Explorations and Proposals toward Market Socialism and World Government

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A Visionary Odyssey

By

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CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

1

EPIPHANY IN THE BRONX

During the academic year of 1961-62, I was a freshman student at the Rose Hill campus of Fordham University, located in the heart of the Bronx, the only one of the five boroughs comprising New York City located on the mainland of the United States. My family home at that time was in Tervuren, Belgium, a suburb of Brussels, where my father had recently taken up an executive position with International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT). Although I had never before lived so far away from home, I adapted to student life at Fordham fairly quickly. In addition to making friends among my fellow students at Mrs. Peters' rooming house near the campus, there were some obvious advantages to living in one of the world's great cities. Among other things, a short ride on the subway would convey me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan, filled to overflowing with the great masterworks of art history.

At the time I started at Fordham University in September 1961, my background and beliefs were quite conventional. Specifically with respect to "socialism," my opinion was thoroughly negative. One had only to look carefully and objectively at the Soviet Union and Red China, so I thought, for it to become completely obvious that socialism was decidedly inferior to the Western system of democratic capitalism, as exemplified by the United States, the nations of Western Europe, and several others around the world. While a socialistic system need not become immediately prostrated, as witnessed by the fact that the Soviet Union and Red China were at that time mounting a very serious geopolitical and military challenge against the Western world, communistic socialism was nevertheless decidedly inferior to Western capitalism both economically and politically.

My harsh judgment on communism had been clearly expressed in a 1958 essay I had written for an English class at Cranwell Prep in Lenox, Massachusetts. The tone of this diatribe was set in the first paragraph, which referenced the then-recent Hungarian revolt against Soviet occupation:

> Just over two years ago, the myth of the communist utopia was shattered in a rain of bullets as mechanized Russian forces cut down inexperienced, underarmed Hungarian Freedom Fighters on the bloody streets of Budapest. For a month the world watched astounded as the oppressed Hungarians erupted in a seething revolt that tore the lid off the communist Big Lie. Never before had there been such a dramatic demonstration of the failure of the "glorious socialism" that the commies claim will inherit the world. For all time the working class—the "proletariat" that is the supposed "beneficiary" of communism—gave emphatic refutation to communism's falsehoods.

I still have a copy of that English essay in my files of juvenilia. The teacher gave me an A and added the notation "Good." That was indeed the way I thought at the beginning of the 1961-62 academic year. But by the end of that year my judgment on "socialism" was—to say the least—far more nuanced than it had been. Indeed, I had come to the firm conclusion that the term "socialism," after all, could refer to a number of very different things—not all of them necessarily bad.

Turning to "world government," I don't have any preserved teenaged writings documenting my negative attitude toward the idea, but I remember it clearly enough. The dire threat from communistic socialism was in the newspapers almost every day. On the other hand, there was no immediate prospect for world government. Thus, as did most people, I gave it very little thought. But to the extent that I gave any consideration at all to world government, I dismissed the possibility as, at best, a misguided and thoroughly utopian delusion, and at worst, a despicable communist plot to destroy freedom and democracy throughout the world. If a world government were established, I had no doubt that the international communist movement would exert every effort to gain complete control over it. And should this effort be successful, I had no doubt also that human existence throughout the world would be reduced to the lowest level of oppression and misery.

But by the end of my freshman year in June of 1962, I had radically revised my opinion of both socialism and world government. From my former opinion that they were both highly undesirable, I had migrated 180 degrees to the opinion that they were both indeed highly desirable—presuming, of course, that they were *properly implemented*. By what is meant "properly implemented"? With respect to socialism, for example, this meant that while undemocratic, centrally planned socialism as practiced at that time in the Soviet Union and Red China was clearly dysfunctional, a system of politically democratic, market-oriented socialism—defining "socialism" as no more nor less than public ownership of the pre-

ponderance of land and capital—did indeed hold great promise as a socio-economic reform in the West.

With respect to world government, my ideas on proper implementation were at that time far less evolved than they were with respect to socialism. But I had an instinct that if the West would transform itself into a democratic market socialist society, the path would thereby be cleared to some form of meaningful and effective world government within a relatively brief period of time. The adoption of democratic market socialism by the West would rip up the roots of the ideological confrontation between the communist and non-communist blocs of nations. More than likely, this fundamental transformation in the West would inspire the communist nations to abandon communist party dominion in favor of genuine democracy. As a result of the much-augmented mutual respect and trust among the superpowers, major progress on disarmament would become possible. Some of the savings from reduced military expenditure could then be transferred to economic development assistance programs, enabling the less developed nations to make more rapid progress toward a much higher level of prosperity. With ideological conflict reduced to a manageable level, and global economic inequality rapidly decreasing, the practical obstacles to world government would thereby be so much diminished that the establishment of such a government would become far more likely.

It could be done! It should be done!

The emotional impact of these fundamental changes in my belief system was easily the equivalent of religious conversion. It was an epiphany of the highest order. I never experienced anything like it either before or after. No doubt several factors contributed to this remarkable transformation, but one factor in particular stands out clearly in my memory. I sometimes wonder whether it would have happened without this one factor.

The immediate catalyst to the chain of thought leading to this diametrical reversal of mind and heart was a casual reading, late in the fall semester of 1961, of *The Power Elite* by the noted sociologist C. Wright Mills, published by Oxford University Press in 1956. By 1961 the book was well established as one of the most important sociological contributions of the recent past.

Exactly what it was about the Mills treatise that precipitated my own personal drastic reappraisal of reality, I cannot say for sure. While Mills was definitely leftwing in his basic ideological orientation, he was by no means a genuine radical. His purpose was not to preach the need for major social transformations, either domestic or international. It was rather merely to put people on their guard against excessive manipulation by the

"power elite" of wealthy capitalists, corporation executives, high military officers and government officials—what President Dwight D. Eisenhower memorably labeled the "military-industrial complex."

