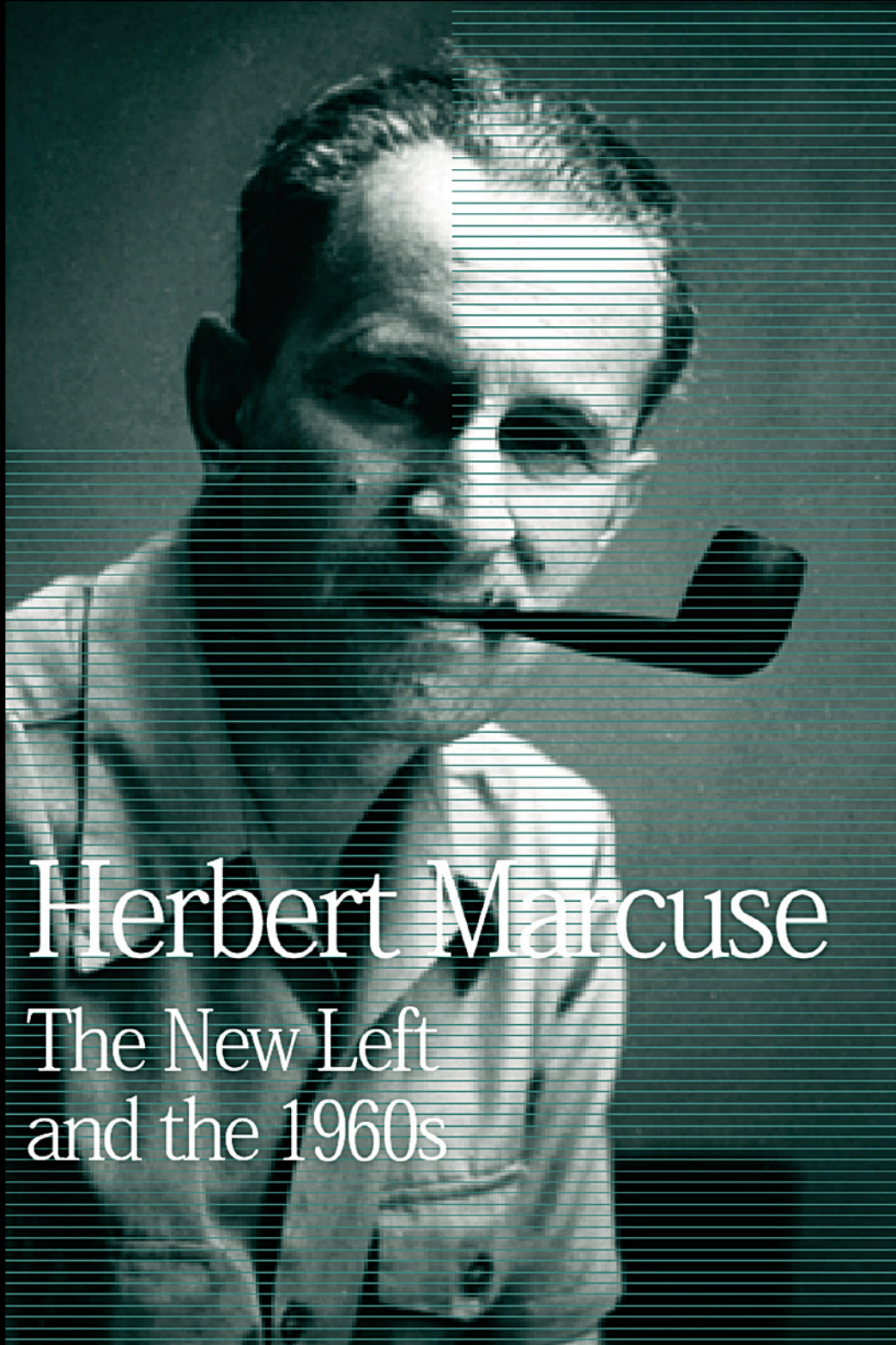




Herbert Marcuse

The New Left
and the 1960s

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THE NEW LEFT AND
THE 1960s

COLLECTED PAPERS OF HERBERT MARCUSE

EDITED BY DOUGLAS KELLNER

Volume One

TECHNOLOGY, WAR AND FASCISM

Volume Two

TOWARDS A CRITICAL THEORY OF SOCIETY

Volume Three

THE NEW LEFT AND THE 1960s

Volume Four

ART AND LIBERATION

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MARXISM, REVOLUTION AND UTOPIA

