easy. But, as the Cold War Left emphasised, this strategy was leading to disaster in the long-term. If America didn't quickly lose its reputation as the 'lover of dictators', all struggles for political democracy and economic justice in the South would develop into nationalist rebellions against yankee imperialism.³⁵⁴ In the looking-glass logic of the Cold War, a totalitarian police state was becoming the champion of progress and freedom across most of the developing world.³⁵⁵

In the year before the presidential elections, the worst fears of the Cold War Left were confirmed. Because it offered no hope for economic development in the South, the Eisenhower administration had allowed the Communists to hijack the 1959 Cuban revolution.³⁵⁶ Emboldened by this victory, revolutionary guerrilla movements were becoming the most dangerous threat to US hegemony over the South. The Russians might win the Cold War - without even having to risk a military showdown in Europe - by leading a worldwide anti-imperialist insurrection against the American empire.³⁵⁷

³⁵³ The CENIS experts diligently studied the writings of their Communist opponents. In 1926, Mao Zedong had explained that: 'In economically backward and semi-colonial China, the landlord and the ... [merchant] class are wholly appendages of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for their survival and growth. These classes represent the most backward and reactionary relations of production in China and hinder the development of her productive forces.' Mao Zedong, 'Analysis of the Classes of Chinese Society', page 18. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The Prospects for Communist China*, pages 18-45.

³⁵⁴ See Eleanor Roosevelt and Huston Smith, 'What Are We For?', pages 10-12. Eleanor Roosevelt was the icon of the left of the Democratic party and wife of the 1933-45 US president. Also see Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 84, 96-97, 111; and W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 326-331, 359-366.

³⁵⁵ In 1960, the co-author of a best-selling novel inspired by the CENIS analysis of the South lambasted the short-sighted policies of the Eisenhower administration: '... we are assured by our government that support for oppressive oligarchies in ... [the developing world] is constructive and successful. Yet ... the upheaval will come full-blown, and hanging happily onto its coattails will be the Communists - almost as though by our invitation.' William Lederer, *A Nation of Sheep*, pages 73-74. Also see William Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American*.

³⁵⁶ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 49-52; and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, 215-220.

³⁵⁷ Rostow pointed out that: 'Lacking a democratic equivalent to an analysis and an operational strategy like those derived from Lenin's *Imperialism*, ... the United States ... found itself ... in danger of being outflanked.' W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, page 255.

In a global rerun of the 1949 Chinese revolution, the heroic peasants of the South would overthrow the corrupt capitalists of the North.

‘Since the Second World War, the proletarian revolutionary movement has for various reasons been temporarily held back in the North American and West European capitalist countries, while the people’s revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been growing vigorously. In a sense, the contemporary world revolution ... presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas. In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world’s population.’³⁵⁸

Aided by the CIA, Rostow and his colleagues developed the up-to-date un-Marxist response to the revolutionary crisis in the South: MIT modernisation theory. First and foremost, they dismissed the geopolitical analyses of Lenin as a relic from the long-gone epoch of European imperialism. In contrast with its European and Japanese predecessors, the prosperity of the American empire wasn’t founded upon the exploitation of overseas colonies. A new theory was needed to understand the new US-led world system.³⁵⁹ Locked in a global competition with Russia, America’s priority was preserving political stability within its sphere of influence. As in Western Europe, social discontent in the South would eventually diminish as living standards rose. It was therefore in the USA’s self-interest to speed-up the urbanisation and industrialisation of the developing world.³⁶⁰ Under the benevolent protection of the American empire, impoverished peasant nations were now able to begin the arduous process of building prosperous and pluralistic societies. With generous financial aid from the US government and guidance from multi-disciplinary teams of MIT-trained experts, the nations of the South could progress faster through the stages of growth towards the goal of welfare Fordism. Echoing the Fabians, the Cold War Left believed that successful imperialism required a civilising mission.³⁶¹

Inspired by the success of the CCF in Western Europe, the CENIS academics thought that America could win the support of the impoverished masses in the developing

³⁵⁸ Lin Biao, ‘People’s War’, page 84. For the inspiration for this revolutionary prophecy, see Mao Zedong, *Six Essays on Military Affairs*.

³⁵⁹ Rostow claimed that: ‘The United States has no interest in political satellites ... our central task in undeveloped areas ... is to protect the independence of the revolutionary process now going forward.’ W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, page 115. Also see Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 147-148.

³⁶⁰ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 144-145; and W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, pages 106-111.

³⁶¹ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Growth*, pages 139-144; *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 65-78; Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 105-148; and Ralph Braibanti, ‘Administrative Modernisation’, pages 173-180.

world. The USA should openly aid the modernising elites in their struggle against both feudal reactionaries and totalitarian revolutionaries. Having overcome their rivals, this 'Third Force' would lead the urban poor and the peasantry towards democracy and plenty.³⁶² As in Western Europe, America's protégés in the developing world were encouraged to imitate the centrist policies of the Cold War Left: political consensus, economic compromise and managerial efficiency. At a global level, free trade might be necessary to prevent the revival of autarchic imperialist blocs. But, at a national level, laissez-faire liberalism was as anachronistic in the South as in the North.³⁶³ The most effective strategy for economic modernisation was the pragmatic combination of state planning and private enterprise. The Third Force must follow the third way to prosperity.³⁶⁴

The CENIS think-tank believed that the media played a key role in preparing the preconditions for 'take-off' and speeding up the process of industrialisation. In agrarian societies, there were many irrational psychological barriers which discouraged the adoption of modern attitudes and lifestyles.³⁶⁵ Echoing McLuhan, the MIT theorists were convinced that the spread of new media would inevitably change people's consciousness and, in turn, lead to the emergence of a new society. With US money and guidance, the modernising elites in the South were able to set up newspapers and radio stations in their countries. They were also planning to extend their telephone systems and begin television broadcasting. For the first time, peasants in these developing countries were learning about the world outside their villages. Public service media informed them about national politics and educated them in the latest agricultural techniques. Commercial media encouraged them to buy new goods and copy urban lifestyles.³⁶⁶ Over time, traditional prejudices and fears would be eroded away. Modernist ideologies would give a common identity to the new nation being built by people from different social and regional backgrounds.³⁶⁷ Thanks to the media, the masses would be eager to embrace US-style industrialisation.

³⁶² See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages x-xi, 8-11, 85-88, 98-101; and W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 114-118.

³⁶³ Having conducted empirical research in the South, the CENIS experts were convinced that: 'The histories of modern Turkey, Mexico and India are better guides to the future than Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*.' Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, page 67.

³⁶⁴ See W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 65-7, 89-105; Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 55-67; and Eugene Staley, 'The Role of the State in Economic Development'.

³⁶⁵ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 5-6, 23-26, 43-48; David McLelland, 'The Impulse to Modernisation'; and Alex Inkeles, 'The Modernisation of Man'. For the un-Marxist inspiration for this analysis, see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

³⁶⁶ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 16, 39-40, 105-110; and Ithiel de Sola Pool, 'Communications and Development'.

³⁶⁷ The top CENIS political scientist explained that: 'The media establish ... [a] common file of mutually understandable information simultaneously over a large area.'

CENIS believed that the new social group which would lead the process of industrialisation already existed in most countries in the South. But, in some unfortunate countries, the indigenous modernising elite was missing. In such cases, the Cold War Left argued that America should intervene to force the traditional ruling class to take on this role. Sometimes, as in 1920s Turkey, the army could provide the decisive leadership needed to make the painful break with the past. When supervised by CENIS graduates, authoritarian regimes were able to create the socio-economic preconditions for democracy and welfare Fordism to flourish in the future.³⁶⁸ Like the CIA covert operations in late-1940s Western Europe, political repression within the American sphere of influence in the South was a temporary inconvenience in the unfolding of the grand narrative of social progress.

‘... it seems ... to be the greater evil [in developing nations] to develop “popular government” at the expense of a viable administration capable of carrying out an amalgam of elite and mass wills. while efficient administration may actually depress some aspects of politicisation, such sedation may be beneficial in the long-run.’³⁶⁹

By creating the CENIS development strategy, Rostow and his colleagues aimed to provide the Third Force in the South with its own distinctive ideology for the political struggle against its Communist rivals. As in Western Europe, this Cold War Left theory would become the accepted orthodoxy as soon as economic growth began to accelerate. There was only one major obstacle preventing this happy outcome. Across the developing world, there existed a small minority of revolutionary fanatics determined to sabotage the ‘take-off’ of their countries. In their research studies, CENIS academics had discovered that the slow pace of modernisation was causing psychological neuroses among a key social group: the intellectuals. Alienated and frustrated, many members of the embryonic knowledge class in the South succumbed to the temptations of revolutionary romanticism and ideological extremism.³⁷⁰ In Rostow’s oft-repeated phrase, Communism was the ‘[mental] disease of the transition’ to modernity.³⁷¹ With aid from Russia and China, these intellectual malcontents were now leading peasant guerrilla movements across the South. Instead

A mass media system welds the segments of the personal contact network into a single national whole capable of integrated action.’ Ithiel de Sola Pool, ‘Communications and Development’, page 103. Also see Leonard Binder, ‘Ideology and Development’.

³⁶⁸ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 31-34; and Myron Weiner, ‘Modernisation of Politics and Government’, pages 213-218.

³⁶⁹ Ralph Braibanti, ‘Administrative Modernisation’, pages 167. Also see Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 79-85.

³⁷⁰ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 22, 36-37, 69-70, 95-96, 102-104; and Harold Lasswell, ‘The World Revolution of our Time’, pages 88-94.