In my case, however, recognition of the possibility that my prior thinking on policy issues might have been manipulated by those with an especially strong interest in maintaining the status quo thoroughly disturbed me: it thoroughly dislodged my previously orderly structure of conventional political and economic judgments. The winter and spring of 1962 was a period of intense intellectual activity, the culmination of which was a fairly comprehensive vision of democratic market socialism as a steppingstone to world government.

In order to fully understand and appreciate this vision, it is necessary to understand and appreciate the condition of the world as it was in the early 1960s. This is not so easy for people today. The collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union took place in 1991, well over a quarter of a century ago. Prior to that historic event, the Cold War between the communist and non-communist nations had the world perched on the edge of nuclear catastrophe for several long, perilous decades. Following the development and first use of atomic bombs against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki toward the end of World War II in 1945, an arms race immediately commenced between the United States and the Soviet Union. As powerful as atomic bombs were, they were soon superseded by hydrogen bombs of a qualitatively greater level of destructiveness. Meanwhile, delivery systems were radically improved. Relatively slow airplanes were replaced by ballistic missiles. A few hours of warning of a nuclear surprise attack dwindled to a few minutes. By the start of the 1960s, it was universally acknowledged that an unrestrained nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people. There were differences of opinion as to precisely how many hundreds of millions would be killed, and as to what the precise odds were of such a horrific event actually happening. But almost everyone was well aware that if it *did* occur, the degree of death and destruction throughout the world would be unprecedented.

The consensus everywhere in the world was that this situation seemed fully insane: that it defied common sense that humanity would have invented such terrifying weapons of mass destruction, and at the same time built up such a level of hostility and distrust within itself that there was a non-negligible possibility that a nuclear holocaust might actually occur. But there seemed to be no escape. Communist ideology insisted that the capitalist system was rotten and evil and destined inevitably to collapse. Non-communist ideology insisted that, to the contrary, it was the communist system that was rotten and evil, and that any effort to impose it on

the non-communist nations would be met by any and all means necessary, up to and including all-out nuclear war.

But what about the possibility of arranging an international conference of experts to freely discuss and decide on the merits of the ideological issue: to determine which was the better system from the standpoint of overall social welfare, or perhaps to recommend some sort of compromise social system that would combine the positive elements from both the communist and non-communist systems? Surely that would have been the rational thing to do.

Perhaps that would have been the rational thing to do—but no authoritative political leader on either side ever suggested such a thing. Both sides continued to blast away at each other with propagandistic proclamations. According to its apologists, capitalism guarantees the blessings of economic prosperity and political freedom. According to the exponents of communism, what capitalism actually guarantees is the freedom of a handful of plutocratic capitalists to exploit the general population. As for capitalist democracy, that (according to these same communist exponents) is a hypocritical sham: only political candidates acceptable to the capitalist plutocracy have any chance whatever of being elected to any important government office. Not only did the capitalist plutocracy own and control the means of communication, they also controlled access to and usage of political power by means of campaign contributions and bribery.

In the face of this kind of vociferous debate employing half-truths, oversimplifications, misrepresentations, obfuscations, and outright prevarication, it seemed, and indeed probably was, futile to hope that any sort of rational argumentation, based on objective, factual evidence, would be successful in resolving the critical issues. So it was simpler just to carry on with the arms race, in hopes that somehow, someday, unforeseen and unforeseeable developments would eventually bring the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion before ultimate disaster intervened.

As we now know, humanity got lucky. The Cold War was brought to a peaceful conclusion in 1991 when the Soviet people gave up on Marxism, and decided that—even after all that—they in fact now wanted Western-style capitalism and democracy for themselves. The policy of containment of communism, formulated and inaugurated by the Truman administration shortly after the end of World War II, had finally worked as intended. The driving force behind the international communist movement, the Soviet Union, had finally seen the light of reason, and given up on its misguided effort to bring the communist economic and political system to the entire world. It had finally become clear to them that this messianic motivation was not only deeply perverse but extremely, unacceptably hazardous.

Around the world were heard deep sighs of relief that nuclear disaster had been averted.

There is no doubt that the world is a much safer place now than it was prior to 1991. But it is not as safe as it could be and should be. Although the stockpile of nuclear-tipped missiles at the ready is much smaller than it used to be, it is by no means insignificant. And although the issue of communism versus capitalism is no longer important, nations still have many disagreements, many conflicts of interest. The "communist menace" came about in 1917 as a result of the Russian revolution. But humanity had been regularly inflicting warfare on itself for millennia prior to 1917. With the disappearance of the "communist menace" in 1991, the propensity toward conflict, violence and warfare was appreciably diminished—but it was by no means abolished. The possibility of nuclear disaster, while much smaller, is still very much with us.

Back in 1961-62, however, the eventual demise of the Cold War in 1991 was far off in the unknown future. At that time, the nuclear threat was a clear and present danger—to some a very imminent danger. People coped with this awful reality as best they could, some more successfully than others. But even the most sanguine knew that if ever announcements came through the airwaves that a nuclear war had commenced, they would be filled with terror as they searched desperately for someplace to shelter. Of course, the bigger the city, the more tempting a target it would be for the other side. And New York City, the place in which I had come to reside in September 1961, was the biggest, juiciest, most tempting target in the entire world for communist nuclear missiles.

Early in my teenage years, I had developed a taste for science fiction. For a while back then, I consumed large quantities of the stuff. In fact, I was so smitten with it that during my high school years at Cranwell Prep, I even produced a few sci-fi short stories of my own, as well as a substantial "future history textbook" covering the story of human endeavor from the present into the era of interstellar expansion.