HERBERT MARCUSE (1898–1979) is an internationally renowned philosopher, social activist and theorist, and member of the Frankfurt School. He has been remembered as one of the most influential social critical theorists inspiring the radical political movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Author of numerous books including *One-Dimensional Man*, *Eros and Civilization*, and *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse taught at Columbia, Harvard, Brandeis University and the University of California before his death in 1979.

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Volume Three

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Douglas Kellner

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DOUGLAS KELLNER

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PREFACE

Marcuse's Legacies

Angela Y. Davis

If we are to examine Marcuse's legacies – and I want to suggest that there are plural legacies – and suggest some future theoretical and practical directions, it seems to me that in seeking to understand the deep connection between his later writings and the political conflicts of the late 1960s, we must simultaneously extricate his work from those linkages that have threatened to entomb and romanticize Marcuse's ideas. Academics and activists alike find it difficult to disassociate Marcuse from the era of the late 1960s and early 1970s. His persona and his work are often evoked as a marker of a radical era, our primary relationship to which tends to be defined by nostalgia. Consequently, the mention of the name Herbert Marcuse elicits a sigh – many of my generation and older tend to treat him as a sign of our youth – wonderful, exciting, revolutionary, but meaningful only within the context of our reminiscences. Parenthetically, as those of us who came of age during the 1960s and early 1970s grow older and older, there seems to be a tendency to spatialize “the 1960s.” Recently I have noticed that many people of my generation like to introduce themselves by saying “I come from the 1960s” – the 1960s being viewed as a point of origin, an originary place, rather than an historical moment. It is a place that we evoke with wonder and joy, but one that is forever beyond our reach. Ironically, the very era during which we were encouraged by Herbert Marcuse to think about the radical potential of utopian thought has itself survived in our historical memory as utopia – as a place that is no place.

It is no less ironic that the best known and most widely read thinker associated with the Frankfurt School in the 1970s became the least studied in the 1980s and 1990s, while Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin are extensively studied in the contemporary era. As Marcuse himself acknowledged, his celebrity had both productive and counterproductive aspects. But we can say that the historical conjuncture that linked his own intellectual development with the search for a new political vocabulary during the late 1960s allowed many of us to understand the extent to which he took seriously the charge of critical theory to develop interdisciplinary approaches, anchored in the emancipatory promise of the philosophical tradition within which he worked, that would signal the possibility and need for transformative interventions in the real, social world. And many of Marcuse's ideas during that period evolved in conversation with the contemporaneous social and cultural movements. When he addressed gatherings of young people from California to Paris to Berlin, he spoke as a philosopher who was perennially struggling with the challenges of critical theory to engage directly with contemporary social issues. He was received as a philosopher who urged participants in radical social movements to think more philosophically and more critically about the implications of their activism.

Despite my chronic critiques of nostalgia as a sorry substitute for historical memory, I want to ask you to permit me to engage in what I would like to think of as a bit of productive nostalgia. Because I do long for the days of interminable philosophical discussions about such subjects as the historical agents of revolution, when the participants in such discussions might be students and professors, as well as organic intellectuals who were workers and organizers. Marcuse's interventions as a public intellectual helped to stimulate such discussions. Did the working class still have a revolutionary potential? What role could students play? I imagine that I am nostalgic today because so few people seem to believe that anybody has any revolutionary potential left.

The thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School were motivated in many of their intellectual endeavors by the desire to develop oppositional – which at that time meant antifascist – theoretical work. Herbert Marcuse and Franz Neumann (whose work should also be more seriously read today) were more interested in exploring transformative oppositional possibilities than their colleagues Adorno and Horkheimer. The first volume of Herbert Marcuse's collected papers, edited by Douglas Kellner, contains a prospectus, written in the late 1930s or early 1940s, for a study on which they apparently planned to collaborate – “A History of the Doctrine of Social Change.”¹ While this study was not actualized as a result of the

1 Herbert Marcuse and Franz Neumann, “A History of the Doctrine of Social Change,” in Herbert Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism: Collected Papers of*

outbreak of World War II, both Neumann and Marcuse were active in the denazification program after the war – Neumann in the prosecution of Nazis, Marcuse in his work with the State Department helping to develop the U.S. denazification policy. I urge you to read the recently published posthumous work,² especially because of the mystery surrounding Marcuse's involvement with the State Department – including the absurd rumors that he was a C.I.A. agent. The first volume of the unpublished papers Kellner has made available allows us to see the important work he did on the cultural impact of Nazism.

Perhaps Marcuse's willingness to engage so directly in this antifascist project in the aftermath of World War II led him to later broaden his antifascist theoretical approach, drawing U.S. society into the frame of his analysis. In other words, precisely because he was so concretely and immediately involved in opposing German fascism, he was also able and willing to identify fascist tendencies in the United States. Because Adorno's and Horkheimer's antifascism expressed itself on a more formal theoretical register, it remained entirely anchored in German history and tradition. When Marcuse wrote "The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State,"³ arguing that fascism and liberalism were not political opposites, that indeed, they were closely linked ideologically, he had already established the foundation for his later analysis of U.S. society. When Horkheimer and Adorno returned to Frankfurt and refused to permit the publication of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Marcuse's critical theory would explore the one-dimensional society in the United States and would later identify the prominent role of racism, encouraging students like myself to attempt to further develop the emancipatory promise of the German philosophical tradition.

One of the most salient and persistent aspects of Marcuse's work is his concern with the possibilities of utopia. This powerful philosophical concept (which meant that he had to contest the orthodox equation of Marxist notions of socialism with the scientific as opposed to a utopian socialism *à la* Fourier) was at the core of his ideas. In his important 1937 essay, "Philosophy and Critical Theory," he wrote:

Like philosophy, [critical theory] opposes making reality into a criterion in the manner of complacent positivism. But unlike philosophy, it always derives its goals from present tendencies of the social process. Therefore it has no fear of the utopia that the new order is denounced as being. When truth cannot be realized within the established social order, it always appears to the latter as

Herbert Marcuse, vol. 1, ed. Douglas Kellner (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 93–104.

2 Herbert Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*.

3 Herbert Marcuse, "The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State," in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 3–42.

mere utopia. This transcendence speaks not against, but for, its truth. The utopian element was long the only progressive element in philosophy, as in the constructions of the best state and the highest pleasure, of perfect happiness and perpetual peace. The obstinacy that comes from adhering to truth against all appearances has given way in contemporary philosophy to whimsy and uninhibited opportunism. Critical theory preserves obstinacy as a genuine quality of philosophical thought.⁴

This is one of my favorite Marcuse passages: utopia and philosophical obstinacy. Obstinacy is certainly a quality that drives those of us who call ourselves veteran radicals, but not obstinacy in the sense that we need to hold on to obsolete theories, ideas and organizing practices, rather the obstinacy of maintaining that emancipatory promises are still entangled in the terrifying and ever-expanding system of global capitalism.