³⁷¹ See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 162-164.

of developing their economies, pro-American governments were forced to concentrate their meagre resources on defeating this intransigent enemy.³⁷²

Because Russia ruthlessly persecuted dissidents inside its bloc, the Cold War Left accepted that it was sometimes necessary – if regrettable – to murder, torture and imprison Communist subversives and their sympathisers. However, the MIT experts feared that a policy of indiscriminate repression would polarise political debate in the South into the choice between two unpleasant extremes: the traditional oligarchy and the revolutionary elite.³⁷³ If the Third Force was to prevail, its American sponsors needed a more intelligent strategy for defeating rural insurrections. As well as promoting economic development, the USA also had to train and equip the security forces of friendly regimes in the South. Learning from the writings of Mao and Guevara on guerrilla warfare, the CIA and CENIS believed that US special forces and their local allies could adapt the techniques of their revolutionary enemy to win the war in the countryside: *counter-insurgency*.³⁷⁴

According to MIT modernisation theory, every nation had its own unique path of development. Yet, at the same time, every economy had to move through the same predetermined sequence of stages of growth.³⁷⁵ For the CENIS team, this duality explained the stark dichotomy in living conditions between the North and the South. The admirers of Lenin and Mao had placed the blame upon American imperialism for perpetuating the ‘underdevelopment’ of the developing world.³⁷⁶ Rejecting this analysis, Rostow and his colleagues argued that each nation was at a different moment in time within the same historical process. Sooner or later, the poor South would enjoy the same living standards as the rich North.³⁷⁷ The recent shift in the ideological meaning of liberalism within American political theory turned this un-Marxist grand

³⁷² See W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, pages 113-114; *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 99-103.

³⁷³ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 97-98.

³⁷⁴ See Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 110-114; and W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 319-323; *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 118-119. Also see Mao Zedong, *Six Essays on Military Affairs*; and Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*.

³⁷⁵ See Lucian Pye, ‘Conclusion’, pages 346-347.

³⁷⁶ The division between North and South was traced back to the imperial system established in the first wave of European colonisation: ‘... the metropolis expropriates economic surplus from its satellites and appropriates it for its own economic development. The satellites remain underdeveloped for lack of access to their own surplus ...’ Andre Gundar Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, page 9.

³⁷⁷ The CENIS essay collection entitled *Modernisation* opened with the proposition that: ‘... many countries in the developing world are today experiencing a comprehensive process of change which Europe and America once experienced ...’ Myron Weiner, ‘Preface’, page v. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pages 139-142; *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 65-78.

narrative into the historical justification for US global leadership. Within a world economy composed of nations at very different stages of growth, free trade remained the only credible alternative to autarkic nationalism. Fortunately, as their economies developed within the world market, every nation would slowly adopt more modern concepts of liberalism. At a global level, market competition was already being supplemented with international financial institutions and regional planning. Under US leadership, the world economy was inevitably evolving from laissez-faire liberalism into Vital Centre liberalism. Global business required global government.³⁷⁸

As in Western Europe, America - the first continental nation - provided the best model for this emerging world federation. The principles of the 1776 revolution showed how economic unity could be combined with political democracy on a global level.³⁷⁹ The international popularity of Hollywood movies and rock 'n' roll music proved that the United States was already the precursor of a united world. As a nation of immigrants and descendents of immigrants, the USA was the first country with a truly global culture. By fusing the local cultures of their homelands together, the American had created a new and more advanced culture. The Cold War Left enthused that this 'melting pot' culture must be the prototype of the global village culture to come. When everyone on the planet had access to the new information technologies, national and ethnic peculiarities would blend into a US-style common identity.³⁸⁰ America today was everywhere else tomorrow.

'The pace at which means of communications are now under development argues ... that the present nations of the world will move into relations of increasing intimacy and interaction. Between them, the urgent imperative to tame military force and the need to deal with people everywhere on the basis of the accelerating proximity argue strongly for movement in the direction of federalised world organisation under effective international law. And, should effective international control of military power be achieved, it might prove consistent and rational to move other functions upward from unilateral determination to an organised arena of international politics.'³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 411-414. In 1914, at the very moment of the collapse of the British imperial system, Karl Kautsky had foreseen the possibility of this new global settlement: 'Out of the world war of the imperialist great powers ... there can result a federation among the strongest of them ... the transference of the policy of [financial and industrial] cartels to foreign policy, a phase of ultra-imperialism ...' Karl Kautsky, *Selected Political Writings*, page 88.

³⁷⁹ Rostow boasted that: 'Our nation was born out of the commitment to ideas – incorporated in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution – which transcend our own borders.' W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, page 53. Also see W.W. Rostow, 'The National Style'; *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 29-30.

³⁸⁰ See Samuel Huntingdon, 'Dead Souls'.

³⁸¹ W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, page 549.

In the 1960 US presidential campaign, Kennedy's enthusiasm for MIT modernisation theory reinforced his public image as the most modern candidate. Unlike his Republican opponent, his team had an up-to-date policy for tackling the new threat of revolutionary guerrilla movements in the South. After Kennedy's victory, the new administration immediately adopted the dual-strategy of CENIS: development and repression. In news reports, the president identified himself with the elite US military units trained for counter-insurgency warfare.³⁸² As their first covert operation, the Democrats approved the previous administration's plan for a CIA-led invasion of Cuba. With US help, the Third Force would defeat totalitarianism without restoring the old oligarchy.³⁸³ When this adventure ended in disaster, Kennedy quickly launched an ambitious programme of subsidies and advice to accelerate economic growth in Latin America: the Alliance for Progress. To ensure its success, Rostow was appointed to oversee the project.³⁸⁴ If military force couldn't remove Communism from its Caribbean base, economic modernisation would prevent the revolutionary contagion from spreading to other countries in the region. The Kennedy government also mobilised political idealism at home for the cause of development abroad. In a highly publicised initiative, young Americans were sent out to work with US-funded aid projects in the South: the Peace Corps. By helping those in distress, these volunteers demonstrated that the Number 1 superpower supported social progress in the less fortunate parts of the world.³⁸⁵ At a 1961 meeting of a regional economic forum in Uruguay, the Latin American delegates didn't know which left-wing politician was the greater threat to the old order on the continent: Che Guevara – the representative of revolutionary Cuba or Douglas Dillon – the US proponent of MIT modernisation theory.³⁸⁶

By the time that Kennedy came to power in 1960, the partition of Europe had solidified. With the building of the Berlin Wall a year later, the last border dispute on the continent was resolved.³⁸⁷ Although the nuclear arms race continued unchecked, an all-out war between America and Russia now seemed very unlikely. Yet, only a year later, a series of miscalculations on both sides nearly triggered the atomic armageddon. In 1962, the competition between the two superpowers for control of Cuba had escalated into the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War. Fearful of another CIA-sponsored invasion, the revolutionary regime had agreed to the Russians stationing nuclear missiles on their island. When US aerial surveillance discovered their bases, the

³⁸² See Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, page 350.

³⁸³ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 233-297; and W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 208-215.

³⁸⁴ Rostow praised the Alliance for Progress as: '... a policy which would align the United States actively with the great forces in Latin America which seek economic development and greater social justice.' W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, page 13. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 216-221; and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 186-205.

³⁸⁵ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 604-609.

³⁸⁶ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 761-765.

³⁸⁷ See Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Dowling, *Cold War*, pages 165-183.

Kennedy regime threatened war if these weapons weren't removed from Cuba. In a terrifying standoff, both sides – in a moment of insanity – had decided to risk losing everything over who controlled a small Caribbean island.³⁸⁸

Back in 1916, Lenin had argued that imperialism was the struggle over who owned the riches of the world. Incessant war was the inevitable result. Yet, in wealthy Europe, the American and Russian empires had faithfully respected the terms of the Yalta agreement for nearly two decades. Military posturing and propaganda rhetoric had never been allowed to escalate into an all-out confrontation. In the early-1950s, the American army had fought in the Korean civil war against the pro-Russian nationalists and their Chinese allies. Yet, even in this vicious conflict, the two superpowers had successfully localised their military competition to the peninsula. When an American general had advocated using nuclear weapons against China, US president Eisenhower quickly sacked him.³⁸⁹ By the beginning of the 1960s, living with the Cold War had become normality. Crises had come and gone, but nothing had fundamentally changed. In 1961, few people had foreseen the Cuban crisis that threatened the survival of humanity. Above all, they were surprised that the final showdown between the superpowers was taking place in the South rather than in Europe.

Paradoxically, the Yalta agreement was responsible for this spasm of irrationality. By partitioning Europe, America and Russia had imposed peace on the continent. But, as both superpowers established order within their spheres of influence, the opportunities for competition between them became ever scarcer. As a result, imperial rivalries were increasingly diverted to the South. In this extension of the Yalta agreement, the dangerous nuclear standoff in Europe was sublimated into a 'great game' of diplomacy, conspiracies, propaganda and military operations played out in exotic lands.³⁹⁰ Russian and American agents experienced the thrill of fighting for dominance over the internal politics of other people's countries. In this Cold War game, the nations of the South became the pieces on the board which were lost or won when loyalties shifted from one bloc to another. Every country in the developing world now had symbolic importance as a counter in the superpower confrontation.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 794-841; and Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 535-574.

³⁸⁹ See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 231-232; and Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Dowling, *Cold War*, pages 101-102.

³⁹⁰ In the early-1960s, American geopolitical strategists argued that: '... a limited war should provide a safety-valve for preventing explosions of a "doomsday" proportion.' Irving Louis Horowitz, *The War Game*, page 143. For the original 'great game' between Britain and Russia in the Victorian era which anticipated the Cold War contest, see Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game*.

³⁹¹ The leading US proponent of games theory explained that: '... the starting point [of a game] is not disagreement, but on the contrary agreement, namely an agreement to strive for incompatible goals within the constraints of certain rules.' Anatol Rapoport, *Fights, Games and Debates*, page viii.

Although both sides played to win, the aim of the Cold War game was to continue playing without ever winning. In a world system founded upon the cooperative rivalry of two blocs, the outright victory for one side was a disastrous defeat for both sides.³⁹² As soon as an encounter was decided, the two players immediately started playing the next one. The Cold War game didn't have a final score. By moving the battlefield to the South, Russia and America were now able to compete for mastery of the world without ever fundamentally altering the geopolitical balance of power. Losing or winning a contest over a country inhabited by impoverished peasants would never be important enough to trigger a nuclear showdown. Best of all, by counting the number of client states in each bloc, it was possible to measure which side was ahead at any particular moment in the 'zero sum' game of the Cold War. Russia and America had preserved stability in the rich North by exporting instability to the poor South.³⁹³

'[Game theory] projects symmetrical models onto an asymmetrical political climate, and rules-of-the-game comprehension into a context of social disorganisation and political disequilibrium.'³⁹⁴

In the early-1960s, MIT modernisation theory was the most advanced American strategy for playing this geopolitical contest. At the beginning of the Cold War game, the USA had controlled most of the pieces on the board. But, by allying itself with the old elites from colonial times, the new empire had slowly but surely alienated the majority of the population in the South. Invigorated by the 1959 Cuban revolution, Stalinism was now the pre-eminent ideology of political emancipation and social justice in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The USA was losing the battle for the hearts and minds of the developing world. When it came power, the Democratic party was determined to prove that its progressive policies were not only morally preferable, but also the most effective strategy for crushing the Communist threat in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Crucially, winning victories overseas helped to win elections at home. Patriotic Americans wanted to see the US team staying ahead in the score in the great game of the South. The new Democratic administration had no intention of disappointing them.

