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Radical Son

David Horowitz's *RADICAL SON: A GENERATIONAL ODYSSEY* is a powerful autobiographical account of his political and spiritual journey from the left to the right. Horowitz was a "red diaper baby." Both his parents were committed members of the Communist Party. Horowitz grew up in the closed world created by the Party, attending Party schools and even a Party summer camp. Though as a young man Horowitz renounced his childhood Stalinism, he still clung to the dream of socialism. As a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, in the early 1960's, Horowitz helped create the New Left, a radical movement dominated by students who hoped to rescue and renew the left project by uniting Marxism with what they believed were more humane and liberating values.

Horowitz quickly became a leader in the radical movement, writing books criticizing American Cold War policy which became widely influential in leftist circles. On the strength of his intellectual reputation, Horowitz became one of the editors of *RAMPARTS*, the leading radical journal of the 1960's. Here Horowitz became involved with the Black Panther Party. Overlooking the Panthers' violence and criminal activities, Horowitz convinced himself that his new associates were earnest revolutionaries like himself. When the Panthers murdered an accountant he had placed with them, Horowitz began a process of reevaluating his convictions. He came to believe that the radical movement of the 1960's had been a mistake, with revolutionary zeal a mask for arrogance and self-promotion.

Gradually Horowitz came to appreciate the political wisdom of the American founding fathers, with their wise sense of fallibility of human nature, and the limits of human endeavor. Horowitz now defends a conservative political vision with the same iconoclastic flair he exhibited as a radical in the 1960's. *RADICAL SON* will be of use to anyone interested in tracking the political evolution of the past thirty years.

Sources for Further Study

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