

BOOK REVIEW

Democracy and Revolution

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Reviewed by: George Charney

In this readable book, the author has made a valuable contribution to the study of the evolution of democracy. *Democracy and Revolution* is a Marxist study with its main focus on the U.S. Novack deals with democracy from Athenian society to the present, showing that it had its greatest impact during the Industrial Revolution and the mass upheaval that marked the transition from feudalism to capitalism, but that the new freedoms primarily benefited the new ruling class, the bourgeoisie. Democracy has been the product of class and economic power; it will be achieved by the vast majority only with the arrival of socialist revolution.

Novack's concept of socialism is far different from the Soviet model. The socialism he visualizes is profoundly democratic, based on the popular will and multiple parties. The author envisions a socialist revolution in the United States to replace an outmoded and oppressive capitalist system, and popular revolution in the U.S.S.R. to replace an oppressive Communist dictatorship. As to the former, one is bound to wonder at the reluctance of Marxist to explain the historic delay in the realization of socialism in the West or to explore new forms of transition to a more rational order. As to the latter, one simply wonders whether Communism will ever prove compatible with democracy. As a whole, the book offers valuable insights on the subject of democracy and socialism. It should be especially attractive to young students of Marxism.