The Cuban missile crisis was the first time when the two superpowers forgot that the Cold War game was only a game. Compared to the wealthy industrial regions of Europe, a small sugar-producing tourist island in the Caribbean was an expendable pawn. Ignoring this geopolitical reality, the leaders of Russia and America in the early-1960s made a series of foolhardy decisions that came close to destroying human civilisation. The symbolic power of a Communist revolution in America's 'backyard' had persuaded both players to escalate to the brink of catastrophe to secure a single piece on the board. After looking into the abyss, the two brother-enemies came to

³⁹² Rapoport emphasised that: 'The opponent speaks the same language; he is seen as ... a mirror-image of self ...' Anatol Rapoport, *Fights, Games and Debates*, page 9.

³⁹³ For the mathematical theorisation of this competition, see Anatol Rapoport, *Fights, Games and Debates*, pages 105-242.

³⁹⁴ Irving Louis Horowitz, *The War Game*, page 21.

their senses and struck a deal. Cuba secured its independence from America by submitting to Russian hegemony. There was no neutralist third option in the zero sum game in the South.³⁹⁵ Although disaster had been averted, the Kennedy administration feared that the loss of any more pieces on the board could further weaken the US playing position by detonating a chain-reaction of anti-American uprisings across the South. In the aptly named ‘domino theory’, Mao Zedong had become the master strategist of the Cold War game.³⁹⁶

By inverting his revolutionary prophecy, MIT analysts argued that – after the US defeat in Cuba – every pro-American regime in the developing world had acquired immense ideological significance. Even nations of little strategic or economic value were now important pieces on the board. If guerrilla revolutionaries were allowed to seize power in another country in the developing world, Stalinism would have proved itself to be the only path to modernity. After winning the first contest in Western Europe, the USA would have lost the second round in the South. Instead of America leading humanity towards the information society, Russian communism would – once again – be the ‘wave of the future’. The Cold War Left insisted that this geopolitical analysis inexorably led to one conclusion: America had to inflict a humiliating defeat on a peasant revolution in the South. Taking a symbolically potent piece on the board would shatter the credibility of apocalyptic prophecy of Maoism. Controlling a small piece of space would demonstrate to the peoples of the world that America still owned the vast immensities of time.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ The rules of the game reflected the bi-polar logic of the Yalta Agreement: ‘... nations necessarily must be partners in one or the other of two coalitions engaged in a simple two-player game, and not independent variables possessing unique interests and ambitions.’ Irving Louis Horowitz, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States*, page 313.

³⁹⁶ See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 293-294; Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, pages 214-215; and Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, pages 35-36.

³⁹⁷ In 1964, as chair of the US government’s Policy Planning Commission, Rostow argued that a decisive American victory in the South would confirm that: ‘Communism is not the wave of the future – it is a disease of the transitional process which well-trained, well-organised professional cadres seek to impose on societies in the early stages of modernisation.’ W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, page 85.

The American Invasion of Vietnam

At the 1964 New York World's Fair, the Unisphere was flanked on one side by the international area. When touring its pavilions, visitors to the exposition were presented with a vision of global harmony. From all corners of the world, representatives of many different nations had travelled to New York to put on a show for their American friends. Close allies like France and South Korea showed their gratitude for US help in the past by enthusiastically participating in the event. Former enemies of America like Japan and Spain had built impressive pavilions for the exposition. Even Israel and its Arab neighbours peacefully co-existed within the international area. The McLuhanite message of the Unisphere had been confirmed. In one corner of the World's Fair, the globe already was a village.³⁹⁸

Back in 1939, the Russian pavilion had been one of the stars of the show.³⁹⁹ However, at the 1964 World's Fair, there was no exhibit from the Number 2 superpower. This omission wasn't an accident. From the outset, the organisers of the event had deliberately snubbed the Bureau of International Expositions - the UN body responsible for deciding which city should host these events. Because New York wasn't officially recognised as a UN site, important satellites of the USA like Britain and West Germany decided not to take part in the exposition.⁴⁰⁰ Yet, despite this boycott, the organisers weren't worried. Provoking the UN regulatory body had made possible the hosting of a World's Fair which excluded the Communist enemy. When they walked around the international area, American visitors wouldn't be disturbed by the unsettling presence of the nation's imperial rivals.⁴⁰¹

More than any other exhibit at the World's Fair, the massive red-gold pagoda situated in a prime spot right next to the Unisphere symbolised the geopolitical limitations of the US elite's concept of the global village. Inside this building, visitors saw displays of 'ancient and modern Chinese culture ... and ... of the evolution of Chinese money.' A restaurant served Chinese food and concerts of Chinese music were staged. From outward impressions, visitors to World's Fair could be forgiven for thinking that China - a very large country in East Asia - had sponsored this impressive pavilion. In the guidebook of the World's Fair, the red-gold pagoda was clearly listed as the entry of the 'Republic of China'. Yet, these innocent visitors would be have been mistaken.

³⁹⁸ See Editors of Time-Life Books, *Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964/5*, pages 118-171.

³⁹⁹ See Exposition Publications, *Official Guide Book of the New York World's Fair 1939*, page 148; and Jeffrey Hart, 'Yesterday's America of Tomorrow', page 65.

⁴⁰⁰ See Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins and David Fishman, *New York 1960*, pages 1028, 1039.

⁴⁰¹ Lefebvre understood this architectural strategy: '*Spatial practice ... defines ... spaces made special by symbolic means as desirable or undesirable, ... sanctioned or forbidden to particular groups.*' Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, page 288.

Bizarrely, it was Taiwan – a small island off the mainland of China – that had been responsible for organising the Chinese pavilion at the World’s Fair.⁴⁰²

This geopolitical charade commemorated the traumatic moment of America’s first major defeat in the Cold War. In 1949, China – a long-standing US ally – had unexpectedly transferred its loyalties to the Russian enemy. Traumatized by the loss of such an important piece in the opening moves of the great game, successive American administrations had stubbornly refused to recognise the new Maoist government on the mainland. In its place, Taiwan – the refuge of the former regime - became their symbolic substitute for ‘Red China’.⁴⁰³ Organised by leading members of the US elite, the World’s Fair materialised this Cold War doublethink in the form of the red-gold pagoda of the self-styled Republic of China. In the international area, American hyper-reality took precedence over East Asian reality.

At the peak of their imperial power, the rulers of the USA were blissfully unaware of the incongruity of holding a World’s Fair without the participation of the majority of the nations of the world. Even if most countries were absent, they still had a sufficient number of overseas pavilions at the exposition to celebrate American hegemony over the planet. At a World’s Fair held in New York, it was easy to conceive of the globe as a village. For over a century, the city had been the gateway for the millions of people from Europe and Russia who came looking for a better life across the Atlantic.⁴⁰⁴ The US elite was convinced that - just like these immigrants – almost all foreigners were wannabe Americans. Imitating their imperial benefactor, the nations of the world were now rapidly progressing along the third way to welfare Fordism and beyond. As the Cold War Left emphasised, their long-term goal was assimilation within the US-dominated ‘intergalactic network’. Sooner or later, everyone outside of America would become an American.

‘Most nations, probably all, believe in the moral goodness of their ideals, but few have had the conceit to imagine, much less constantly proclaim, that their particular ideals are universal.’⁴⁰⁵

In Latin America in the early-1960s, the Democratic administration promoted the Alliance for Progress as the quickest route to the US version of hi-tech modernity. Guided by MIT-trained experts, the Third Force would deliver rapid economic development without sacrificing political pluralism. Back in the late-1940s, the Americans had made similar promises to the West Europeans and, within a decade, they had made them come true. The Cold War Left claimed that the Alliance for Progress was now extending the benefits of welfare Fordism to the workers and

⁴⁰² See Editors of Time-Life Books, *Official Guide New York World’s Fair 1964/5*, pages 112, 120, 166.

⁴⁰³ See David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 106-120; and Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, pages 192-193.

⁴⁰⁴ See Ric Burns and James Sanders with Lisa Ades, *New York*, pages 220-230.

⁴⁰⁵ Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, page 118.

peasants of Latin America. As long as they firmly resisted the temptations of Cuban Stalinism, the long-oppressed masses would soon be enjoying both prosperity and democracy. Eventually, they too would become fully-fledged members of the US-led global village. Like everyone else, Latin Americans were turning into North Americans.

The Alliance for Progress was designed to symbolise the Democrats' break with the failed policies of the past. Before they came to power, Rostow and his CENIS colleagues had fiercely condemned the Republican strategy of allying with the traditional elites of Latin America. Instead, the USA must become the champion of the Third Force in the South. But, once they were in office, the MIT experts' soon began to doubt the wisdom of their own analysis. Like its predecessor, the new Democratic administration quickly learnt to distrust loyalty of nationalist reformers on the southern continent. In Western Europe, the advocates of third way socialism were devoted admirers of the USA. In contrast, the leaders of the Third Force in Latin America were much more attracted by the unacceptable option in the zero sum Cold War game: neutrality. When the Alliance for Progress was unable to recruit these radical nationalists for the US cause, the gurus of MIT modernisation theory realised that - much to their horror - the modernising elite in this part of the developing world wanted to follow its own path to modernity. Since the Third Force had demonstrated its political unreliability, the Democratic administration decided to return to the policies of the past in a new guise. As recommended by the CENIS textbooks, they would persuade the military to take on the role of the modernising elite. Financed, trained and organised by the US government, the enforcer of the old oligarchy would be transformed into the builder of the new social order in Latin America.⁴⁰⁶

Back in the early-nineteenth century, the Monroe Doctrine had first asserted US hegemony over the continent. Having patiently waited until the mid-twentieth century to displace the British, the American empire had no intention of letting its southern neighbours escape from its grasp.⁴⁰⁷ In 1954, the Eisenhower administration had ordered the CIA to restore the traditional elite to power in Guatemala when the democratic government's policies threatened US business interests.⁴⁰⁸ Now that they were in charge, the Cold War Left became equally determined to prevent radical nationalists from disturbing the established order in Latin America. Following the CIA's assassination of the dictator of the Dominican Republic in 1962, the Johnson administration invaded this Caribbean island to ensure that its protégés kept political

⁴⁰⁶ See John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, pages 305-316; Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations*, pages 31-34; and Myron Weiner, 'Modernisation of Politics and Government', pages 213-218.

