

support progress toward his linked goals of disarmament, human rights, economic development, and environmental protection. Such a political community will be multiethnic, multiracial, and religiously plural; it will have solved the problem of conflict-adjudication through legal and political processes; and it will have sustained those processes over time, in such a way that human rights were consistently protected and economic well-being regularly advanced.

Only one diverse, mass-population society has accomplished that on a significant scale in human history, and that is the United States. Despite our undoubted failings, America is the model, in microcosm, of the systemic change required to achieve the kind of world order Johansen defends.

Furthermore, creating a humane world order today requires more than a global social movement modeled on the Abolitionists. Whatever such a movement accomplishes will be mediated through the structures of existing state power centers. Their power can be a positive force for humane politics when it is linked to that sense of moral obligation that will sustain the effort over the long haul.

Such a sense of moral obligation has been drastically weakened in the United States over the past fifteen years; but where else is the national center capable of putting the Johansen goals on its agenda and rooting them in a new sense of its national purpose, one that resonates with its ethical and philosophical foundations?

In his study *Insight*, the Canadian theologian Bernard Lonergan coined the term *scotosis* to refer to the distortion of new data by fixed perspectives in such a way that one's picture of reality is badly awry. Robert Johansen's view of the possibilities of the American role in leadership toward a more humane world order suffers from a kind of ideological *scotosis*—despite the fact that the author himself seems to recognize the one-eyedness of the picture he presents. Time and again qualifying phrases try to give a fuller, more adequate accounting of the realities. Yet in his conclusions Johansen regularly returns to the prescriptions favored by the ideologues.

And that judgment is all the more painful to make because, unlike so many other foreign policy *illuminati*, he has gotten the questions right. **WVV**

THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING: MASS MEDIA IN THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF THE NEW LEFT

by **Todd Gitlin**

(University of California Press, 340 pp, \$12.95)

Raymond A. Schroth

In November, 1969, the Nixon administration used the stern, scolding mug and manfully gesturing fists of Vice-President Agnew for launching a campaign to stifle free criticism of its policies and convince the American people that the news media were unworthy of their trust. This year Todd Gitlin, poet, critic, assistant professor of sociology, and director of the mass communications program at the University of California, Berkeley, has produced an impressive and aggravating doctoral dissertation-made-book in which he comes to a paradoxically similar conclusion.

The Agnew argument—shared to a degree by Lyndon Johnson, who suspected that CBS-TV correspondent Morley Safer was a Communist because he reported the story of U.S. Marines torching a Vietnamese village—was that TV news and the press were somehow in league with radicals to undermine established authority and the American way of life. The Gitlin thesis, however, picks up and develops part of an opposing theme in contemporary media criticism. This theme was partly expressed in Timothy Crouse's journalistic study of the 1972 presidential campaign, *The Boys on the Bus*: that news men mislead us not because they are radicals but because they are unprofessional, too co-opted and too lazy to pursue the truth with a vengeance.

In Gitlin's version the media mislead us not because they are subversive or lazy but because they are necessary to the ruling class's domination, the "systemic (but not necessarily or even usually deliberate) engineering of mass consent to the established order." Just as liberal capitalist ideology has been able to survive the injustice of the economic system by systematically absorbing and domesticating criticism, the media, controlled by a corporate and political elite, maintain their claim to objectivity and legitimacy and at the same time tame the opposition by reporting it in "frames" or categories that neutralize its force.

Gitlin's book is initially a case study



Basic Rights

Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy
Henry Shue

Which human rights ought to be the first honored and the last sacrificed? In the first systematic attempt by an American philosopher to address this issue as it relates to U.S. foreign policy, Henry Shue proposes an original conception of basic rights that illuminates both the nature of moral rights generally and the determination of which specific rights are the basic ones.

Dr. Shue argues that subsistence rights are of equal priority with rights to security and to liberty and that these three are basic rights that should be promoted, or at least not violated, by U.S. foreign policy. In conclusion, he recommends an effective official acknowledgment that subsistence rights are basic rights, the cessation of both economic and security assistance to all governments engaged in essential and systematic deprivation of basic rights, and the prevention of the thwarting of U.S. policies toward basic rights by U.S. based corporations.