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) is the technical psychiatric term for what is commonly known as multiple personality disorder (aka split-personality disorder). In his 1886 novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson authored a lurid fictionalization of the condition. I would contend that the science fiction genre also manifests a split personality. On the bright side, you have the abundant stories that optimistically envision the human race expanding out into the stars, into the galaxy, into the universe. On the dark side, you have the abundant stories that pessimistically envision humanity never getting off planet Earth owing to a catastrophic nuclear holocaust and/or environmental collapse.

On the one hand, you have The Stars; on the other you have Doomsday.

There are some unsettling technical considerations that suggest that in the real world, the Doomsday prospect is more plausible than The Stars prospect. According to Albert Einstein, whose early twentieth century cogitations laid the groundwork for nuclear weapons: as any moving object approaches the speed of light (186,000 miles per second, or 6 trillion miles per year—the distance denoted by the term "light-year"), its mass approaches infinity. Thus the speed of light is the maximum upper limit of velocity: nothing can travel faster than the speed of light. But the distances between the stars are so vast that they are measured in light-years. For example, the nearest star to our sun is Alpha Centauri, which is 4.37 light-years away. For another example, the estimated diameter of our own galaxy, known as the Milky Way, is between 100,000 and 180,000 light-years across. Of course, in the "space opera" sci-fi sub-genre exemplified by the several *Star Wars* movies, spaceships are depicted as zipping about among the stars in about the same amount of time it takes to get between various destinations on the surface of planet Earth. But unless future science can somehow get around Einstein's conclusions regarding velocity, such visions must be deemed fantasies, as something which is known to be impossible.

On the other hand, we know for a fact that nuclear doomsdays are quite possible in the here and now. The existence and the readiness of the weaponry is no fantasy. Even in the post-Cold War era, considerations of national security in the United States, the Russian Federation, and several other nuclear-armed nations around the world, require that this weaponry be kept in a constant state of readiness, and that under certain conditions, its utilization could not be long delayed. But the danger was far worse back in the 1960s, when ideologues on both sides were proclaiming that if necessary, universal death and destruction would be preferable to living under the odious socioeconomic system of the other side.

No one knew in the 1960s what the consequences would be of an all-out nuclear war, any more than anyone knows today what would happen. The consensus among the experts, foremost among whom was Herman Kahn, RAND Corporation strategist and author of such bestsellers as *On Thermonuclear War* (1959) and *Thinking about the Unthinkable* (1962), was that while the death and destruction caused by a nuclear war would be unprecedented in the history of mankind, it was unlikely to lead to the short-term extinction of humanity. The general tenor of *On Thermonuclear War* was upbeat in a sense: that nuclear war was definitely survivable, and possibly even winnable. As such, it constituted an influential rebuttal to the "we'll all die" jeremiads of hardline pacifists proposing unilateral

disarmament. Naturally, critics accused *On Thermonuclear War*—despite its ostensible purpose as a warning to all mankind—of making nuclear war more rather than less likely.

From the very beginning of the nuclear age, the Doomsday Tale became an important sub-genre within the overall science fiction genre. Perhaps the best-known example of this sub-genre was *On the Beach*, a best-selling novel by Nevil Shute, published in 1957 and soon afterwards produced as a film of the same name (1959). The premise is that an all-out nuclear war would not cause the immediate extinction of the human race via the heat and blast effects created by the nuclear explosions themselves, but rather these explosions would produce so much radioactive fallout that all the survivors would eventually perish of radiation sickness. (In his writings on nuclear war, Herman Kahn opined that this premise was implausible.) Personally, I found both the novel and the film to be somewhat sanitized depictions of the potential consequences of nuclear war: the focus was on the thoughts and activities of people in Australia who had been spared the initial conflagration, but who were now waiting for the death-dealing radioactive cloud to envelop their country. Among other things, there was no depiction of the agonizing consequences of radiation sickness.

Personally I found another entry in the Doomsday literature of the period to be far more frightening than *On the Beach*: *Level 7*, by Mordecai Roshwald, published in 1959. The premise of this novel was the same as that of *On the Beach*: following the initial conflagration, radioactive fallout would be so heavy and universal that every human being on the planet would succumb. The last survivors were in the lowest level (Level 7) of a multi-level underground shelter, some 4,000 feet below the surface. The sole responsibility of the Level 7 personnel is—in the event of nuclear war—to unleash their entire nuclear missile arsenal against the enemy. It is left ambiguous who is the enemy is: Level 7 personnel are designated by codes rather than names, and no hint is provided as to whether they are American or Russian. The novel takes the form of a diary kept by X-127, one of the officers in charge of launching nuclear attacks or counterattacks.

Of course, nuclear war does break out—by "technical accident." The accident leads to the unintentional launching by the other side of twelve intercontinental ballistic missiles, of which two fall on cities. Before a message is received apologizing for the accident, a retaliatory strike is on its way. Despite efforts by human decision-makers on both sides to stop the escalation, computerized automatic response systems take over. Within less than three hours, the nuclear armories on both sides have been entirely

expended, and much of the world's population on the surface is already dead. The remaining surface survivors will soon succumb to radiation sickness.

But at this point there is apparently no imminent danger to the survivors sheltering in the various underground levels. Of these levels, Level 7 is the safest. Its designers have estimated that its occupants will be safe for 500 years, long enough for surface radiation to become harmless. Unfortunately, the designers were wrong. Deadly radiation begins seeping down lower and lower into the ground, and one by one the people in the higher levels die off. Eventually everyone in Level 7 succumbs to radiation sickness. According to the story, the nuclear war takes place on June 9, and on October 12, the last survivor, X-127, passes away. Instead of 500 years, Level 7 had held out a mere four months. The author, Mordecai Roshwald, did a fine job, through the accumulation of a host of realistic details, of making it all seem very plausible, very believable. A sense of claustrophobic doom builds steadily as the story unfolds.