⁴⁰⁷ See James Monroe, 'Monroe Doctrine'; and Maurice Lemoine, 'Uncle Sam's Manifest Destiny'.

⁴⁰⁸ See William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 72-83; and John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, pages 181-186.

control.⁴⁰⁹ After this victory, the next target was Brazil. In 1964, the CIA organised a military coup to overthrow the reformist Goulart government.⁴¹⁰ According to Rostow, the elected politicians had proved themselves to be too irresponsible to run the country. In their place, the generals would provide the much-needed leadership for the Brazilian modernising elite.⁴¹¹ By destroying political pluralism, this military version of the Third Force was – paradoxically – better able to implement the economic and managerial programme of the third way. Dictatorship in the present guaranteed the future of democracy in Brazil.⁴¹²

During the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration had demonised all forms of radical nationalism in the South as emanations of the worldwide Communist conspiracy. Any government which placed restrictions on US businesses was the mortal enemy of the empire.⁴¹³ In contrast, the MIT modernisation theorists had advocated a policy of divide and rule within the American sphere of influence. As long as developing countries were politically friendly, economic nationalism should be tolerated. In his first job for Kennedy in 1957, Rostow had been an advisor on his campaign to provide US financial aid for India. In the South, the mixed economy was preferable to totalitarian state planning.⁴¹⁴ Yet, now that they were in power, the Democrats were too afraid to implement their own enlightened policies. Repudiating their own programme for the Alliance for Progress, they had become convinced that the traditional elite was the USA's only reliable ally in Latin America. Just like its Republican predecessor, the Democratic administration now denounced economic nationalism as the path to Stalinist tyranny. Laissez-faire liberalism was once again the signifier of political loyalty in the South.⁴¹⁵ As in the previous decade, anti-

⁴⁰⁹ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 411-415; William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 175-184; and John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, pages 194-202.

⁴¹⁰ See William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 163-172; and John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, pages 82-99.

⁴¹¹ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 310, 411, 419-420, 425. For a CENIS-inspired history of this period, also see Riordan Roett, *Brazil*, pages 82-100.

⁴¹² Instead of being characterised by regular elections and universal suffrage, Rostow argued that: '... the democratic element within society emerges as a matter of degree, as aspiration and direction of movement.' W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, page 93. Also see Riordan Roett, *Brazil*, pages 133-164.

⁴¹³ See Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, pages 234-236; and William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 64-103.

⁴¹⁴ Rostow stressed that the successful modernisation of Indian agriculture would provide the Free World alternative to the Chinese model of development. See W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half-Century*, pages 40-41. Also see W.W. Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, pages 188-253.

⁴¹⁵ Radical nationalists believed that the military dictatorship – as the representative of the old oligarchy and US capitalism – had adopted policies which encouraged the 'de-Brazilianisation' of the economy. See Andre Gundar Frank, *Capitalism and*

Communism transformed fascist torturers and corrupt oligarchs into heroes of the US-led Free World.⁴¹⁶ Instead of being the up-to-date American strategy for the South, MIT modernisation theory had become the new name for an old-fashioned policy: the imperialism of free trade.

‘As to the efficacy of the policy recommended by Rostow, it speaks for itself: no country, once underdeveloped, ever managed to develop by Rostow’s stages [of growth to US-style Fordism].’⁴¹⁷

Across Latin America in the mid-1960s, the Democratic administration won victory after victory in its counter-insurgency campaign against left-wing nationalist groups inspired by the Cuban revolution. In 1967, CIA-led forces in Bolivia even succeeded in capturing and killing Che Guevara: the celebrated theorist of rural guerrilla warfare.⁴¹⁸ But, for the Cold War Left, the disciplining of the disobedient peoples of Latin America was only a partial success. Whether in Brazil or in Bolivia, the USA had found it too easy to defeat a divided and disorganised opponent. Although the Cuban path to modernity had been closed off in Latin America, this achievement had little impact upon the rest of the developing world. If it wanted to discredit the Maoist prophecy of global peasant revolution, then the American empire must take on – and humiliate - the toughest rural guerrilla movement in the South. Winning this vital piece on the board would ensure that America retained its dominant position in the Cold War game. Above all, by beating its enemy’s champion fighter, the Democratic administration would have proved beyond doubt that the USA owned the imaginary future.

Around the same time that the Bell commission was beginning its deliberations, the Democratic administration became convinced that it had found the perfect location for staging its world-historical confrontation with the Maoist peasant revolution: Vietnam. Back in the late-1940s and early-1950s, Communist-led guerrillas had outmanoeuvred and outfought the numerically stronger and better equipped French army of occupation. Even massive amounts of US aid had failed to reverse the situation. When the old imperial power finally admitted defeat in 1954, the new American empire intervened to split Vietnam into two. While the victorious Communists came to power in the north, a US-sponsored anti-Communist

Underdevelopment in Latin America, pages 185-218. Also see Andre Gundar Frank, ‘Imperialism: the case of Brazil’.

⁴¹⁶ In 1962, an official from the local American embassy explained why the US government financed and armed the psychopathic dictator of Paraguay: ‘... a sure anti-Communist, no matter how despicable, is better than a reformer, no matter how honest, who might turn against us.’ John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, page 127.

⁴¹⁷ Andre Gundar Frank, *Sociology of Development*, page 26.

⁴¹⁸ See Che Guevara, *Bolivian Diary*; and William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 221-229.

dictatorship was imposed upon the south.⁴¹⁹ By the early-1960s, this artificial division of Vietnam was no longer sustainable. Corrupt and repressive, the regime in the south was incapable of defending itself against the resurgent revolutionary movement. The Democratic administration realised that - if the USA didn't act decisively - the Stalinist north would soon seize control of the whole country.⁴²⁰ According to the domino theory, a Communist victory in Vietnam would quickly be followed by the Communist take-over of the whole of South-East Asia and, in the worst-case scenario, the implosion of the entire American empire.⁴²¹

‘Why are we in ... Vietnam? ... Across the globe, from Berlin to Thailand, [there] are people whose well-being rests ... on the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked. To leave Vietnam to its fate would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of an American commitment ... The result would be increased unrest and instability, and even wider war.’⁴²²

The Democratic administration was supremely confident of victory. While America was the richest and most powerful nation on the planet, Vietnam was a backward peasant country with few natural resources.⁴²³ As in the past, economic and technological superiority meant military invincibility. Led by the Cold War Left, America now also had the ideological advantage. Their Vietnamese opponents were old-fashioned Stalinists dreaming of an autarchic industrial economy. In contrast, the American empire was leading humanity towards the hi-tech global utopia. Possessing a more sophisticated understanding of the grand narrative of modernity, the Cold War Left knew how to defeat Stalinism in the developing world. Under the supervision of MIT-trained advisors, a nation called South Vietnam would be built on the American model. As had already happened in Western Europe, the anti-Communist half of the country would become a prosperous and democratic mass consumption society. Just like its East European allies, the Communist north was condemned to stagnation at the

⁴¹⁹ See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 1-13, 26-40; Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 35-79; and Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, pages 145-172.

⁴²⁰ See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 13-25, 41-78; Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 80-108; and Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, pages 173-196.

⁴²¹ In 1961, US vice-president Johnson warned that: ‘We must decide whether to help ... [South-East Asia] to the best of our ability or pull back our defences to San Francisco and a “Fortress America” concept.’ Lyndon Johnson in Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, page 129.

⁴²² Lyndon Johnson, ‘Peace Without Conquest’, page 2. Also see W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 264-295, 446-449.

⁴²³ US president Johnson contemptuously described Vietnam as a ‘damn little piss-ant country’. See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, page 329. Also see David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 526-528.

stage of growth of its steam-age ideology. MIT modernisation theory would prove its superiority over the Maoist peasant revolution.⁴²⁴

In the early stages of the conflict, the Kennedy administration placed the CIA in charge of the struggle against Vietnamese Communism.⁴²⁵ Flush with money and weaponry, its CENIS-trained counter-insurgency experts and economic development advisors set to work on modernising the military and bureaucratic structures of the southern state. As its top priority, the CIA wanted to win the hearts and minds of the majority of the Vietnamese population: the peasantry. Imitating the Communist enemy, its propaganda promised that the corruption and brutality of the old feudal order would soon be swept away. Following the precepts of MIT modernisation theory, the CIA launched a programme of ‘Revolutionary Development’ in the Vietnamese countryside. Land reform, universal education, health care, free speech and honest government would secure the loyalty of the peasantry.⁴²⁶ Slowly but surely, the US-backed government would overcome the Communists by putting dedicated anti-Communists in charge of every village. Unlike the defeated French colonial regime, the American-sponsored modernising elite knew how to defeat the Russian-inspired revolutionary vanguard.⁴²⁷

By the time that Johnson became US president, the CIA’s counter-insurgency strategy for pacifying the Vietnamese countryside had stalled. Paramilitary operatives and MIT-trained advisors couldn’t make an army fight which didn’t want to fight or eliminate corruption in a political system founded upon corruption.⁴²⁸ The shoddily built nation of South Vietnam was on the brink of collapse. Determined to win this round in the Cold War game, the Johnson administration decided in 1964 to send the US air force into battle. Both Rostow – the presidential security advisor – and McNamara – the minister of defence – had worked in the early-1940s as ‘backroom

⁴²⁴ See W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, pages 20-23, 112-120; *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 282-290.