This obstinacy is most productive, I believe, when it travels from one generation to the next, when new ways of identifying those promises and new oppositional discourses and practices are proposed. In this context, I want to acknowledge the important intergenerational character of this conference.⁵ In a passage from the introduction to an *Essay on Liberation* that many of you – old as well as new Marcuse scholars – have probably committed to memory, Marcuse writes that,

what is denounced as “utopian” is no longer that which has “no place” and cannot have any place in the historical universe, but rather that which is blocked from coming about by the power of the established societies. Utopian possibilities are inherent in the technical and technological forces of advanced capitalism and socialism: the rational utilization of these forces on a global scale would terminate poverty and scarcity within a very foreseeable future.⁶

Marcuse’s lifelong insistence on the radical potential of art is linked to this obstinate insistence on the utopian dimension. On the one hand art criticizes and negates the existing social order by the power of its form, which in turn creates another universe, thus hinting at the possibility of building a new social order. But this relationship is highly mediated, as Marcuse continually emphasized – from “The Affirmative Character of Culture” (1937), to the recently published “Some Remarks on Aragon: Art and Politics in the Totalitarian Era” (1945), to the ninth chapter of *Eros and Civilization* (1955), to the last book he published before his death, entitled, like the ninth chapter of *Eros and Civilization*, *The Aesthetic Dimension*.⁷ I cite a passage from his essay on Aragon:

4 Herbert Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” in *Negations*, p. 143.

5 This paper was originally given at the conference “The Legacy of Herbert Marcuse,” held at the University of California, Berkeley in November 1998.

6 Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 13.

7 Herbert Marcuse, “The Affirmative Character of Culture,” in *Negations*,

Art does not and cannot present the fascist reality (nor any other forms of the totality of monopolistic oppression). But any human activity which does not contain the terror of this era is by this very token inhuman, irrelevant, incidental, untrue. In art, however, the untruth may become the life element of the truth. The incompatibility of the artistic form with the real form of life may be used as a lever for throwing upon the reality the light which the latter cannot absorb, the light which may eventually dissolve this reality (although such dissolution is no longer the function of art). The untruth of art may become the precondition for the artistic contradiction and negation. Art may promote the alienation, the total estrangement of man from his world. And this alienation may provide the artificial basis for the remembrance of freedom in the totality of oppression.⁸

On the other hand, emancipatory possibilities reside in the very forces that are responsible for the obscene expansion of an increasingly exploitative and repressive order. It seems to me that the overarching themes of Marcuse's thought are as relevant today on the cusp of the twenty-first century as they were when his scholarship and political interventions were most widely celebrated.

At this point in my remarks I would like to make some comments about my own development. I have often publicly expressed my gratitude to Herbert Marcuse for teaching me that I did not have to choose between a career as an academic and a political vocation that entailed making interventions around concrete social issues. In Frankfurt, when I was studying with Adorno, he discouraged me from seeking to discover ways of linking my seemingly discrepant interests in philosophy and social activism. After the founding of the Black Panther Party in 1966, I felt very much drawn back to [the United States]. During one of my last meetings with him (students were extremely fortunate if we managed to get one meeting over the course of our studies with a professor like Adorno), he suggested that my desire to work directly in the radical movements of that period was akin to a media studies scholar deciding to become a radio technician.

On my way back from Germany, during the summer of 1967, I attended a conference in London, *Dialectics of Liberation* organized by R.D. Laing and David Cooper. I was primarily interested in attending the conference because Herbert Marcuse was one of the major speakers and because I was on my way to the University of California, San Diego to study with him. As I prepared my notes for this talk, I discovered that my copy of the collection of presentations from that conference was missing from my bookshelves. So I embarked on a long and ultimately futile search for this book. The library

pp. 88–133; “Some Remarks on Aragon: Art and Politics in the Totalitarian Era,” in *Technology, War and Fascism*, pp. 199–214; “The Aesthetic Dimension,” in *Eros and Civilization* (New York: Vintage, 1962), pp. 157–79; *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1978).

8 *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 214.

at the University of California, Santa Cruz listed a copy in its collection, but a librarian finally discovered that it had been placed in storage in another city and that there was no way to retrieve it. No one could tell me what had happened to the four copies owned by the University of California, Berkeley library and still listed as part of its current collection. A librarian there speculated that the books had been discarded without removing them from the computer. This search for *Dialectics of Liberation* made me wonder whether other texts including Marcuse's writings have fallen into a similar state of disuse.