So this was the kind of thing that contributed to my unease as I settled in to my college studies at Fordham University in New York. If the missiles ever started flying, some of them, clearly, would head straight for the Big Apple. But would that ever happen? Would any of the leaders of the superpowers ever be so rash, so misguided, so *stupid* as to permit circumstances to arise under which nuclear war would be possible, even probable? Probably not—but there were certain things going on in the world at that time that might have given considerable pause to any sensible person.

In the fall of 1961, the most obvious danger point was the city of Berlin. The post-World War II settlement had left Germany a divided country and Berlin a divided city. East Germany and East Berlin were both occupied by Soviet Russian forces, assisted by their East German allies. Following the war, Joseph Stalin had seen to it that most territory occupied by the Red Army was forcibly communized in the interest of protecting the Soviet Union itself with a buffer zone of "friendly" regimes. Among the forcibly communized Eastern European countries was East Germany. Unfortunately for the cause of peace and stability, the erstwhile capital of Germany, Berlin, was not on the border between East Germany and West Germany. Rather it was entirely within the boundaries of East Germany, the nearest West German territory being almost 100 miles distant from the city's borders.

From the start, the postwar German partition was a public relations disaster for the communist leadership. The Soviet occupation of East Germany was exceptionally harsh owing to residual bitterness left over from the epic struggle on the Eastern front between Nazi Germany and

Soviet Russia. During the postwar years, a large gap opened up between living standards in West Germany, at that time benefiting from Marshall Plan aid, and East Germany. Quite aside from the rigors of foreign occupation by the Red Army, the economic gap alone motivated hundreds of thousands of East Germans to migrate to the West. Berlin became the most important loophole: East Berliners would cross over into West Berlin, and then use road or rail connections to relocate themselves to cities and towns within West Germany. This out-migration was an acute embarrassment for the communist leadership both in Soviet Russia and East Germany.

In a November 1958 speech, Nikita Khrushchev proclaimed that this situation had to end—within six months. Berlin must become a "free city" with no foreign occupiers. The Eisenhower administration interpreted Khrushchev's speech as an ultimatum: with American and other allied forces removed from the city, the East German communist regime would have no difficulty shutting off the out-migration. Khrushchev's demand was therefore rejected as unacceptable. This uneasy status quo continued until in August 1961, the East German regime under Walter Ulbricht forced the issue by constructing the Berlin Wall to forcibly shut down the out-migration. Not long afterwards, on the night of October 27, as a consequence of a dispute between the Americans and the Russians over whether diplomatic personnel needed to present their credentials to border guards, a standoff occurred at Checkpoint Charlie on the Friedrichstrasse between Russian and American tanks and soldiers. Both sides had loaded weapons and were under instructions to return fire if fired upon. The possibility was on everyone's mind that a small-scale border shooting incident might somehow blossom out into a nuclear World War III. Fortunately, both Kennedy and Khrushchev did not want that to happen. Informal agreements were hastily reached: the Soviets and East Germans would withdraw their demands that Berlin become a "free city," and in return the Americans would abandon any temptations they might have had toward interfering with the Berlin Wall. This arrangement persisted peaceably until finally, almost three decades later, the Berlin Wall was dismantled on November 9, 1989.

However, that "everything would turn out fine in the end" was not at all evident to me, reading my *New York Times* on an NYC park bench, on the morning of October 28, 1961. How many more of these confrontations were going to take place in the future? Would they all end peacefully? This is most definitely an unsatisfactory situation. Is there nothing at all that can be done to reduce the peril? Nothing at all?

And what about "the Russians"? True, they were our deadly enemies, with whom, upon a moment's notice, we might have to fight to the death. But from an early age, I had been a "World War II buff," and I was fully aware that not too many years before, we had stood shoulder to shoulder with the Russians against the Nazi menace. And I knew enough about the Eastern front from 1941 to 1945 to know that Russian losses during those desperate years dwarfed those of all the other allies combined. It was true, of course, that the Stalin dictatorship had much in common with the Hitler dictatorship. But at least Soviet communism, unlike German Nazism, had not openly scorned the democratic principle. Stalin's 1930s purges were monstrous, but they were not as horrific as Hitler's 1940s Holocaust against Jews and other "racial undesirables."

That the Soviet Union was dangerously paranoid could hardly be doubted, but to some extent the paranoia was understandable. Following the Russian revolution, throughout the interwar period, the Soviet Union had been the sole socialist nation in the entire world. And although most anti-socialists outside the Soviet Union assumed that it would eventually collapse owing to the weakness of its Marxist underpinnings, there were some who felt that the collapse should be hastened along by outside military intervention. And when Hitler's armies eventually invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, a large part of the public relations justification provided for this to the world by the Nazi regime was the purported need to eliminate the "Bolshevik menace."

Even granting that the current Russian leadership was dangerously misguided, what about the historical tradition of Russian culture? What about Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in literature, and Shiskin and Repin in art, and Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev in music? Could a nation so rich in culture be now so hopelessly immured in evil as to be past redemption? And what about the Russian people? Like people everywhere, most of them were probably good and kind at heart.

The cinema is often a revealing guide to the ordinary people of any given society. As part of the ongoing cultural exchange programs of the period, a Soviet film produced in 1960, with the English title *A Summer to Remember*, was shown in New York City in the winter of 1961-62. The protagonist is a little 5-year-old tyke by the name of Seryozka, only son of the recently war-widowed Maryana. Along comes Korostelyov, ex-Red Army officer, who takes over as director of the collective farm and marries Maryana. Korostelyov is a formidable figure, but soon manifests a heart of gold where little Seryozka is concerned. When it is comes time for Korostelyov to go with Maryana to a new assignment, leaving Seryozka behind temporarily in the care of his grandparents, the cute little kid is

heartbroken. But in the end it is the imposing Korostelyov who crumbles. In the midst of a raging blizzard he has the truck turned around to go back to pick up Seryozka. To his ecstatic joy, little Seryozka, together with his beloved mother Maryana and stepfather Korostyelov, will be all together in their new home! Talk about heart-warming! I came out of that New York movie theater on that cold winter's night with tears in my eyes, and with the overpowering conviction that it would be a dirty rotten shame if we were forced to wage nuclear war against people like these.

