p. 10 Over the last three decades, the faith of the American people in their democratic institutions has declined, and Americans have begun to doubt their ability to improve the world through politics. At a time when the people of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia are experiencing the excitement of self-government, Americans view politics with boredom and detachment. For most of us, politics is increasingly abstract, a spectator sport barely worth watching. Election campaigns generate less excitement than ever and are dominated by television commercials, direct mail, polling, and other approaches that treat individual voters not as citizens deciding their nation's fate, but as mere collections of impulses to be stroked and soothed.

p. 10 Because of our flight from public life, our common citizenship no longer fosters a sense of community or common purpose. Social gaps, notably the divide between blacks and whites, grow wider. The very language and music heard in the inner city is increasingly estranged from the words and melodies of the affluent suburbs. We have less and less to do with each other, meaning that we feel few obligations to each other and are less and less inclined to vindicate each other's rights. The Persian Gulf War has raised disturbing questions about how we share the most basic burden of democratic citizenship: the obligation to defend the country in time of peril. Many black Americans felt that they were bearing a much larger share of this obligation than the rest of the nation. This was one cause

or the finding of the public opinion polls that African Americans were far less likely than other Americans to support the war effort. Thus did our nation's racial division threaten to affect questions of national security.

P. 11 Most of the problems of our political life can be traced to the failure of the dominant ideologies of American politics, liberalism and conservatism. The central argument of this book is that liberalism and conservatism are framing political issues as a series of false choices. Wracked by contradiction and responsive mainly to the needs of their various constituencies, liberalism and conservatism prevent the nation from settling the questions that most trouble it. On issue after issue, there is consensus on where the country should move or at least on what we should be arguing about; liberalism and conservatism make it impossible for that consensus to express itself.

p. 11 We are suffering from a false polarization in our politics, in which liberals and conservatives keep arguing about the same things when the country wants to move ion.

p. 11-12 The cause of this false polarization is the cultural civil war that broke out in the 1960s. Just as the Civil War dominated American political life for decades after it ended, so

is the cultural civil war of the 1960s, with all its tensions and contradictions, shaping our politics today. We are still trapped in the 1960s.

p. 12 The country still faces three major sets of questions left over the old cultural battles: civil rights and the full integration of blacks into the country's political and economic life; the revolution in values involving feminism and changed attitudes toward child-rearing and sexuality; and the ongoing debate over the meaning of the Vietnam War, which is less a fight over whether it was right to do battle in that Southeast Asian country than an argument over how Americans see their nation, its leaders, and its role in the world.

p. 12-13 The broad political interests of liberal lie in settling the cultural civil war, but many liberals have an interest in seeing it continue. The politics of the 1960s shifted the balance of power within the liberal coalition away from working-class and lower-middle-class voters, whose main concern were economic, and toward upper-middle class reformers mainly interested in cultural issues and foreign policy. Increasingly, liberalism is defined not by its support for energetic government intervention in the economy but by its openness to cultural change and its opposition to American intervention abroad. The rise of the cultural issues made the upper-middle-class reformers the dominant voices within American

liberalism. The reformers, no less than the conservatives, have a continuing interest in seeing the cultural civil war continue.

p. 15 In explaining these sorry developments, we have tended, I believe, to focus too narrowly on the political *process* and not enough on the *content* of politics.

p. 16 At its best, democratic politics is about what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. calls "the search for remedy."

p. 17 The Decline of a "politics of remedy" creates a vicious cycle. Campaigns have become negative in large part because of a sharp decline in popular faith in government. To appeal to an increasingly alienated electorate, candidates and their political consultants have adopted a cynical stance which, they believe with good reason, plays into popular cynicism about politics and thus wins them votes. But cynical campaigns do not resolve issues. They do not lead to "remedies." Therefore, problems get worse, the electorate becomes *more* cynical – and so does the advertising.

p. 17 The party system of the New Deal Era was relatively stable because definable groups voted together and largely held together, even in bad times. Now, almost everything

conspires against group solidarity. Unions are in trouble – and conservatives have done everything they could to weaken them. The new jobs in the service industries promote individualism. The decline of the small town and the old urban ethnic enclaves and the rise of new suburbs, exurbs, and condominium developments further weaken social solidarity. Old urban neighborhoods feel abandoned by the liberal politicians whom they once counted on for support.

p. 18 an Italian machinist in a Detroit suburb may identify himself more with his fellow gun owners than with his ethnic group, his neighborhood, or his follow workers. Since he believes that politics will do little to improve his life or that of his community, he votes defensively: If the government won't do anything *for* him, he damn well won't let it do *anything* against him, such as tax him more heavily or take away his gun. It is not an irrational response, given the current state of our politics.