But allow me to make a few observations about the conference itself, which gathered an amazing collection of participants – from scholars and university professors to community activists and prominent figures in the black movement at that time. I attended the conference because I was about to resume my studies with Herbert Marcuse and wanted to hear his presentation, as well as those of R.D. Laing, David Cooper and Judith Mitchell. However, this was also my first opportunity to meet Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure) and Michael X – the leading black militant in Britain at the time, who was later executed in Trinidad.

Today such a gathering – which was at the same time a scholarly conference, an assembly of community activists and a “happening” – what we now call performance art – would seem quite bizarre. It would clearly challenge our notions of community. But Marcuse felt very much at home in this environment, always pushing himself to communicate across the divides that usually define the language we use – across academic disciplines and across boundaries of race, class, culture and nation. I was a co-convenor of a conference that took place [at Berkeley on] *Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex*.⁹ If Marcuse were alive and well today, no doubt he would have been a key figure in this conference, for we tried precisely to construct unpredictable conversations across those disciplinary divides. Academics talked with activists, advocates, artists, former prisoners and – with the aid of video-conferencing technology – people currently incarcerated in state prisons and county jails.

Marcuse played an important role during the late 1960s and early 1970s in encouraging intellectuals to speak out against racism, against the Vietnam war, for student rights. He emphasized the important role of intellectuals within oppositional movements, which, I believe, led more intellectuals to frame their work in relation to these movements than would otherwise have done so. And Marcuse's thought revealed how deeply he himself was influenced by the movements of his time and how his engagement with those movements revitalized his thought.

9 This took place at the University of California, Berkeley on September 25–7, 1998. For more information on the conference and for the current political activities of the group that emerged from it, see their website at www.criticalresistance.org.

Today, it seems inconceivable that crowds of people at a political rally would be willing to enthusiastically applaud a philosopher trained in the classical tradition, who might just as easily evoke Kant and Hegel as Marx, Fanon or Dutschke. It seems inconceivable that people did not complain when this philosopher compelled them to use their brains in order to figure out what he was saying in a public rally speech. The lesson I draw from these reminiscences is that we need to recapture the ability to communicate across divides that are designed to keep people apart. At the same time we need to substitute a nostalgic attitude toward Marcuse with one that takes seriously his work as a philosopher and as a public intellectual.

One of the great challenges of any social movement is to develop new vocabularies. As we attempt to develop these vocabularies today, we can find inspiration and direction in Marcuse's attempts to theorize the politics of language. In *An Essay on Liberation* he wrote:

Political linguistics: armor of the Establishment. If the radical opposition develops its own language, it protests spontaneously, subconsciously, against one of the most effective "secret weapons" of domination and defamation. The language of the prevailing Law and Order, validated by the courts and by the police, is not only the voice but also the deed of suppression. This language not only defines and condemns the Enemy, it also *creates* him . . . This linguistic universe, which incorporates the Enemy (as *Untermensch*) into the routine of everyday speech can be transcended only in action.¹⁰

While Marcuse was specifically referring to the way Nixon's law-and-order rhetoric conflated criminals and radicals and communists in the former Soviet Union and freedom fighters in Vietnam and defenders of the revolution in Cuba, the challenge he presents is very much a contemporary one, particularly with respect to the need to create a "rupture with the linguistic universe of the Establishment" and its representation of crime and criminals, which has helped to imprison almost 2 million people – which has facilitated the horrifying pattern of the prison as the major institution toward which young black men – and increasingly black women – are headed.