It was not long after the Checkpoint Charlie standoff that I started reading the book that changed my life forever: *The Power Elite* by C. Wright Mills. At first I didn't find anything particularly surprising about it. Any sensible person has to realize that every large-scale, organized society must have a "power elite" of responsible, authoritative leaders. This is true of the United States just as it is true of every other country in the world. So what?

But as I continued turning the pages, absorbing what Mills was trying to convey, I began to experience thoughts and feelings that I had never before thought or felt. Surely capitalism was a fine thing in a general sense, but as it had developed in the United States and the other leading capitalist nations, it had created a great deal of economic inequality, especially in the distribution of capital property. Most people possessed little or nothing in the way of stocks, bonds, and other property income-producing instruments, while at the same time a small minority of the population possessed huge amounts of this kind of property. Moreover, this situation has political implications as well as economic implications. Clearly, very wealthy people have disproportionate influence in the workings of governance even in what is ostensibly a fully democratic republic—as well as having disproportionate financial resources with which to acquire the good things in life.

And was it true, as I had always previously believed, that there was absolutely nothing at all of value within the socialist critique of capitalism? Could it be that there was not one single little iota of validity in this critique that had inspired millions upon millions of people all around the world over several generations of humanity? Could they have all been totally deluded, totally misguided, totally wrong? Somehow that proposition seemed unlikely—increasingly unlikely. These kinds of borderline heretical thoughts increasingly troubled me as I made my way through the pages of *The Power Elite*.

The first salient point emphasized by Mills is that the power elite suffers from a superiority complex that seriously weakens its ability to empathize with the rank and file of society, the "common people." Although the

power elite described by Mills are generally rich, they did not all necessarily come by their wealth via inheritance and family connections. Nevertheless, whatever the source of their wealth and power, they all possess a deeply ingrained elitist attitude (Mills, pp. 283-295 passim):

> All the structural coincidence of their interests as well as the intricate, psychological facts of their origins and their education, their careers and their associations make possible the psychological affinities that prevail among them, affinities that make it possible for them to say of one another: He is, of course, one of us. And all this points to the basic, psychological meaning of class consciousness. Nowhere in America is there as great a "class consciousness" as among the elite.

Granted for the sake of argument that the interests of the "power elite" do not necessarily coincide entirely with those of "society at large," is this necessarily a problem? Are there effective means by which the power elite might impose their own preferences on the overall society even within an ostensibly fully democratic political system? Mills suggests that this is indeed the case, albeit the imposition is not by force but rather by persuasion. The means of persuasion operate through the privately-owned and operated mass communications media, upon which the general population is dependent for its information and viewpoints (Mills, pp. 296-315 passim):

> So long as the media are not entirely monopolized, the individual can play one medium off against another; he can compare them, and hence resist what any one of them puts out. The more genuine competition there is among the media, the more resistance the individual might be able to command. But how much is this now the case? *Do* people compare reports on public events or policies, playing one medium's content off against another's?
>
> The answer is: generally no, very few do: (1) We know that people tend strongly to select those media which carry contents with which they already agree. There is a kind of selection of new opinions on the basis of prior opinions. No one seems to search out counter-statements as may be found in alternative media offerings. Given radio programs and magazines and newspapers often get a rather consistent public, and thus reinforce their messages in the minds of that public. (2) This idea of playing one medium off against another assumes that the media really have varying contents. It assumes genuine competition, which is not widely true. The media displays an apparent variety and competition, but on closer view they seem to compete more in terms of variations on a few standardized themes than clashing issues. The freedom to raise issues effectively seems more and more to be confined to those few interests that have ready and continual access to these media.

In his concluding Chapter 15 ("The Higher Immorality"), Mills opines that the phenomena he describes are by no means neutral, by no means benign. They are rather highly dysfunctional: they are guiding society in a direction that is not consistent with its best interests (Mills, pp. 360-361):

> America—a conservative country without any conservative ideology—appears now before the world a naked and arbitrary power, as in the name of realism, its men of decision enforce their often crackpot definitions upon world reality. The second-rate mind is in command of the ponderously spoken platitude. In the liberal rhetoric, vagueness, and in the conservative mood, irrationality, are raised to principle. Public relations and the official secret, the trivializing campaign and the terrible fact clumsily accomplished, are replacing the reasoned debate of political ideas in the privately incorporated economy, the military ascendancy, and the political vacuum of modern America.

Two years following the publication of *The Power Elite* in 1956, Mills published another book, much shorter but even more vehement, entitled *The Causes of World War Three* (Ballantine Books, 1958). In this book Mills expressed his acute concern over the hazardous trend of international relations, which seemed to have humanity on a collision course with nuclear holocaust. Whereas most intellectuals of the period tended to assign responsibility for this unsatisfactory situation to the unimaginative and irrational tendencies within every human being, Mills was more specific. To him it was primarily the *leadership* that was at fault. Not just the leadership of the West, as dissected in *The Power Elite*, but the leadership of the East. Although Mills was willing to give communism some credit for commendable ideals, he had no sympathy for it as actually practiced in the Soviet Union, Red China, and elsewhere. Like most Western critics of the Western non-communist system at that time, he was of the firm opinion that no matter how bad the Western non-communist system might be, the Eastern communist system was even worse. There, the perverse policies laid down by the leadership were enforced on the people not by indirect trickery and persuasion, but rather by direct intimidation and coercion.