⁴²⁵ In 1961, US president Kennedy justified this policy by claiming that ‘subversives and saboteurs and insurrectionists’ were threatening ‘freedom’ in Vietnam and other countries in the South. See John Kennedy, ‘Special Message to Congress on Urgent Needs’, page 1. Also see Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pages 536-550; and Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 442-461, 664-669.

⁴²⁶ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 451-459; Raymond Gastil, ‘Political and Social Aspects of the Vietnamese Conflict’; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 121-129; and William Blum, *Killing Hope*, pages 122-145.

⁴²⁷ In MIT and other leading US universities, Cold War Left academics believed that: ‘Vietnam was ... a great experiment, challenging almost exhilarating, a laboratory of counter-insurgency.’ Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, page 9. Also see Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, pages 30-61; and Irving Louis Horowitz, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States*, pages 275-291.

⁴²⁸ See Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, pages 286-287; Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, pages 114-115, 129-131, 169; and Mary McCarthy, *Vietnam*, pages 69-97.

boys' in the bombing campaigns against Germany and Japan.⁴²⁹ Inspired by this experience, they ordered intensive – and ever more destructive – air offensives against Communist-controlled areas of the south, the liberated north and guerrilla supply routes in neighbouring countries. When its losses in people and property reached the critical breaking point, the Vietnamese resistance would be forced to admit defeat and agree to abandon its struggle against the American occupation.⁴³⁰

Within a short period of time, it became clear that the US air force – like the CIA – couldn't deliver victory. In a decade of conflict, the US air force dropped more explosives on South-East Asia than in its early-1940s campaigns against Germany and Japan.⁴³¹ This fierce onslaught inflicted immense human suffering and enormous physical damage on Vietnam – and on neighbouring Cambodia and Laos. Yet, despite all this death and destruction, the Communists never reached their breaking point.⁴³² Early on, US president Johnson had reluctantly accepted that bombing on its own wouldn't defeat the Vietnamese resistance.⁴³³ In 1965, he sent in the army to finish off the job. America had become the new colonial ruler of Vietnam.

Like their air force colleagues, US generals were also convinced that a combination of massive firepower and hi-tech weaponry would quickly win the war. Back in the 1950s, Vietnamese guerrillas had taken over the countryside by concentrating their forces in surprise hit and run attacks against the widely dispersed and sluggish French army. A decade later, Rostow argued that advances in weapons technology had completely changed the balance of forces on the Asian battlefield.⁴³⁴ Above, all, the occupying army now had the advantage in mobility. Transported by helicopters, American soldiers were able to take the war to the enemy in the villages. In a series of 'search and destroy' missions, the US military would flush out and eliminate the Communist guerrillas. With the Johnson administration committing ever more troops

⁴²⁹ See W.W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena*, pages 65-74; *Concept and Controversy*, pages 27-58; and Errol Morris, *The Fog of War*.

⁴³⁰ In August 1965, Rostow confidently predicted that: '... the Vietcong are already coming apart under the bombing. They're going to collapse in weeks. Not months, weeks.' Walt Rostow in Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, page 184. Also see Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 307-344; Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, pages 66-87; and Frank Harvey, *Air War - Vietnam*.

⁴³¹ See Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, page 249.

⁴³² In 1967, a presidential advisor reluctantly concluded that: '... the net effect of ... [strategic bombing] damage upon the military capacity of a primitive country [like Vietnam] is almost sure to be slight.' McGeorge Bundy in Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, page 570.

⁴³³ See Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, pages 51-52.

⁴³⁴ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, page 450; and David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 122-124, 542-543.

and resources to the conflict, the generals confidently predicted that victory was close: 'the light at the end of the tunnel'.⁴³⁵

In its struggle against Vietnamese Communism, the US military faced an unexpected problem: measuring its achievements on the battlefield. When fighting a conventional war, winning meant conquering the opponent's territory. But, in a guerrilla conflict, the enemy refused to defend fixed positions. In the late-1940s and early-1950s, the Vietnamese Communists had beaten the French army by winning over the peasantry to their cause. Once the colonial regime had lost control of the countryside, its fate was sealed. Without taking a single city, rural guerrillas had beaten a modern army.⁴³⁶ Learning from this defeat, the US military knew that controlling the peasantry was the key to victory. The conundrum was how to assess the results of American offensives in the countryside. Unable to measure territorial gains, the US military decided instead to focus instead upon the number of enemy combatants killed in each operation: the 'body count'. From this data, its analysts could calculate which side had inflicted the most damage on its opponent: the 'kill ratio'. The US military now had the measure of victory.⁴³⁷

This statistical solution delighted the politicians back home. When he had worked for Ford in the 1950s, McNamara dramatically improved managerial efficiency by using computers to produce detailed statistics about the company's different activities: 'cost-benefit analysis'. In his new job as defence minister, he urged the US military to apply this hi-tech method of making cars to the task of fighting wars.⁴³⁸ Happy to oblige, the generals became computer-age managers. In Vietnam, the US military would kill Communists as efficiently as Ford manufactured cars back home. Just like the private sector, the generals carefully measured whether their subordinates were fulfilling their production quotas. By processing data from battlefields across the country on IBM mainframes, analysts produced detailed statistics proving that the Americans were winning the war. According to the body count score, the US military now had the kill ratio advantage. The Vietnamese resistance was losing fighters quicker than it could recruit them. American collaborators would soon outnumber Communist

⁴³⁵ See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 382-417, 459-485; Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, pages 209-214; and Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 205-235.

⁴³⁶ Mao stressed that: 'A national revolutionary war ... cannot be won without extensive and thorough-going political mobilisation. ... This move is ... of primary importance, while our inferiority in weapons and other things is only secondary.' Mao Zedong, *Six Essays on Military Affairs*, pages 268-269. For the Vietnamese commander-in-chief's application of this strategy in the struggle against the American occupation, see Vo Nguyen Giap, *National Liberation War in Vietnam*.

⁴³⁷ See Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, pages 48, 237-238; and Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 224-227.

⁴³⁸ See Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, pages 10-25; and David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 215-247.

militants in the countryside.⁴³⁹ Just like when he was at Ford, McNamara now had the facts and figures to beat the competition. Cybernetic feedback would impose US-style managerial discipline upon the disobedient Vietnamese peasantry.

‘The other side is near collapse. ... The charts are very good ... Victory is very near.’⁴⁴⁰

As the war dragged on, the US government desperately searched for the wonder weapon which could win the war. In this sellers’ market, university research labs and military contractors seized the opportunity to test their cutting edge military technologies in battlefield conditions. Everything was tried, but nothing delivered the decisive blow against the Vietnamese resistance. In 1967, the Johnson government believed that it had finally found its magic bullet. A multi-disciplinary team of America’s leading scientists devised a plan to build an impenetrable hi-tech barrier to separate the two halves of Vietnam. Millions of electronic sensors – interspersed with mines and booby-traps - would be installed along the frontiers of the southern state. Robot drones would patrol the skies overhead. Computers would collate and sort the data from the barrier’s surveillance devices. When Communist guerrillas were detected infiltrating the south, US planes and helicopter-borne troops would be scrambled to repel them. As it was improved and expanded, this system would – in a few years time – be able to control combat operations over the entire South-East Asian war zone: the ‘electronic battlefield’. Sooner or later, post-industrial technologies would deliver the knockout blow against the peasant revolution.⁴⁴¹

Over the next five years, the US government funded a lavish development programme to put this new military strategy into practice.⁴⁴² Since the information society was the next stage in human development, the convergence of media, telecommunications and computing must be able to provide the technological fix for anti-imperialist nationalism in Vietnam. During the late-1960s and early-1970s, the US military made strenuous efforts to construct an electronic barrier blocking the supply routes between the liberated north and the occupied south. Within minutes of enemy forces being detected by its ADSID sensors, IBM System/360 mainframes calculated their location and dispatched B-52 bombers to destroy them. Nothing could move in the combat zone without American permission.⁴⁴³ It was inevitable that computer-age

⁴³⁹ For the US military’s statistical charts for 1965-71, see W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 440-445. Also see Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, pages 237-238; and Computer People for Peace, *The Technological Warlords*, pages 21-25.

⁴⁴⁰ Walt Rostow in Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, page 184. This mid-1967 claim was a repetition of his failed prediction of 2 years earlier.

⁴⁴¹ See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 507-509; Berkeley SESPA, *Science against the People*, pages 1-6, 17-18; and Paul Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield*, pages 20-31.

⁴⁴² See Paul Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield*, pages 32-54.

⁴⁴³ See Berkeley SESPA, *Science against the People*, pages 8-9; and Paul Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield*, pages 67-75.

McLuhanism would emerge victorious from its struggle with steam-age Maoism in the jungles of Vietnam.

‘I foresee ... battlefields ... that are under 24 hour ... real-time surveillance ... on which we can destroy anything we can locate through instant communications and the almost instantaneous application of highly lethal firepower.’⁴⁴⁴

Like all the other sophisticated strategies for winning the war, the electronic battlefield also didn't deliver on its promises. In 1972, even after five years of testing and refining, the US military's hi-tech barrier failed to detect large numbers of noisy Vietnamese tanks and other heavy equipment moving down the supply routes to launch an offensive in the south. Maoist ingenuity had outwitted McLuhanite machinery.⁴⁴⁵ Long before this embarrassing fiasco took place, the costs of the occupation had become unbearable for the American empire. As each solution had been tried and failed, the next fix always required even more money and more soldiers for its implementation. From a minor part of US state expenditure under Kennedy, spending on the war exploded under the Johnson administration.⁴⁴⁶ More troublingly, in the years immediately after the 1965 invasion, the size of the American expeditionary force increased exponentially. By 1967, the Johnson government had committed over 500,000 US troops to the struggle.⁴⁴⁷ For the first time since Korea in the early-1950s, the United States was fighting a major – and very expensive – land war.

