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First published in 1967, this essay in the interpretation of radical social thought deals mainly with the radical theorists rather than the doctrines of social and political movements, but makes an exception in an important discussion of the new radicalism of the 1960s. The author's main concern is to lay bare the connections between intellectual dissent and theories of society, and in so doing to explore the neglected subject of the heritage of American radical thinking.

Readers of this book will not only emerge enlightened by Professor Bottomore's impressive knowledge of American radical thought, but with a greatly increased understanding of contemporary American history. He ends with the question of whether the new radicalism can find a firmer basis than the student movement or the negro revolt; can produce an ideology both responsive to the doubts and complexities of our time and capable of directing action to plausible ends.