But whatever the means by which the Western and Eastern power elites controlled their respective societies, they are very much alike in one critical respect: lack of imagination. As the holders of wealth and power, they are too conservative, too suspicious of change, too attached to the status quo—even though that status quo is headed for disaster. By separate means, they have created for themselves "mass societies" of blissfully uncomprehending citizens marching like cattle toward the slaughterhouse.

The 1950s and 60s were the early days of the Cold War, and while almost everyone agreed that the nuclear arms race was not a healthy devel-

opment, and that it could justly be described as mad, stupid, insane, idiotic, and so on and so forth, very little in the way of practical recommendations for ameliorating the problem were being put forward. Certainly Mills, for one, had no specific, operational ideas. For the non-communist world, there was one and only one course to be followed, containment: "We must hold out until the communists see the error of their ways and stop pushing for global communization." The situation was analogous in the communist world: "We must hold out until the people of the non-communist nations see the error of their ways and stop defending capitalism." As to the possibility that nuclear holocaust might intervene before either of these objectives could be reached—well, that risk was just the price we had to pay to protect and preserve our hallowed way of life, whatever it might be.

It was not as if at any point during the winter and spring of 1962, I sat down calmly and said to myself: "Apparently no one is thinking seriously about what sort of ideological compromise might be possible between communism and non-communism—therefore I shall undertake this." It was more that a vision emerged, step by step—but not gradually. The process was actually quite rapid, more like a "flash of intuition" than a piecemeal evolutionary development. While the overall outline was fairly clear from the beginning, the fine details of the vision took time to develop—many long years, in fact.

The starting point was that—contrary to my firm belief up to that time—"socialism" was not in fact a thoroughly malign, completely perverse concept. Always before I had identified "socialism" with "communism," and "communism" with both political tyranny (communist party dominion) and economic inefficiency (central planning). But then it came to me: "socialism" per se, as could be confirmed by reference to almost any dictionary, referred primarily to public ownership of the non-human factors of production, land and capital. True, socialism had become identified with communist party dominion and central planning owing to its historical association with communism as implemented first in Soviet Russia, and more recently in Red China. But this identification was very likely an accident of history—not something necessarily implied by the basic public ownership principle. Socialism in its pure sense need not imply central planning, and need not imply the absence of Western-style political democracy. The implications of this seminal insight were far-reaching.

During my freshman year at Fordham University, I took the standard two semester sequence in principles of economics: macroeconomics in the first (fall) semester, microeconomics in the second (spring) semester. The

textbook for the course was Paul Samuelson, *Economics: An Introductory Analysis*, fourth edition (McGraw-Hill, 1958). Buried away within this encyclopedic tome, in an appendix to Chapter 30 ("Profits and Incentives") entitled "Review of Commodity and Factor Pricing: General Equilibrium and the Parable of Ideal Welfare Pricing," were several passages that caught my attention. The basic premise advanced by Samuelson in this material was that, hypothetically, a socialist economy could utilize much the same market mechanisms as utilized by the capitalist economy. Public ownership of capital did not necessarily imply that the economy must be centrally planned by a government agency—as was the case in the Soviet Union and Red China. Samuelson advanced the idea, derived from the much earlier work of Oskar Lange, that the non-human factors of production could be managed much as they were in the capitalist economy. Economic rationality demanded that these factors be paid a return—but that return did not necessarily have to be paid to private owners. Instead, the return paid to the non-human factors of production could be collected by the government and paid out to the general population as a "social dividend." This could lead to a far more egalitarian distribution of capital property income, one that might seem much fairer to most people.

As was the case with all economics students during the 1960s and for several decades thereafter, I had immense respect for Paul Samuelson. Not only were the many editions of his principles textbook, the first edition of which was published in 1948, widely utilized from the 1950s through the 1990s, he was a prolific contributor to the professional journal literature: his collected scientific papers run to seven thick volumes. His Ph.D. dissertation (*Foundations of Economic Analysis*), a survey of mathematical applications in economic theory, had been published by Harvard University Press in 1947. In 1970 he was awarded a Nobel Prize in Economics.

Nevertheless, despite his Olympian prestige, I had my doubts about the validity of Samuelson's bottom-line judgment that the problems of capitalism, especially that of "improper" distribution of income, could (as he said) "be ameliorated by appropriate policies, within the framework of the capitalistic system." Perhaps this particular problem could be "ameliorated"—but could it be "abrogated"?

In principle, it would be simple enough to deal with the problem: If the distribution of capital property income is considered excessively unequal, then simply apply a high rate of income taxation to capital income in the form of dividends, interest, and capital gains. But this simplistic notion takes no account of the political power and influence of wealthy capitalists whose personal incomes are dominated by exactly these types of income. These people would not be happy to see their personal incomes gutted by

high rates of taxation on capital income, and they possess the power and influence to see to it that this does not happen. High rates of capital income taxation might well be in the interests of the general population, most of whom receive little or no capital property income, because higher taxation of capital income could enable lower taxation of wage and salary income, such labor income components as dominate the incomes of the vast majority of households. But the levers of influence—especially the mass media—controlled by the capitalist minority might be sufficient to blind the non-capitalist majority to their own interests in the matter. In other words, perhaps a more realistic and effective way to get at the problem of maldistribution of capital wealth and income would be public ownership of capital property, i.e. socialism.