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of the effect of the media's coverage on the SDS, of which he himself served as president in 1963-64. But his broader conclusion is that neither SDS nor any other truly radical movement has a chance of being perceived fairly by the general public. The subtle interaction of too many established forces—the predispositions of reporters and editors, the editor's sense of what images best illustrate the correspondent's text, his sense of what the audience might want that particular summer night, the fear of harassing phone calls from the White House—screens out whatever contradicts such dominant hegemonic principles as “the legitimacy of private control of commodity production...the legitimacy of the social order secured by the dominant elites, and the value of individualism as the measure of social existence.”

In a key chapter Gitlin focuses on the *New York Times's* coverage of the SDS in 1965, when the movement was trying to get a clear sense of its own direction and capture public attention with dramatic events like its Wall Street demonstration against the Chase Manhattan Bank and the antiwar march on Washington, both of which he himself helped organize. After comparing the *Times's* coverage of the antiwar demonstration with that of the left-wing weekly *National Guardian*, Gitlin concludes that the *Times* piece “depreciated the size and significance of the march,” “marginalized it by identifying it with youthful deviance,” “trivialized it by failing to cover the speeches,” and “polarized” it by choosing a wire-service photo that included right-wing counterdemonstrations too.

This, in Gitlin's mind, set a pattern

for subsequent coverage. The media's need to interpret stories in familiar journalistic categories led them to handle “arrests” of demonstrators as “crime” stories, and when the student protest movement suddenly burst into headlines in the late 1960s, the media sought out “spokesmen” for the movement and transformed/corrupted them into “celebrities.” Alas, in the long run the media and the movement leaders compromised and undermined one another as each group sought to manipulate the other. “Sealed off from the possibility of experienced social observations, the celebrities became inferior strategists. Reduced to roles in the spectacle, celebrated radicals became radical celebrities: four-star attractions in the carnival of distracting and entertaining national and international symbols.”

In time, Gitlin concludes, the movement, partly in its attempts to project media images of itself without a consistent self-understanding, lost contact with reality. “Increasingly outrageous action led to increased media coverage and selective amplification, and to police suppression, which in turn fueled the movement's anger and paranoia, inspiring still more police reaction and still more stereotypic coverage of outrageous symbols.”

There are so many good things in *The Whole World Is Watching* that I feel guilty about not enjoying it more: the rich bibliography and footnotes; the intelligent use of recent studies; the occasionally wonderful insights (“movement events conditioned the experience of time; one marked one's life experience by ‘Chicago,’ which signified this, by ‘People's Park,’ which signified that. Life came to seem a sequence of tenuously linked exclamation points. But what were the sentences between?”) Why have I had such a hard time getting a “fix” on this book when I expected to like it? Perhaps I'm disappointed because Gitlin handled in just a few pages the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention, which I experienced close to the center of the action and which, I think, the “establishment” *New York Times* covered well. Or because the voice and style of Gitlin the critic-poet loses so many pillow fights with the jargon of the sociologist-communicationist that the book, which has the makings of a great personal story, never develops a center or heart of its own. Rather, it takes on the tone of a discouraging, well-docu-

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT ABOUT JEWS ISN'T IN THE NEW YORK TIMES (OR THE WASHINGTON POST OR ON CBS)

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mented, generally valid but nevertheless dominantly Marxist exposition, telling us what most of us knew but didn't get too depressed (or depressed enough?) about: that no matter what the *New York Times* and Walter Cronkite tell us, we are neither given "all the news that's fit to print" nor told precisely "the way it is"—only something close. [WV]

THE TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEM
by Jacques Ellul
(Continuum Books, 368 pp., \$19.50)