p. 18 It does no good to yearn for an America that no longer exists, especially since pluralism and geographical and social mobility have created much that we love about the United States. But if our politics is to get better, it is crucial that we recognize that the fragmentation of American society has made our public life much more difficult. We need to find ways to tie citizens back into public life, not to turn them off even more. Above all,

we need to end the phony polarization around the issues of the 1960s that serves only to carry us ever further from a deliberative, democratic public life.

p. 19 Most Americans wouldn't care much about whether one label or the other was used. What they do care about is figuring out how to make the new balance of work and family work.

p. 20 In black families headed by a married couple, 89 percent are above the poverty line. That is still below the 95 percent rate among comparable white couples, but the gap has been closing. In families where both husband and wives, work, black and white incomes are virtually equal.

p. 20 But this relatively good news is counterbalanced by a great deal of bad news. Overall, the black median family income is just 56 percent of white family income. Nearly a third of all blacks, as against only 10 percent of whites, live below the poverty line. Among black children, 45 percent live in poverty, as against only 15 percent of white children. These grim figures are closely related to another statistic: Half of all black children, as against only 16 percent of white children, live in families headed by a woman.

Perhaps the grimmest statistic of all is this one: Black men account for 3.5 percent of America's college students but 40 percent of its prison inmates.

p. 21 But blacks and whites also know that money alone will not suffice. They agree that the problems of the poorest people in urban areas have to do not just with economics but also with a moral crisis. They agree that whatever money is spent should be directed not only at improving opportunities but at changing values. Fathers need to be required to care for their children, work should be required from those who receive social benefits, young women need to be encouraged to avoid pregnancy and stay in school, criminal behavior needs to be sanctioned severely. Both blacks and whites agree that the broader society has an obligation to lift up those trapped in poverty; both blacks and whites agree that the poor have obligations to society, and themselves.

p. 24 But neo-conservatism went off track in response to the polarization bred by the late 1960s. In many cases, the opponents of ideology became ideologues themselves. In the end, neoconservatives, who had once believed deeply in the public sector, fueled a wholesale revolt against it.

p. 24 I then turn to the issues of race and the family to show how anti-democratic impulses among upper-middle-class liberals greatly impaired their generally desirable efforts at social reform. In the case of both race and feminism, liberals – in ways that I believe were unnecessary –undermined the very political coalitions that were essential to a reformist approach to politics.

p. 25-26 But with the rise of Ronald Reagan, conservatism's two wings, libertarian and traditionalist, became increasingly powerful, challenging both fusionism and each other. I highlight the growing strength of three distinct movements within the right, the religious right, supply-side economics, and libertarianism, each of which brought doctrines long regarded as marginal to American life back to a central position in our public debate. The rise of conservative religiosity came as a particular surprise to a country that had long seen "progress," urbanization, and secularization as the trinity representing the wave of the future. Yet, like so many other aspects of modern conservatism, conservative religion ha been thriving for a long time. What changed in the 1970s and 1980s is that the interpreters of the culture were forced to notice it.

p. 26 Conservatives need a politics of false choices. As long as conservatives can continue to run against the discredited liberalism of the past, they will not have to provide a road map

for the future. Conservatism badly needs the failed old liberalism' without such an enemy, conservatism could fall apart.

p. 27 Some conservatives associated with Jack Kemp's ideas on poverty and with the young White House aides pushing for what they call a "new paradigm" in social policy understand the need for new departures. Such conservatives are willing to acknowledge a rode for government and think that by offering their own non-bureaucratic approaches to public policy, they will speak to popular anger and impatience with the way government has done business in the past. These conservatives, admirably in my view, want to promote racial harmony, and they largely accept the new social tolerance created by the 1960s.

One can only wish this new conservatism well. But it is my view that if a new center is created, it will be created by liberals. Liberals are in a better position to make peace with the 19670s. Liberals are not tied to the highly ideological approach to regulation, taxation, government spending, and income distribution that characterizes so much of contemporary conservatism. Liberals do not claim to believe, as so many conservatives do, that politics, public life, and government ought to arouse more suspicion than hope.

p. 32 In the less heroic account, the young rebels are portrayed as spoiled children, the sorry products of Dr. Spock's theories of child-rearing. They were restless souls who ejected the necessary constraints of "bourgeois" society. They abandoned the very rules that created prosperity, a prosperity that allowed them to enjoy so many good things in life. They took all these good things for granted. In casting the rules aside, the young created a counterculture that was indifferent to how children were raised. They were blind to the damage that a drug culture could do to a society. They had no idea how dangerous a world lacking an agreed-upon moral code could be. Yes, the New Left threw off reflexive anticommunism, said its critics. But they embraced instead what might be called reflexive pro-communism, a tendency to support almost any regime, no matter how dictatorial that made the United States its adversary. And in the end, the brigades of the New Left and the counterculture proved no less prone to the seductions of American materialism than their elders. Nothing makes a critic of the New Left happier than to run into an old militant now hard at work at a corporate law firm or an investment bank.