While this is another topic entirely – and this is what I usually speak and write about, so I must restrain myself from beginning another talk – I do want to conclude by suggesting how important it is for us to consider the contemporary relevance of Marcuse's ideas within this context. How do we draw upon Marcuse's critical theory in our attempt to develop new vocabularies of resistance today, vocabularies that effect a rupture with the equation of affirmative action and "reverse racism," vocabularies that reflect a utopian vision of a society without prisons, at least without the monstrous, corporatized system that we call the prison industrial complex?

I am not suggesting that Marcuse should be revived as the preeminent theorist of the twenty-first century. He, more than anyone, insisted on the

10 *Essay on Liberation*, pp. 76ff.

deeply historical character of theory. It would certainly militate against the spirit of his ideas to argue that his work contains the solution to the many dilemmas facing us as scholars, organizers, advocates, artists, and, I would add, as marginalized communities, whose members are increasingly treated as detritus and relegated to prisons, which, in turn, generate astronomical profits for a growing global prison industry. An uncritical and nostalgic version of Marcuse, which, for example, fails to acknowledge the limits of an aesthetic theory that maintains a rigid distinction between high and low art, one that is not willing to engage seriously with popular culture and all its contradictions, would not be helpful to those who are seeking to forge radical political vocabularies today. But if we abandon our Marcuse nostalgia and attempt to incorporate his ideas into a historical memory that draws upon the useful aspects of the past in order to put them to work in the present, we will be able to hold on to Marcuse's legacies as we explore terrains that he himself could never have imagined.

INTRODUCTION

Radical Politics, Marcuse, and the New Left

Douglas Kellner

In the 1960s Herbert Marcuse ascended to the unlikely role of Guru of the New Left. A philosopher by training who had become affiliated with the German exiles later known as “the Frankfurt School,” Marcuse had produced perhaps the best book on Hegel and Marx in his 1941 *Reason and Revolution* and an excellent philosophical interpretation of Freud in his 1955 *Eros and Civilization*.¹ *Reason and Revolution* introduced English-speaking readers to the critical social theory and dialectical methods of Hegel and Marx, providing for later generations of critical social theorists and New Left activists the tools of dialectical thought and theory-informed practice

1 For background on Marcuse and the Frankfurt School, see Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (London and Berkeley, Calif.: Macmillan Press and University of California Press, 1984) and the first two volumes in the Routledge *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Douglas Kellner, *Technology, War and Fascism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) and *Towards a Critical Theory of Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). See also Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (hereafter *R&R*) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941; reprinted Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1960) and *Eros and Civilization* (hereafter *EC*) (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1955; reprinted London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

(or *praxis*, in a terminology that would become popular in the 1960s). *Eros and Civilization* in turn provided a splendid access to Freud's thought and the ways that psychoanalytic ideas could be merged with critical social theory and emancipatory culture and practice. In an uncanny way, the text, with its emphasis on polymorphic sexual liberation, play, cultivation of an aesthetic ethos, and burning desire for another world and way of life, anticipated the counterculture of the 1960s which lived out many of the key ideas in Marcuse's visionary text.

In 1964, Marcuse published a major study of advanced industrial society, *One-Dimensional Man*, which emerged as an important influence on the young radicals who formed the New Left. While the Old Left embraced Soviet Marxism and the Soviet Union, the New Left combined forms of critical Marxism with radical democracy and openness to a broad array of ideas and political alliances. Whereas the Old Left was doctrinaire and puritanical, the New Left was pluralistic and engaged emergent cultural forms and social movements. While the Old Left, with some exceptions, tended to impose doctrinal conformity and cut itself off from "liberal" groups, the New Left embraced a wide range of social movements around the issues of class, gender, race, sexuality, the environment, peace, and other issues.

For Marcuse, the New Left at its best united spontaneity with organization, combining strong anti-authoritarian and liberatory tendencies with the development of new forms of political struggle and organization. The New Left sought to join change of consciousness with the change of society, the personal with sociopolitical liberation. The New Left, in Marcuse's view, provided important emphases on the subjective conditions of radical social change and sought new and more humane values, institutions, and ways of life. It embodied the best features of previous socialist and anarchist traditions that it concretized in social struggles such as the antiwar, feminist, ecological, communal, and countercultural movements. For Marcuse, it was the demand for total change that distinguished the New Left and its championing of freedom, social justice, and democracy in every sphere of life.