Kai Hong

The main argument of Jacques Ellul's *The Technological System* is that technology is a force unto itself, independent of human goals or desires. While dismissing futuristic fantasies such as the simplistically anthropomorphic computer in 2001, Ellul goes on to write that technology is independent of political, moral, and economic influences. He claims in fact that technology erases political and moral distinctions and actually dictates economic progress. If a technology is developed, a use will be found for it—and with that use a whole substructure of social organization will be created. "Man in his hubris...still believes that his mind controls technology," writes Ellul, but "the technician does not tolerate any insertion of morality in his work." Neither does the "system" of which the technician is a servant. Growth is the imperative of the technological system, and whatever does not serve technological growth will become obsolete, or at best be tolerated as an irrelevancy. The system itself consists of numerous subsystems that mutually influence each other in particularly complex fashion—too complex, no doubt, for the human mind to understand. "The decision-making processes are no longer independent. A decision is the obligatory and inevitable result of those multiple connections."

A main difference between Ellul's earlier volume *The Technological Society* and *The Technological System* is that he now claims "the system exists in all its rigor, but it exists within the society, living in and off the society and grafted upon it." Yet in the chapters called "Technology as the Determining Factor," "Technology as a System,"

"Autonomy," and "Totalization" the overwhelming presence of technology implies its dominance over every sphere of human activity. This is not the only contradiction in Ellul's book. Perhaps the most glaring is his claim early on that technology dictates economic development, while in a later chapter he writes: "Among the obstacles exterior to technological growth, the most striking is the economic obstacle." Ellul's contradictions arise from his exclusive use of general terms. How, for instance, is the term "exterior" to be defined in the above quotation? "System," "totalization," "social reality"—Ellul is full of general terms with virtually no specific examples or analyses of technological subsystems at work.

To point out a particularly embarrassing error, Ellul seems to think that "chess playing machines are still in the realm of fancy." This will come as a surprise to the thousands of consumers who have bought chess programs for their home mini-computers. Indeed, large chess-playing computers have been in the chess columns of the press for at least ten years. Furthermore, when Ellul claims that "anything that can be done must be done: this is once again the fundamental law of automatism," one wonders if the author has ever taken a ride on a New York City subway train. If he had, he would have discovered that certain technological capabilities, though developed, have not been applied. An investigation into the lack of U.S. Government support for independent research and development in the field of solar energy would provide an example of the "system" militating against technological progress. An example of economic factors determining technological direction is the development of nuclear energy without the development of safe methods for disposing of nuclear waste—a problem that could be solved but has not because it would cut into profits.

The tone of the whole book, particularly the concluding chapters, is deeply pessimistic. Man will possess "only an occasional and not creative role" in the future society. But while seemingly a critic of technology and the amorality of technicians, Ellul has at once a cold-blooded and romantic notion of technology's efficiency and omnipotence. He seems to forget or, worse, not to realize that in computer programming the burden of creativity lies with the hu-

YEARS OF ESTRANGEMENT:
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Choosing a neglected period of Soviet-American relations, Maddux documents a germinal stage in the formation of American attitudes and Roosevelt's relations with Stalin and his own State Department, and his manipulations of the media. Many unpublished records of the State Department and personal manuscripts are analyzed. Maddux offers the first systematic assessment of the American media's response to Stalin and its impact on U.S. policy.

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Foreign Affairs

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man being, not the machine. An excellent example of this is computer music. When computers are left relatively alone, they create passable—which is to say mediocre—music. It is only when a human being—a composer and not a mere technician—spends hundreds of hours programming and reprogramming the machine, making it reach beyond its normative capabilities, that interesting music is created.

What is lacking in Ellul's analysis is any appreciation of human capabilities. Notoriously discounted is emotion. Desire is merely a means to manipulate a consumer. Yet one of the lessons the U.S. was forced to face in Vietnam and the Soviet Union is learning presently in Afghanistan is that human beings with sufficient motivation will find a way to defeat superior technologies. Ellul's strange reliance on general terms is reminiscent of the Pentagon's use of such wonderful catch phrases as "pacification" during the 1960s.

Ellul does, however, make a vital point: Human beings in the technological system tend to behave more and more like components of a system (a behaviorist's dream come true). This is the real issue concerning technology's