

1966

The Accidental Century

R. A. Rupen

Michael Harrington

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reading for all professional officers and should be of special interest in the high circles of the government.

P. F. CUNNINGHAM
Captain, U.S. Navy

Harrington, Michael. *The Accidental Century*. New York: Macmillan, 1965. 322 p.

Michael Harrington argues here for a modern socialism in the United States to oppose what he sees as a great hypocrisy and fundamental failure of present capitalism to meet the "real" challenges which dehumanize most people while enriching a new elite. He believes that affluence and modern technology make democratic socialism more relevant than ever before, and indeed make it the only way to maintain focus of human values and to control our fate, rather than to be helpless instruments of it. He believes that things have actually worked out in America so that a substantial and growing portion of the population is poorly educated and unequipped to deal with modern technological development, and that a few well-educated people who understand and control the new machinery constitute a technological elite. Unfortunately, Harrington seriously muddies the waters of his stimulating arguments and theses with wide-ranging quotations from others which leave an impression that he is trying to show how clever and learned he is instead of concentrating attention on serious problems. He also comes dangerously close to a "devil theory" of society which suggests that all the present beneficiaries of the system want only to feather their own nests and no one but Harrington sees through them. "America has for some time been engaged in the wrong argument," he arrogantly proclaims.

Yet Harrington deals with significant questions: "education" too often fails to prepare people for the lives they actually lead, and it does not get anywhere near the investment of money and people it should have; middle-class and luxury housing steadily improves while masses of people live in slums and poverty; contemporary real-estate developments isolate an elite in homogeneous golden ghettos while the poor are condemned to urban slums; corporate planning and advertising direct consumption and do not respond to people's demands; traditional individualism has largely become a farce; government, business, and military bureaucracies manipulate information and destroy the true "market place of ideas"; competition no longer actually

exists. Collectivism has become the fact, and individualism a myth. Harrington is still decent enough (or immature enough?) to be shocked that people say one thing and often do another. He also appears to believe that ordinary people possess a great intellectual and moral potential which "the system" perverts and destroys; his socialist system will liberate this great reservoir of largely untapped talent. People are enslaved by an outdated form of economic and social organization; their inadequacies are socially caused and not inherent. The book is recommended as stimulating and serious, but made unduly difficult and confusing by extensive quotation. It illuminates real problems and difficulties, but its prescription is difficult to accept.

R.A. RUPEN

Consultant, International Relations

Schwartz, Harry. *The Soviet Economy since Stalin*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965. 256 p.

This is a report of the ins and outs, the ups and downs of the Soviet economy since 1953 when Stalin died. In addition, there is a brief review of the Stalin era, which the author claims still haunts the Soviet economy and Soviet society. *The Soviet Economy since Stalin* is the Soviet story of promising far more than could be achieved, and objectively describes the Russians' plans, their accomplishments, and their disappointments. Mr. Schwartz tells of the key economic issues that probably helped determine the timing of Khrushchev's fall, and attempts to identify his successors' intentions in the area of economic policy. In all, this is a gem of a little book, written by and in the style of a *New York Times* staffer.

F.A. BALDWIN

Captain, U.S. Navy

Sulzberger, Cyrus L. *Unfinished Revolution*. New York: Atheneum, 1965. 304 p.

This book is a pithy introduction to current problems of American foreign policy. Mr. Sulzberger, writing as a journalist and not as a historian, has produced an excellent, if somewhat oversimplified, survey of the current world. He begins by briefly outlining three major revolutions which have begun since World War I: the Revolution of Technical Means, the Revolution of