Marcuse embodied many of these defining political impulses of the New Left in his own thought and politics. Hence, a younger generation of political activists looked up to a white-haired German refugee in his mid-1960s for theoretical and political guidance. Disgusted by the excessive affluence of the advanced industrial societies and the violence of neo-imperialist interventions against developing societies in what was then called the "Third World," the generation that would produce a New Left found theoretical and political inspiration and support in Marcuse's writings. Marcuse in turn tirelessly criticized "advanced industrial society," U.S. imperialism, racism, sexism, environmental destruction, and the forms of oppression and domination that he perceived as growing in intensity and scope.

Energized by the enthusiastic response of young radicals and large numbers of his academic colleagues and fellow travelers on the Left, Herbert

Marcuse embarked on a remarkable trajectory, becoming a major figure in the growing antiwar movement, a hero to the counterculture, and a forceful defender of the New Left. Marcuse also engaged the emerging feminist, environmental, gay and lesbian, and other oppositional social movements of the era, and his writings, lectures, and political interventions became part of the history of the times.

Fredric Jameson wrote in his 1998 book on Adorno that while Marcuse and Sartre were the key thinkers of the 1960s, Adorno was the most relevant for the 1990s,² in that the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire marked the development of global capitalism into a system of domination whereby growing prosperity in the overdeveloped countries absorbed individuals into conforming to the system, while the global economy as such produced tremendous inequalities and much suffering. In this conjuncture, Jameson argued that Adorno's critique of a totalizing system of domination and stance of critique and negation, without positing alternatives, may have been appropriate and justified. Yet I would argue that in the present conjuncture of global economic crisis, terrorism and a resurgence of U.S. militarism, and growing global movements against corporate capitalism and war, Marcuse's political and activist version of critical theory is highly relevant to the challenges of the contemporary moment. Marcuse is especially useful for developing global perspectives on domination and resistance, radically criticizing the existing system of domination, valorizing movements of resistance, and projecting radical alternatives to the current organization of society and mode of life.

In particular, Marcuse's identification with the New Left and attempt to sharpen his critique of the current society and to project radical alternatives could be taken up again in the contemporary era. As a new millennium unfolds, accompanied by the dual forces of terrorism and militarism that are confronted by a growing global antiwar and social justice movement, we find ourselves in a highly turbulent and conflicted era, similar to the 1960s and 1970s. A younger generation may well find theoretical and political guidance and insight in the life and work of Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse attempted to articulate the theory and practice of a New Left during an era of widespread social protest. Hence, a new generation involved in an emergent anticorporate globalization and a worldwide peace movement in the making may find theoretical and political guidance in the Marcusean texts collected in this volume.

It is now possible to gain the historical distance and understanding to grasp and appraise the interconnection of Marcuse's philosophy with the struggles of the day. A wealth of fresh material from the Herbert Marcuse and other archives contains documents, collected in this and accompanying volumes, that provide a richer and deeper grasp of the era and the role of

2 Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 5.

Marcuse in the theoretical and political dramas of the day than was originally possible. I will accordingly in this introduction situate the largely unpublished or little-known texts collected in this volume within the context of Marcuse's major works of the era. Let us, then, return to the 1960s and examine the remarkable theoretical and political odyssey of Herbert Marcuse and the New Left.³

ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN, THE GREAT REFUSAL, AND THE RISE OF THE NEW LEFT

While *Eros and Civilization* provides the most detailed depiction of his vision of liberation, *One-Dimensional Man* provides Marcuse's most systematic analysis of forces of domination.⁴ *One-Dimensional Man* explored