Back in 1954, as the French colonial regime collapsed, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had told their political masters that South-East Asia was ‘devoid of decisive military objectives’.⁴⁴⁸ This conclusion wasn't a surprise. Unlike the French colonialists, the new American empire had much more lucrative ways of making money than exploiting the impoverished peasants of the region. Located far away from both the USA and Europe, Vietnam's geopolitical orientation also had minimal impact upon the superpower balance of power. Even if the Communists did unify the country, America had little to fear. In medieval times, Vietnamese nationalism had emerged from the struggle against Chinese imperialism.⁴⁴⁹ Like Yugoslavia in the late-1940s, this Stalinist state might well prefer an alliance with capitalist America to being

⁴⁴⁴ W.C. Westmoreland, ‘Address to the Association of the United States Army’, page 221. Westmoreland was commander-in-chief of the US military in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968.

⁴⁴⁵ See Berkeley SESPA, *Science against the People*, page 14; and Paul Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield*, pages 78-80.

⁴⁴⁶ In 1967, paying for the occupation of Vietnam had risen to over a third of the American military budget. See Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, page 265.

⁴⁴⁷ See Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 178-179.

⁴⁴⁸ See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 44-45.

⁴⁴⁹ See Vo Nguyen Giap, *National Liberation War in Vietnam*, pages 10-13.

dominated by a more powerful neighbour even it was an ideological soul mate. History was on the side of the optimists. As part of the common struggle against Japan in the early-1940s, the forerunner of the CIA had armed and trained the Vietnamese resistance. Twenty years later, it would have been much easier and cheaper for the Americans to renew their alliance with the Communists than to fight them for possession of an insignificant agricultural country.⁴⁵⁰ If – as the Democrats claimed at the time – the Johnson administration formulated its foreign policy through rational cost-benefit analysis, then the USA's loss-making subsidiary in South-East Asia would have been immediately closed down.

In the early-1960s, the Cold War Left provided the intellectual leadership for those within the US elite opposed to America making a mutually beneficial deal with the Communist leaders of Vietnam. During both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Rostow was one of the prime movers behind the American invasion of Vietnam. As each military strategy failed, he was always the most enthusiastic advocate of further escalation. Another big push would reach the breaking point of the Vietnamese resistance.⁴⁵¹ When accused of being an old-style imperialist, Rostow angrily refuted this charge. In contrast with the villainous European empires in Lenin's pamphlet, the USA had no desire to steal Vietnam's meagre resources or rack-rent its peasantry.⁴⁵² America was fighting for a much more valuable prize: 'credibility'.⁴⁵³ Despite Vietnam itself being economically and strategically unimportant, defeating its Communist movement had immense symbolic value. In the Cold War game, America would have taken on and humiliated a battle hardened revolutionary movement. Under US guidance, the Vietnamese would then be able to build a democratic and prosperous country. Across the South, the message would be clear. The revolutionary road to modernity was discredited. There was no alternative to US hegemony.

'In was early 1964 that Washington's war-aims took on a more definite shape: American intervention in Vietnam was to provide an enduring example, a permanent lesson to all under-developed countries which might presume to

⁴⁵⁰ See Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 6-23; and Peter Macdonald, *Giap*, page 35. Reflecting the closeness of this collaboration, the 1945 Vietnamese Declaration of Independence opened with a quote from its 1776 American predecessor. See Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, page 53.

⁴⁵¹ US president Kennedy described Rostow as: '... the biggest Cold [War] warrior I've got.' John Kennedy in Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly*, page 368. Also see David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 121-129, 155-167, 353, 542-543, 626-628, 630-631, 636-638.

⁴⁵² See W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, pages 112-120.

⁴⁵³ One of McNamera's junior ministers divided and ranked America's reasons for invading Vietnam: 70% for protecting the USA's reputation as the 'guarantor' of anti-Communist regimes; 20% for preventing China taking over South-East Asia; and – most revealingly - only 10% for improving the lives of the Vietnamese. See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, page 432.

question the validity of a regional power-structure guaranteed by the United States. Vietnamese peasants were to die in ever-increasing numbers for the greater peace of mind of the Brazilian bourgeoisie, the Moroccan royalists and the ruling clique in Manila.⁴⁵⁴

The US government needed to fight a serious opponent like the Vietnamese for its victory over Communism to have any ‘credibility’ within the developing world. Yet, if no one outside South-East Asia witnessed the drama of its titanic contest with the heavyweight champion of the peasant revolution, the ideological impact of this triumph would be minimal. People had to be spectators of this military struggle for its outcome to have any symbolic significance.⁴⁵⁵ Luckily, in the emerging global village, an increasing proportion of the world’s population had access to the new technology of television. Even those who didn’t would hear about the dramatic story unfolding on the TV screens. For this vital psychological operation, the US military ensured that the American networks provided dramatic images – along with sympathetic commentary – from Vietnam to audiences watching in their front rooms across the world.⁴⁵⁶ Filmed from the occupying power’s viewpoint on the battlefield, these reports present a one-sided experience of the ebb and flow of the distant war. Heroic journalists went on search and destroy missions with US troops. TV pundits explained the latest American strategy for winning the war. US government press officers talked about favourable kill ratios and rising body counts. Above all, the viewers saw - with their own eyes - the awesome destructive power of American hi-tech weaponry.⁴⁵⁷ Before a worldwide TV audience, the US military was – in full-colour – inflicting a devastating defeat on the most skilful and dedicated revolutionary movement in the South. In the most literal sense of the phrase, the American invasion of Vietnam was a ‘show of force’: a spectacular display of imperial power.

‘In the end, victory was ours ... a very important point was made – that US infantrymen using established techniques, impromptu ingenuity and plenty of support in the air can seek out and destroy the best guerrilla army in the world.’⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ Jean Lacouture, *Ho Chi Minh*, page 244.

⁴⁵⁵ See Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, theses 55-56.

⁴⁵⁶ A combination of commercial self-interest and patriotic duty persuaded the American TV news teams to play their allotted role: ‘The [US] networks simply presented a series of images, mainly of Americans fighting an unseen foe. Images themselves ordinarily leave no explicit message. ... It was left mainly to [US] government spokesmen to provide the interpretative framework for the television coverage of the war in Vietnam.’ Michael Mandelbaum, ‘Vietnam: the television war’, page 160. Also see Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire*, pages 271-281; and Michael Herr, *Dispatches*, pages 214-219.

⁴⁵⁷ See CBS, *The Vietnam War: courage under fire*; *The Vietnam War: the end of the road*. Also see Jean Baudrillard, *La Guerre du Golfe N’a Pas Eu Lieu*, pages 9-17, 95-98; and Michael Mandelbaum, ‘Vietnam: the television war’, pages 158-160.

⁴⁵⁸ Morley Safer in CBS, *The Vietnam War: courage under fire*.

In January 1968, the Vietnamese resistance launched an urban uprising against the American occupation: the Tet Offensive. Believing that the war would be decided in the countryside, the US military was initially taken by surprise by this sudden switch in strategy. In the first week of the Tet Offensive, Vietnamese guerrillas seized control of major cities in the provinces and large areas of Saigon – the capital of the southern state. But, once it had recovered from the momentary shock, the US military's massive firepower ruthlessly put down the uprising. When the final body count was made, the Americans were the clear winners of the Tet Offensive. The Communists had lost almost half their army in a suicidal frontal assault on a far superior force. Crucially, the overwhelming majority of the urban population of the south had refused to join the uprising against the American army of occupation and its collaborators.⁴⁵⁹ Rostow and his colleagues were jubilant. The CENIS academics knew that the Vietnamese had ignored the basic principles of Maoist peasant guerrilla war by attacking in the cities. According to their computer calculations, the US army had finally inflicted the decisive blow on their Communist enemy. After the Tet Offensive, an American victory was certain.⁴⁶⁰

Unfortunately for the Johnson administration, the US military's computers had badly miscalculated.⁴⁶¹ As subsequent events would prove, Vietnam - a nation without television - had just won the war on television. On the first day of the Tet Offensive, people around the world had watched in amazement as the US army fought Communist guerrillas in the grounds of the American embassy in Saigon. Having seized the lead item in the daily news bulletins, the Vietnamese resistance held the attention of the global TV audience for as long as possible. Week after week, their guerrillas stubbornly held their ground against far superior American forces. By the time that the Communists were defeated on the battlefield, they had emerged victorious in the global village. By putting on their own spectacular show of force, the Vietnamese had won the television war.⁴⁶² When the Tet Offensive was eventually crushed, Walter Cronkite - the well-loved presenter of the top-rated US evening news show – gave a sombre analysis of its long-term impact upon the conflict. For the first time, an authority figure publicly expressed what many Americans were thinking after

⁴⁵⁹ See Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 589-601, 613-621; Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 274-300; and John Hughes-Wilson, *Military Intelligence Blunders and Cover-Ups*, pages 165-217.

⁴⁶⁰ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, 459-470; Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 303-311; and Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, pages 615-621.

⁴⁶¹ 'The Vietnamese refused to play the game the way that they were expected to when the war was simulated on the RAND Corporation computers.' Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, page 203. Also see Mao Zedong, *Six Essays on Military Affairs*, pages 1-135.

⁴⁶² See CBS, *The Vietnam War: the end of the road*; Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire*, pages 299-302; and Michael Mandelbaum, 'Vietnam: the television war', page 159.

watching three months of dramatic TV coverage of vicious urban fighting: victory wasn't certain.

'We have been too often disappointed by the optimism of American leaders ... to have any faith in the silver linings they find in the darkest clouds. ... For it seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in stalemate. ... To say that we are closer to victory is to believe ... the optimists who have been wrong in the past.'⁴⁶³

During the rapid escalation of the war after the 1965 invasion, the overwhelming majority of Americans had patriotically backed the Johnson administration's firm action against global Communism in Vietnam.⁴⁶⁴ Night after night, the evening news bulletins had told them that US troops were on the verge of beating their guerrilla opponents. With the government being led by the best minds in the country, they had no reason to doubt the predictions of their political leaders. The Tet Offensive changed everything. In the three years before 1968, the Johnson administration had repackaged the failure of its military offensives in the countryside as great victories. Despite doubts among the journalists on the ground, the American networks encouraged their public to believe what they were being told. But, when Communist guerrillas fighting in the cities dominated the evening news bulletins for every night, this carefully constructed hyper-reality suddenly imploded. Fighting for credibility in the South, the Democratic government had lost it at home. Public support for the war fell dramatically and never recovered.⁴⁶⁵ During the six months following the uprising, Johnson announced his resignation from the presidency, the commander of American forces in Vietnam was sacked and a committee of the inner circle of the US elite concluded that the occupation was unsustainable. After trying everything else, the only remaining option was an American withdrawal with the minimum of symbolic damage: 'peace with honour'.⁴⁶⁶

The collapse of public support at home was fatal in an occupation army made up overwhelmingly of conscripts. Like its Vietnamese client regime, the US elite discovered that it was impossible to persuade soldiers to fight if they were determined not to fight.⁴⁶⁷ For seven agonising years after the Tet Offensive, the American empire

⁴⁶³ Walter Cronkite in CBS, *The Vietnam War: the end of the road*. After watching this report, the US president mournfully concluded: 'I've lost [the votes of] Middle America.' Lyndon Johnson in Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, page 400.