p. 35 A grim picture indeed. "Loneliness, estrangement, isolation describe the vast distance between man and man today," the statement went on. "Doubt has replaced hopefulness- and men act out of a defeatism that is labeled realistic."

p. 36 And he echoed a them that was to become central to the New Left's doctrine, that large inaccessible institutions were inherently "alienating." Nisbet, who became one of the New Left's harshest critics, was in many ways-inadvertently and, he would argue, through certain misunderstandings – one of its early prophets.

p. 39 If one wonders when the neoconservative reaction against the counterculture was born, one could do worse than examine Norman Podhoretz's outburst against Kerouac, written in 1958. Almost all the criticisms Podhoretz levels against Kerouac are criticisms that surfaced later against the counterculture. Podhoretz saw the beat bohemianism of the 1950s as "hostile to civilization," a movement that "worships primitivism, instinct, energy, 'blood," and whose intellectual interests ran to "mystical doctrines, irrationalist philosophies." The Beat Generation's "worship of primitivism and spontaneity is more than a cover for hostility to intelligence," Podhoretz went on, "it arises from a pathetic poverty of feeling as well." The best revolt, Podhoretz declared, was "the revolt of the spiritually under privileged and the crippled of the soul." Long before anyone had discovered the "me decade," Podhoretz saw the beats as "young men who can't get outside the morass of self and so construct definitions of feeling that exclude all human beings who manage to live, even miserably, in a world of objects."

p. 39 Podhoretz noted that one of Kerouac's favorite responses to all situations was Wow!" That, of course, became an expression of choice right through the 1980s as beat-speak became Val-speak, Gitlin noted the same skeptical view of language in rock 'n' roll, which linked "distress of language, distrust of the correct, distrust of practicality itself." The sense, Gitlin said, was that "[w]hat we're feeling is so deep, so difficult, so amazing, it can only be expressed if we leave behind middle class manners, undo the lessons of school, stop trying to sound correct." As the historian Fred Siegel put it in another context, "rules of language came to be seen as the thin edge of totalitarianism."

p. 46-47 It would much too far to say that the "New Left" took over the Democratic Party through the antiwar insurgency. Indeed, the formal institutions of the New Left, notably SDS, regularly assailed the Democratic Party. But the antiwar movement did allow the left and its ideas back into the Democratic Party. If the Cold War political order began domestically with Henry Wallace's split from Harry Truman and the expulsion of the Communist-linked trade unions from the CIO, then the Cold War ended in the Democratic Party with Eugene McCarthy's declaration of candidacy in November of 1967. Suddenly, a critique of American foreign policy that had been off-limits was very much part of the party's normal discourse. Seen another way" In 1964, only two Democratic senators,

Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, voted against the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. In 1965, only seven House Democrats voted against the military budget to protect the Vietnam War. By 1970, the antiwar forces held a majority among congressional Democrats. And in the 1980s, clear majorities among the Democrats in both houses opposed American military aid to the Nicaraguan contras. Cold War liberalism, in short, moved from being the Democratic Party's overwhelmingly dominant tendency to representing the view of an influential but embattled minority.

p. 48 The seed money for the Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations of October 1969 came in significant part from two businessmen who were leaders in Mass Pax, Jerome Grossman and Betram A. Yaffe. Grossman, Yaffee, and other Mass Pax leaders were also heavily involved in the Massachusetts McGovern campaign in 1972, and Grossman was elected to the Democratic National Committee. Subsequently, Mass Pax merged with the successor group to the 1968 McCarthy campaign, Citizens for Participation Politics. (Note the emphasis, drawn from the New Left and Kaufman, on "participatory democracy.") The New Politics forces played decisive roles in electing antiwar figures to top jobs in Massachusetts politics – Michael Harrington, Father Robert F. Drinan, Jim Shannon, Gerry Studds, and Barney Frank to Congress, John Kerry to the Senate. Although Michael Dukakis's roots lay in the earlier tradition of Stevensonian reform and not in antiwar

politics, he needed to court and win over the antiwar wing of his party to win the governorship in 1974.

p. 49 The Daley battle illustrated one major result of the rise of a reform faction in the Democratic Party: the declining power of the party's white, working-class base, which preferred Richard Daley to middle-class reformers (and also to Jesse Jackson). Over the long run, the new party rules that emphasized participation led to an increasing role for the well-to-do and a declining role for the working and lower-middle classes. Thomas Byrne Edsall, a reporter at *The Washington Post*, put matters starkly in a 1988 essay: "the turnout in primaries and in caucuses is skewed in favor of the affluent and upper middle class....These delegate selection processes have been contributing factors in the acceleration of the decline of political organizations in working class communities." That was hardly the result that the egalitarians of the early New Left had in mind when they first broached the idea of "participatory democracy."

