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Book Review

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Reviewed by Aaron J. Ritzenberg*

TRIAL, by Tom Hayden (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York; 1970); 168 pp.

To some it was a trial, to others, especially to the defendants, a tribulation, in a case now famous, or infamous, again depending upon one's point of view. Tom Hayden, co-defendant in the trial of the Chicago Eight (subsequently reduced to seven), literate and erudite, uses that event as the base for this, his latest book.

Drafter of the Port Huron Statement that founded *Students for a Democratic Society*, the author, organizer, activist, theoretician, and, if one listens to him, now a revolutionist, writes with anger and scorn, lightened, nevertheless, with a certain gallows humor. Cast obviously as villains are the judge, jury, prosecutors, and above all, the Establishment. Cast, of course, as heroes are the author, the other defendants, and their counsel.

The author narrates his version of events leading to the trial and in detail points to the trial itself as his evidence that full-scale repression has replaced prior freedom in the United States. He argues that state of mind was on trial and not the defendants' acts.

In the latter part of the book the author expounds on his political views. He argues that political justice, and racial justice, for good measure, are dead in the United States, and that the arch-injustices are the war in Viet Nam and the "War Against the Panthers." He calls for a total revolution; freedom or death is his cry. But first he apologizes, in effect, and seeks to establish that the call to revolution is because of desperation following failure of attempts at peaceful redress. He likens himself and his followers to the early patriots of this nation.

This reviewer was perturbed by the bitterness flowing through the book. To hear or read about bombings and other activist acts of the alienated young does not give a picture of their vitriolic state of mind. To read their reasoning and to be exposed to their earnestness and corrosive thinking creates a feeling of dismay and puzzlement, particularly to a reader who considers himself, more or less, a member of the Establishment.

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