⁴⁶⁴ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, 478-481.

⁴⁶⁵ See David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 647-648; Vo Nguyen Giap, *National Liberation War in Vietnam*, pages 78-97; and W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 478-483.

⁴⁶⁶ See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 473-521; Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 312-326; and David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 647-658.

⁴⁶⁷ By 1970, the frontline troops were openly defying orders in front of TV news crews: 'We're just going to refuse to do it ... you may be [put] in jail, but you won't

refused to concede defeat in the south. As the mutinous infantry went home, US bombers continued to rain death and destruction upon the unfortunate inhabitants of South-East Asia. America – as TV pundits kept reminding their viewers – was stuck in a quagmire. In 1975, the agony was finally over. A political scandal at home allowed opponents of the war in the legislature to cut off financial and military support for the made-in-the-USA puppet state. Deprived of its American patron, the never-built nation of South Vietnam quickly collapsed.⁴⁶⁸

In the last scene of the final episode of the long-running series, Communist troops seized control of the US client regime's presidential palace in Saigon. After more than three decades of war, Vietnam was finally liberated from foreign occupation. Unfortunately, the international TV news crews had arrived too late for the dramatic moment when the Vietnamese tank had driven straight through the front gates of the palace. Determined to capture this world-historical image for the viewers in the global village, the victors quickly repaired the gate and took their positions. When the camera crews were ready, the tank drove through the gates for a second time and Vietnamese soldiers once again liberated the palace. Evening news bulletins across the world now had the iconic image to accompany their lead story. The war won on television had ended on television.⁴⁶⁹

In 1954, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had concluded that the American empire could safely ignore the loss of Vietnam to Communism. In the decades following the liberation, this prognosis was confirmed. The fall of Saigon didn't lead to American dominos toppling across the South. On the contrary, the victorious Maoists quickly turned on each other. In the late-1970s, Vietnam was first attacked by Cambodia and then, after defeating this erstwhile ally, by its former sponsor China.⁴⁷⁰ When peace finally came, the country – belatedly – began to modernise its economy. With the Communists securely in power, Vietnam was able to focus its energies on moving towards industrialisation and urbanisation.

In the early-1960s, Rostow had predicted that the unification of the two halves of the country would lead to Maoist-style economic autarky. Instead, Vietnam - like China itself – decided to imitate its East Asian neighbours which had successfully industrialised within the US sphere of influence during the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁷¹

be dead.' A US soldier in CBS, *The Vietnam War: the end of the road*. For an account of the conscripts' revolt against their officers, see Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 359-367; and Jonathan Neale, *The American War*, pages 117-146.

⁴⁶⁸ See Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 347-426; Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, pages 414-421; and W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 550-563.

⁴⁶⁹ See Michael Maclear, *Vietnam*, pages 465-466; and CBS, *The Vietnam War: the end of the road*.

⁴⁷⁰ See Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War*, pages 34-62, 84-164.

⁴⁷¹ See Alain Lipietz, *Mirages and Miracles* pages 69-111; and Nigel Harris, *The End of the Third World*, pages 30-69.

Eventually, the vindictive Americans were persuaded to stop obstructing the integration of this lucrative source of cheap labour into the world market. By the early-2000s, US companies were making substantial investments in the Vietnamese economy. With the arrival of the Net, this once-isolated country was now part of the global village. Back home, American business magazines reported that free trade had succeeded where military force had failed.⁴⁷² In the last years of his life, Rostow felt confident enough to claim that the grand narrative of history had – almost three decades after 1975 - vindicated the mistakes of the past:

‘... the American people ... held the line [in Vietnam] so that a free Asia could survive and grow; for, in the end, the war ... [was] about who would control the balance of power in Asia ... Those [Americans] who died or were wounded or are veterans of that conflict were not involved in a pointless war.’⁴⁷³

Like most Hollywood movies about the Vietnam conflict, Rostow’s article presented America’s most humiliating defeat as a retrospective victory.⁴⁷⁴ However, it was far too late for him to rescue a public reputation which had been ruined by the media spectacle of the Tet Offensive. At the very beginning of 1968, Rostow had stood at the peak of his career. This Cold War Left intellectual was the closest advisor to the most powerful political leader on the planet. Using his deep understanding of the materialist conception of history, he was devising wise and rational policies for the Modern Prince. But, before the year was over, Rostow was out of office and openly reviled. His downfall began when the weeks of dramatic television coverage of the Tet Offensive shattered the credibility of the Johnson administration’s optimistic predictions of imminent victory.⁴⁷⁵ In its wake, the Democrats went from disaster to disaster. Johnson was forced to resign, their most popular candidate for the US presidential elections was assassinated and anti-war protesters besieged the party convention in Chicago. Worst of all, the administration’s disastrous imperial adventure in Vietnam completely overshadowed its impressive political and social achievements at home. At the end of 1968, the Republicans were able to win a narrow majority in the presidential elections. By failing to deliver a quick and easy victory in Vietnam, the Cold War Left had lost political power in America.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷² See Frederik Balfour, ‘Vietnam Toddles into a Capitalist Future’; ‘Vietnam’s Time is Running Out’. Also see Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 559-604.

⁴⁷³ W.W. Rostow, ‘The Case for the Vietnam War’, page 6. Also see W.W. Rostow, *Concept and Controversy*, pages 304-316.

⁴⁷⁴ In a 1985 film fantasy, its Vietnam veteran hero plaintively asked: ‘Sir? Do we get to win this time?’ George Cosmatos, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*. Also see Michael Anderegg, *Inventing Vietnam*.

⁴⁷⁵ See Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, pages 711-722; and Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*, page 199.

⁴⁷⁶ See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 471-542.

When Rostow asked to return to his old job at MIT, his request was politely refused. Too closely identified with the American debacle in Vietnam, the founder of the world-famous CENIS research centre had become a political embarrassment.⁴⁷⁷ Turned down by every other elite university, Rostow was forced to take an academic post at Austin in the gift of former US president Johnson.⁴⁷⁸ As well as publicly shaming him as an individual, the exiling of the author of *The Stages of Economic Growth* to Texas also marked the end of the collective hegemony of the Cold War Left over intellectual life in America. Back in 1960, when Rostow departed from MIT to join the Kennedy administration, the movement had defined its common identity through its consensual third way politics. But, by 1968, the American war against the Vietnamese had shattered this image of ideological unity. Instead of speaking with one voice, the master thinkers of the Cold War Left were now angrily arguing with each other. Rostow was the bellicose architect of the invasion. Galbraith had always opposed US intervention in the region.⁴⁷⁹ Kahn claimed that a more sophisticated counter-insurgency strategy would bring victory.⁴⁸⁰ Schlesinger published a book advocating a negotiated settlement with the insurgents.⁴⁸¹ Just like rest of the American public, the Vital Centre had been forced to choose between two incompatible positions: patriotic imperialism or anti-war activism. There was no third way solution to this crisis.

Like political consensus, economic compromise was another treasured principle of the Cold War Left which became a casualty of the conflict. Inspired by Keynesian theory, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations simultaneously cut taxes and increased expenditure. At first, this expansionary policy was highly successful. The growth rate went up and so did employment, wages and profits.⁴⁸² But, as the costs of the occupation of Vietnam escalated out of control, this expansion of effective demand outpaced the productive powers of the US economy. Even worse, the stimulation of output was increasingly being diverted from solving pressing social needs at home into financing imperial expansion overseas. By the late-1960s, American military spending was beginning to destabilise the global financial system. As the inflationary spiral took off, governments across the North struggled to control the economic crisis.⁴⁸³ Back in the mid-1950s, the Cold War Left had argued that state intervention corrected the fluctuations of the market. Enlightened regulation was the guarantor of prosperity. Yet, when the Democratic administration had put this Keynesian policy into practice in the early-1960s, its expansionist policies had instead destabilised the market.

⁴⁷⁷ Blamed for his misguided advice to US president Johnson, Rostow was castigated as: ‘the wrong man at wrong time with the wrong idea.’ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, page 513.

⁴⁷⁸ See Geoffrey Hodgson, ‘Walt Rostow’.

⁴⁷⁹ See Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 355, 451, 460-461.

⁴⁸⁰ See Herman Kahn, ‘Toward a Program of Victory’.

⁴⁸¹ See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Bitter Heritage*.

⁴⁸² See Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, pages 333-335, 506-509, 583-589; and Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 27-42, 82-113.

⁴⁸³ See Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter*, pages 358-378; and Alain Lipietz, *L’Audace ou L’Enlissement*, pages 37-64.

Confounding the expectations of Galbraith and the CENIS researchers, the US economy couldn't be programmed like an IBM System/360 mainframe.

In the 1950s, the founders of the Cold War Left had been convinced that – by applying their third way theory to empirical evidence - the US government would be able to formulate policies in an informed and intelligent manner. But, when the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had made the key decisions about American intervention in Vietnam, ideology had always taken precedence over rationality.⁴⁸⁴ In the great game between the superpowers, struggles in the impoverished South were no longer the harmless sublimation of dangerous rivalries in the rich North. By the early-1960s, the Cold War Left had convinced itself that the security of the American empire depended upon winning a symbolic victory over Vietnamese Communism. As it committed more and more resources to winning this unwinnable war, the Democratic administration inadvertently turned this impoverished rice-growing region into the most valuable piece of real estate on the planet. The war had become an end in itself.