Nowhere in the fourth edition of Samuelson's principles textbook was there any mention of Oskar Lange. But very early on in my study of economics at Fordham University, I became aware of Lange's reputation as the "father of market socialism." Back in the 1930s, Lange had authored a lengthy essay entitled "On the Economic Theory of Socialism," first published as a two-part article in the *Review of Economic Studies* (1936-37), and shortly afterwards as the major component of a book of the same title published by the University of Minnesota Press (1938). Lange's work was the focus of Chapter 12, "Socialist Economics," authored by Abram Bergson and included in the extremely influential *A Survey of Contemporary Economics* sponsored by the American Economic Association.

Although Lange did not coin the term "market socialism," it was soon applied by others to his proposed system. Lange was also responsible for popularizing the term "social dividend." The basic idea of what I later designated "Langian market socialism" envisioned an economy that would function very similarly to its "capitalist twin," with the principal exception that the interest and other property income components paid by the publicly-owned business enterprises for the use of capital would go to a public collection agency, which would then pay most of it out to the general public as a "social dividend." As each citizen would be a part owner of the commonly owned capital stock, each citizen would thereby be entitled to a social dividend based on the earnings of that capital stock. For the large majority of the population in a modern, industrialized economy, what they would receive as social dividend under market socialism would greatly exceed what they are currently receiving under contemporary capitalism as personal capital income.

Even as the basic concept of and motivation for market socialism crystallized in my mind during the spring of 1962, I realized that many details would have to be worked out before the idea could be convincingly pre-

sented, especially to skeptical minds—and most minds in the Western world were indeed highly skeptical of socialism. What exactly would be the mechanisms of governance for the publicly-owned business enterprises? What would ensure their efficient operation? How exactly would capital property income be collected by a public ownership agency and disbursed to the general public? Should the distribution be on a simple lump-sum basis (the same social dividend to every household or individual), or would another distribution method be superior?

And what about capitalist apologetics? The idea of socialism had been around for at least 150 years, and during all that time the defenders of the capitalist system had been busy coming up with justifications of the status quo. To the many apologists of capitalism, socialism would bring about all kinds of disabilities and disasters: the loss of entrepreneurship and the cessation of technical progress, such a degree of economic leveling as would completely destroy incentives to effort and result in an economy of stagnant mediocrity, the crushing of individuality under an immense burden of bureaucracy, the imposition of communistic totalitarianism, the suppression of the human soul, the ruination of humanity—and so on and so forth. It would be necessary to refute this formidable body of myth and misconception. And the first step toward that would be the formulation of a plausible institutional plan for market socialism.

At that point, my thinking on market socialism was in an embryonic state, and my study, research, and writing on the subject would go on not just for years afterwards, but for decades. Eventually I would publish no less than five books focused principally on market socialism, as well as approximately 25 journal articles on the subject. In chronological order, the books were as follows: *Socialism in the Free Market* (Nellen, 1978); *Socialism Revised and Modernized: The Case for Pragmatic Market Socialism* (Praeger, 1992); *Capitalism versus Pragmatic Market Socialism: A General Equilibrium Evaluation* (Kluwer, 1993); *Economic Justice: The Market Socialist Vision* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1997); and *On the Political Economy of Market Socialism: Essays and Analyses* (Ashgate, 2001). The last title on this list was a selection of 14 of my previously published journal articles on the subject.

When the Soviet Union abandoned Marxist communism and dissolved itself in 1991, thus bringing the Cold War to an abrupt and very welcome end, it was immediately apparent to me that there was no longer any role whatsoever for market socialism as a potential bridge over the ideological gap between communism and non-communism. Although there was still a significant internal case to be made for market socialism as a potential reform of the contemporary capitalist socioeconomic system, the case was

no longer critical for the external purpose of reducing the threat of nuclear holocaust. Throughout the 1990s and thereafter, my principal research and writing interest turned to the world government possibility, and its economic corollary, a global economic development effort. Market socialism would be neither necessary nor sufficient for either of these.

In chronological order, my books on these subjects were as follows: *World Union on the Horizon: The Case for Supernational Federation* (University Press of America, 1993); *Common Progress: The Case for a World Economic Equalization Program* (Praeger, 2000); *Rethinking World Government: A New Approach* (University Press of America, 2005); *Political Globalization: A New Vision of Federal World Government* (University Press of America, 2007); *The Grand Convergence: Economic and Political Aspects of Human Progress* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); *The Idea of World Government: From Ancient Times to the Twenty-First Century* (Routledge, 2011); *Global Marshall Plan: Theory and Evidence* (Lexington, 2014); *Beyond Global Governance: Prospects for Global Government* (University Press of America, 2014); and *Evolutionary World Government: A Pragmatic Approach to Global Federation* (Hamilton, 2018). Of these books, two (*Rethinking World Government* and *Beyond Global Governance*) were collections of my professional journal articles on world government.

Of course, back in the spring of 1962, all this was far off in the remote and unknowable future. All I knew then was that there was a great deal of work to be done in order to flesh out the vision, give it structure and substance, make it as clear and compelling to other people as it was to me. This would not be easy or quick. I was going to have to concentrate my personal resources in a manner never before attempted. That skepticism was likely to be the dominant reaction among most people to their initial exposure to the thrust of what I soon came to term "the Project," soon became apparent to me as I endeavored to explain the concept to some of my fellow Fordham students. But I remained confident that if I could just find the means of properly clarifying the vision, dubious skepticism would eventually be replaced by enthusiastic acceptance.

I never gave any serious consideration to the possibility that the skeptics were fundamentally right and I was fundamentally wrong—in the sense that neither market socialism nor world government would, if implemented, be beneficial in terms of human welfare. I might have been willing to concede that the real-world force of "ignorance" (which I soon revised to "erroneous misconception") might prove so strong that it would prevent these advances from taking place anytime within the foreseeable future, even though they *would* be beneficial if they *did* take place. But I

never entertained serious doubts, either then or at any subsequent time, that these two particular institutional innovations, market socialism and world government—*presuming they were properly designed and implemented*—would significantly improve the condition and prospects of human civilization everywhere in the world.