p. 50 The political right, represented in the late 1960s by Richard Nixon and George Wallace, was only too happy to rescue the working class from Marcuse's dustbin and harvest is ballots.

p. 52 Critics of American foreign policy have nearly always been labeled "anti-American" by their foes, being cast into the political darkness is one of the risks of dissent. But rarely ıve dissenters cooperated so willingly to validate the claims of their enemies. By embracing anti-Americanism as a noble cause, the farther fringes of the New Left divided and set back the antiwar movement. They opened the way for a contentless politics of symbolism that made the care and treatment of the American flag a more important political question than what the flag stood for. Those who despised George Bush's relentless use of the American flag as a partisan symbol can blame the flag burners of the 1960s for making such a tactic possible. Even the Communist Party had the good sense to drape its meetings with American flags and to declare that communism was "twentieth-century Americanism." The New Left thus committed the cardinal political sin" it let itself be defeated more by its own actions than by those of its foes.

p. 53 And so it went through other issues: Gays wanted an end to laws against sodomy ("leave us alone"); feminists wanted an end to laws against abortion ("leave us alone"); blacks wanted an end to laws enforcing segregation ("leave us alone"); there were many battles against the censorship of music, books, and alternative papers ("Leave us alone"); dictatorships everywhere were called upon to life barriers against emigration and to end torture and the imprisonment of political dissidents ("Leave *them* along").

p. 57-58 In his excellent critical study of the neoconservatives, Peter Steinfels identifies several key words that became central to the future neoconservatives during the 1950s, when the neoconservatives still thought of themselves as liberals. They feared the growth of *mass society* and the resulting *mass politics*, which they saw as descending into the rule of the mob. They saw mass politics as reaching its logical form in totalitarianism – in Hitlerism and Stalinism. The answer to mass politics lay in *pluralism,* the idea of a politics based on negotiations among the leaders of key social groups. For the neoconservatives, pluralism was America's answer to the dangers of mass politics, modern political sociology's version of Madison's system of checks and balances.

p. 59 The newspaper headlines these days are mainly about the resurgence of militant Islam and the growth of nationalism, within the republics and former satellites of the Soviet Union. These developments, too, were foreseen by neoconservatives. Nathan Glazer, one of their numbers, long ago predicted what he called "the universalization of ethnicity" and argued that ethnicity often told us much more about modern politics than class.

p. 60 The founding of the Public Interest in 1965 can be seen as key event in a pivotal decade. In the first issue, its editors declared that the main obstacle to effective e public

policy was the blindness caused by "a prior commitment to ideology, whether it be liberal, conservative or radical."

p. 60 "For it is the nature of ideology," the editors went on, "to preconceive reality; and that it is exactly such preconceptions that are the worst hindrances to knowing-what-one-in-talking-about."

p. 60-61 The logic of this view led to a sense that perhaps the first bump should have been left alone. George H. Nash, the able historian of modern conservationism, cities the influence of a "law" discovered by Jay w. Forrester of MIT that "in complicated situations efforts to improve things often tend to make them worse, sometimes much worst, on occasion calamitous."

p. 61-62 But over time, the neoconservatives were calling nearly all efforts at social reform into question – the bump-in-the-carpet syndrome-and were increasingly skeptical of the reformers themselves. Soon, it seemed that the main consequences of government programs were always the unintended ones. At one level, the message of the neoconservatives to would-be reformers was undoubtedly valuable: Be humble, don't pretend to know what you don't know, be aware that you may cause more harm than good. But the message that came

to permeate the political culture and was seized upon by harder-line conservatives was quite different: Why bother? If you change things, you'll probably only make them worse. Many of *The Public Interest's* editors were willing to acknowledge that their ideas had, indeed, drifted right, under the influence of their own analyses. As a result, wrote Mark Lilla, *The Public Interest's* associate editor, "a new, more aggressive line of argument was put forward." The new wisdom? "Whether well-intentioned or not, the attempt to expand government activity simultaneously in many social spheres has been a counterproductive mistake." Lilla offered this view in 1985. In two decades, the neoconservatives attitude toward social reform had moved from skeptical support to principled opposition.

p. 62 The liberationists, Kristol said, took far too benign a view of human nature and failed to understand that a democratic polity's destiny "is finally determined by the capacity of its citizens to govern its passions and thereby rightly understand its enduring common interests." So much for "if it feels good, do it."

p. 63 From the discussions of unintended consequences, it was just a short step to another neoconservative them that the gravest threat to democracy was the *crisis of authority.* The neoconservatives argued that too many people were demanding too much government, creating "overload." Samuel P. Huntington warned that an "excess of democracy" would