‘At each decision point, we have gambled; at each point to avoid the damage to our effectiveness of defaulting on our commitment, we have upped the ante. ... We have not defaulted, and the ante (and our commitment) is now very high.’⁴⁸⁵

As the military situation deteriorated after the 1965 invasion, US president Johnson and his advisors became increasingly incapable of distinguishing their own wishful thinking from the reality on the ground in Vietnam. Paradoxically, the availability of the latest information technologies encouraged their delusions about the war. Thanks to advances in computing and telecommunications, politicians in America believed that they were able to direct military operations over on the other side of the world. Mesmerised by their virtual proximity to the fighting, they placed their trust in the mediated interpretation of the war provided by information technologies. Crucially, the administration never seriously questioned the reliability of the data provided by the US military.⁴⁸⁶ As long as the daily body count kept rising, Johnson – encouraged by Rostow - persuaded himself that victory was close. Instead of helping the

⁴⁸⁴ As Chomsky pointed out, it was ironic that: ‘The ... policy makers may be caught up in the fantasies that they spin to disguise imperial intervention, and ... sometimes even find themselves trapped by them ...’ Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, page 54. Also see David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 299-305, 524, 655-658.

⁴⁸⁵ John McNaughton in Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy and Fox Butterfield, *The Pentagon Papers*, page 492.

⁴⁸⁶ Halberstam emphasised that the statistics from the Vietnamese battlefield were: ‘All lies. ... [McNamara was] looking for American production indices in an Asian political revolution.’ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, page 248.

Democratic leadership to understand what was happening over in South-East Asia, computerised statistics had created an ideological hyper-reality.⁴⁸⁷

Nowhere was this contradiction between theory and practice clearer than in the social background of the Vietnamese who welcomed the American occupation of their country. According to the CENIS textbooks, the USA should have supported the Third Force modernising elite. Instead, the Democratic administration had become the new protector of the minority who had prospered under French rule: absentee landlords, foreign merchants, nepotistic bureaucrats and greedy generals. As in Brazil, the US government picked the military forces of this corrupt oligarchy as its replacement for the missing modernising elite. Not surprisingly, the Vietnamese peasantry failed to appreciate their good fortune when steam-age European colonialism was replaced by computer-age American imperialism. All that happened was that their oppressors had transferred their loyalties to another foreign power. The Democratic administration's decision to ally itself with the traditional elite doomed the American cause in Vietnam. For the peasantry, expelling the imperialists who protected the old regime meant victory over the parasitical landowners who had exploited them for centuries. Confounding Rostow's prognosis, the Vietnamese masses saw Maoism as much more modern than MIT modernisation theory. The US promise of consumer plenty in the global village of the future was no substitute for the immediate benefits of national independence and land reform. Above all, the peasantry knew by bitter experience that the American occupying army was fighting to prevent any social progress in the countryside. In 1960s Vietnam, Communism was still the 'wave of the future'.⁴⁸⁸

'... our people ... have succeeded ... in ... making civilisation triumph over brute force and overcoming our enemy's superior armaments with our absolute political and moral superiority.'⁴⁸⁹

The political weakness of the American position in Vietnam had inexorably led to the decision in 1965 to crush the peasant insurgency with overwhelming force. Lacking any other solution to the crisis, the Johnson administration rapidly lost control over the US military in its desperation for a quick victory.⁴⁹⁰ As each strategy was tried and failed, the American empire inflicted ever more extreme levels of violence upon the Vietnamese people. Unable to win the hearts and minds of peasantry, the US military declared all-out war on the entire countryside. Needing high scores in the body count to please their commanders, soldiers began to massacre civilians and then record their deaths as Communist losses.⁴⁹¹ What started as spontaneous atrocities quickly

⁴⁸⁷ See David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 637-639.

⁴⁸⁸ See David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 146-151, 159-162; and Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 107-108, 208-222.

⁴⁸⁹ Vo Nguyen Giap, *National Liberation War in Vietnam*, page 28. Also see Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings*, pages 277-294, 307-310.

⁴⁹⁰ See David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 616-618.

⁴⁹¹ See Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, pages 83-84.

evolved into a policy of deliberate genocide. In 1930s China, the Maoists had poetically described their guerrilla army as fish swimming in the sea of the peasantry.⁴⁹² Having failed to find the fish, the US military decided that it would drain the sea. More and more of the Vietnamese countryside was turned into a ‘free fire zone’ to terrify the population into the cities. When there were no more peasants, the peasant revolution would be finished.⁴⁹³

In 1968, Samuel Huntingdon claimed that the US military had finally found the antidote to the Maoist threat in the South. By destroying the peasantry as a class, the Americans could deprive the revolutionary movement in Vietnam of its social base. As added bonus, the refugees in the southern cities were now available as a pool of cheap labour. The Vietnamese economy was about to ‘take-off’ into the industrial stage of growth. Echoing Stalin in the 1930s, Huntingdon praised state violence for its alchemic ability to accelerate the process of modernisation. In this noble cause, the US military’s indiscriminate slaughter of Vietnamese civilians was excused as a regrettable necessity.⁴⁹⁴ Back in the 1950s, the CCF had successfully defined the superpower confrontation in Europe as the choice between American democracy and Russian dictatorship. But, in 1960s Vietnam, this favourable comparison couldn’t be made. As the US military’s offensives in the countryside demonstrated, the Cold War Left had become more totalitarian than its Stalinist opponents. Worst of all, unlike in 1930s Russia, the destruction of the peasantry in Vietnam didn’t even lead – as Huntingdon had promised - to the rapid industrialisation of the country. On the contrary, like the old ruling class, the new proletarians also ended up living off the US taxpayer. MIT modernisation theory put into practice had created the squalid slums of Saigon.⁴⁹⁵

As the war in Vietnam intensified in the mid-1960s, Rostow spent many hours arguing the Johnson administration’s case at university meetings and with delegations of students.⁴⁹⁶ But, all of his efforts were in vain. Within the universities, the gurus of the Cold War Left were becoming the targets of the increasingly militant student anti-war movement. Instead of being credited for its impressive political and social reforms at home, the Johnson administration was identified with the brutal imagery of war dominating the TV news bulletins. After the Tet Offensive, the Cold War Left was

⁴⁹² See Geoffrey Fairbairn, *Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare*, pages 98-100; and Mao Zedong, *Six Essays on Military Affairs*, pages 268-271.

⁴⁹³ In 1971, an American soldier informed a US Congressional committee that: ‘... the general attitude ... [was] the only good Vietnamese was a dead Vietnamese, like if you could get away with it ... blow them away.’ Kenneth Campbell in iwchildren.org, ‘Free Fire Zones?’, page 4. Also see Michael Herr, *Dispatches*, pages 59-61; and Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, pages 70-94, 212-258.

⁴⁹⁴ Huntingdon summarised his theory in one sentence: ‘The Maoist-inspired rural revolution is undercut by the American-sponsored urban revolution.’ Samuel Huntingdon, ‘The Bases of Accommodation’, page 650. Also see Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 239-240.

⁴⁹⁵ See Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pages 465-469, 489-491.

⁴⁹⁶ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 497-498.

completely discredited. The audience who had once listened in awe was now openly contemptuous. Student radicals denounced their anti-Communist professors as perpetrators of genocide. Hippies created their own counter-culture to replace the modernist aesthetics and technocratic attitudes of their discredited elders. Inside the institutional icon of the information society, the knowledge class was joining the anti-imperialist revolution. If about nothing else, the militants of the New Left were united in their contempt for the guilty intellectuals of the Cold War Left.⁴⁹⁷

At the very moment when the Bell commission began preaching the prophecy of post-industrialism to the peoples of the world, the Tet Offensive had suddenly exposed the limitations of American technological superiority. As the leaders of the Vietnamese resistance emphasised, humanity – not machinery – was the subject of history. Even worse, in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive, the Cold War Left realised to its dismay that America was now threatened by two key components of the emerging information society: the electronic media and the knowledge class. The TV news bulletins were responsible for undermining support for the war at home. Student protests had demoralised the troops in Vietnam. Traumatized by their fall from power, Rostow and other hawks of the Cold War Left needed scapegoats for their own disastrous misjudgements. Like the Nazis blaming Marxists and Jews for Germany's defeat in the First World War, they claimed that the US military had been betrayed by a 'stab-in-the-back' by irresponsible journalists and infantile hippies.⁴⁹⁸ The privileged members of the nascent information society had inexplicably turned on their generous benefactors.

Like other prophets of the Cold War Left, Daniel Bell was disorientated by the sudden implosion of the movement. The advocate of 'the ideology of the end of ideology' was now confronted by the choice between two incompatible – and undesirable – ideologies. On the one hand, he despaired when the student revolutionaries made the same mistakes as he had in his Trotskyist youth. On the other hand, Bell was reluctant to follow his hawkish friends all the way into the Republican party.⁴⁹⁹ As the Vital Centre disintegrated, he continued working on the canonical text of the Cold War Left's imaginary future. McLuhan's mystical thought

⁴⁹⁷ In 1972, radical scientists at Berkeley university tellingly compared their professors who had worked on the hi-tech barrier dividing Vietnam into two with the Nazi chemists who decided that Zyklon B was the more effective poison to use in the gas-chambers than Zyklon A. See Berkeley SESPA, *Science Against the People*, page 44. Also see Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, pages 23-61; and Irving Louis Horowitz, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States*, pages 225-291.

⁴⁹⁸ See W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, pages 484-503; C. Dale Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable U.S. Defeat in Vietnam*, pages 33-47; and David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pages 622-624, 655-656. Also see Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*, pages 97-112.

⁴⁹⁹ In 1968, Bell co-edited a bitter denunciation of the New Left student activists by their Cold War Left professors. See Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol, *Confrontation*. Also see Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, pages 344-365.

probes were slowly translated into un-Marxist theory and provided with empirical evidence. In 1973, the great work was finally published. In the years since Bell commission had first met, excessive optimism in hi-tech solutions had led America into disaster at home and abroad. Yet, despite everything, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society* was an intellectual sensation. The convergence of media, telecommunications and media into the Net was - once again – the road to human emancipation. Most gratifyingly, hippie revolutionaries were now among the most fervent champions of the McLuhanite prophecy. The Cold War Left was dead - and the information society was still the imaginary future.

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