I set myself the task of constructing the elements of a case so comprehensive and compelling as to be virtually irresistible, at least on grounds of reason and rationality. I needed to greatly increase my knowledge of relevant aspects of economics, sociology, psychology, politics, history—even philosophy. (At Fordham University at that time, all undergraduates were required to complete a minor in philosophy. I didn't mind, because literally everything was grist for my mill—no aspect of human thought and activity was entirely irrelevant.) I read voraciously. For example, in a hand-written record book entitled "Journal of Personal Progress" (a kind of diary), covering the interval from October 1, 1962, through December 15, 1962, the first entry records a "partial" list of books read over the preceding nine months. Some of the 43 books on the list:

Arthur P. Mendel, ed. *Essential Works of Marxism.*
Edmund Wilson. *To the Finland Station.*
Sidney Hook. *Marx and the Marxists.*
Isaiah Berlin. *Karl Marx.*
Robert Freedman. *Marx on Economics.*
Milovan Djilas. *The New Class.*
Wesley Clair Mitchell. *Business Cycles and Their Causes.*
Isaac Deutscher. *The Great Contest.*
Seymour Melman. *The Peace Race.*
Barry Goldwater. *Conscience of a Conservative.*
Louis M. Hacker. *American Capitalism.*
John McConnell. *Economists Past and Present.*
Walt Whitman Rostow. *The Stages of Economic Growth.*
Gottfried Haberler, ed. *Readings in Business Cycle Theory.*
John Kenneth Galbraith. *The Affluent Society.*
Dennis Wong. *Population and Society.*
Charles Wright. *Mass Communication.*
E. K. Nottingham. *Religion and Society.*
Jesse Clarkson. *A History of Russia.*
George F. Kennan. *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin.*
Alan Moorehead. *The Russian Revolution.*
Matthew Josephson. *The Robber Barons.*
Richard Hofstadter. *Social Darwinism in American Thought.*

Considering that very few of these books were directly relevant to any of my courses, it is something of a wonder that I managed to do as well as I did in assigned course work. But the fact was that I was *driven* to a degree I had never experienced before, or ever experienced after. It was a dizzying experience, at the same time exhilarating and exhausting. Various factoids, observations, and insights went into the handwritten Journals of Personal Progress, and some went into typed essays, mostly single-spaced. As the writing piled up, my thinking gradually firmed up. In the substantial files of preserved documentation from my Fordham years, the single longest and most comprehensive manuscript is an 86-page, single-spaced typed tract, dated August 1963, with the grandiose title "Introduction to the New World." The "New World" elucidated in the manuscript, obviously, should not be confused with the "New World Order" proclaimed in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse and the end of the Cold War. My "New World" greatly predated the "New World Order" of three decades later. Clearly, however, the "new world" phrase has considerable appeal to visionary futurists. The contents page of that document is as follows:

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW WORLD

I. Introduction
   1. The World Crisis
   2. The Solution
II. Capitalist Democracy
III. Socialism in Theory and Practice
   1. Introduction: Capitalism and Socialism
   2. Justice
   3. Efficiency
   4. Blueprint for an American Socialist System
   5. Democracy
   6. Summary
IV. Unified World Government
   1. The Need
   2. The Communist World
   3. The Post-Conciliation Program
   4. The Politically United World
V. Summary and Conclusion
   1. Summary of the Plan
   2. The Twentieth Century Council
   3. Prospects
   4. The Need for Courage and Humanity

When I review that manuscript today, I wince. It is too full of youthful enthusiasm, of dogmatic certitude, of burning anguish, towering rage, and borderline-psychotic optimism. It did not help that I consistently misspelled "ideological" as "idealogical." Moreover, the essay is disconcertingly vague on many important practical questions. Nevertheless, it contained in embryonic form the fundamental theses on market socialism and world government which I put forward much later in various publications of a more polished nature.

Later on I normally utilized the term "pragmatic market socialism" to describe the proposed socialist economy. A principal reason for this was to distinguish the proposal from "Langian market socialism" as expounded by Oskar Lange in the 1930s. "Introduction to the New World" did not cite Lange by name, but it did discuss—and reject—"marginal cost socialism," which was what Lange, and a few others, had proposed as the operational embodiment of "market socialism." Even at that early date, I had already dismissed marginal cost socialism as impractical, as too much influenced by textbook economic theory. It soon became clear to me that the publicly-owned business enterprises must be profit-maximizers, because profits were an observable success criterion, and were necessary for purposes of efficient allocation of scarce capital. Almost all socialists prior to Lange had condemned profits as clear evidence of economic exploitation. But Lange argued—compellingly in my judgment—that there was nothing inherently wrong with profits. The problem was (and is) that under contemporary capitalism, with its extraordinary concentration of capital wealth ownership, the lion's share of profits were (and are) claimed by a very small minority of wealthy capitalists. Under market socialism, in contrast, the profits produced by the publicly-owned business enterprises, would be returned via a social dividend, in a relatively egalitarian manner, to the entire population. It was not profits themselves that were bad—it was the maldistribution of profits under capitalism.

Of course, for the pragmatic market socialist economy to work successfully, the executives of the publicly-owned corporations must be motivated to do what they already do under capitalism: pursue profits energetically. Under capitalism, corporation executives are inspired to pursue profits by both the carrot (salaries and bonuses) and the stick (the possibility of dismissal). It would be the same under pragmatic market socialism, with the exception that instead of the profit motive being enforced on the executives by the class of private capitalists, it would be enforced upon them by a public ownership agency. Since nothing quite like pragmatic market socialism had ever existed in the real world, exactly what would be the nature of the public ownership agency, and exactly how it would oper-