3 For earlier studies of Marcuse and the New Left, that I draw upon here, see Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse*, Chapter 9; Paul Breines's articles in *Antworten auf Herbert Marcuse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971) and *New Left Perspectives on Herbert Marcuse: Critical Interruptions* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) and Jean-Michel Palmier, *Herbert Marcuse et la nouvelle gauche* (Paris: Belfond, 1973), which contains an exhaustive study of the relevance of Marcuse's ideas to New Left theory and practice in France and America. For more critical accounts of Marcuse and the New Left, see A. Quattrocchi and T. Nairn, *The Beginning of the End: France, May 1968* (London: Penguin, 1968) and Henri Lefebvre, *The Explosion: Marxism and the French Upheaval* (New York: Monthly Review, 1969). Cohn-Bendit is skeptical of whether Marcuse had much influence on the French student movement:

Some people try to foist Marcuse upon us as a mentor. This is a joke. None of us have read Marcuse. Some people have read Marx, perhaps Bakunin and when it comes to modern authors – Althusser, Mao, Guevara, Lefebvre. Almost all the rebels have read Sartre.

(cited in E. Batalov, *The Philosophy of Revolt*
(Moscow: Progress, 1977), p. 52)

Palmier contests this, claiming that many had read Marcuse and that there was a surge of interest in his writings during and after the May events. On this topic, see Palmier's earlier book *Sur Marcuse* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1968) and *La Nef*, 36 (January–March 1969) on "Marcuse: cet inconnu." On Marcuse and the German New Left, see Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1994) and the documents collected in Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946–1995*, 3 volumes (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard). Subsequent histories of the New Left and appraisals of Marcuse tend to stress his importance for and influence on the oppositional political movements of the era. See George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1987) and John Bokina and Timothy J. Lukes, *From the New Left to the Next Left* (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas Press, 1994).

4 See Herbert Marcuse (1964) *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, second edition, 1991; Routledge classics edition with an Introduction by Douglas Kellner, London: 2002) (henceforth ODM).

the development of new forms of social control that were producing a “one-dimensional man” and “society without opposition.” Citing trends toward conformity, Marcuse described the forms of culture and society which created consumer needs that integrated individuals into the existing system of production and consumption via mass media, advertising, industrial management, and uncritical modes of thought. To “one-dimensional society,” Marcuse counterpoised critical and dialectical thinking which perceived a freer and happier form of culture and society, and advocated a “great refusal” of all modes of repression and domination.

One-Dimensional Man theorized the decline of revolutionary potential within the industrial working class in capitalist societies and the development of new forms of social control. Marcuse claimed that “advanced industrial society” created consumer and conformist needs that integrated individuals into the existing system of production and consumption. Domination in institutions of labor, schooling, the family, the state, social relations, culture, and contemporary modes of thought all reproduced the existing system and attempted to eliminate negativity, critique, and opposition. The result was a “one-dimensional” universe of thought and behavior in which the very aptitude and ability for critical thinking and oppositional behavior were withering away.

Not only had capitalism integrated the working class, the source of potential revolutionary opposition, but also the current capitalist system had developed new techniques of stabilization through state and corporate policies and the development of new forms of social control. Thus Marcuse questioned two of the fundamental postulates of orthodox Marxism: the revolutionary proletariat and inevitability of capitalist crisis. In contrast with the working-class focus of orthodox Marxism, Marcuse championed non-integrated forces of minorities, outsiders, and radical intelligentsia and attempted to nourish oppositional thought and behavior while promoting radical thinking and opposition.

For Marcuse, domination combined economics, politics, technology and social organization. For orthodox Marxists, domination is inscribed in capitalist relations of production and the logic of commodification, and for Heideggerians, Weberians and others it is technology, technological rationality, and/or the coercive logic of political institutions that are the major force of societal domination. Marcuse, by contrast, has a multicausal analysis that ferrets out aspects of domination and resistance throughout the social order. Moreover, Marcuse insisted that contradictions of the system, theorized by classical Marxism as the antagonism of capital and labor, continued to exist, albeit in altered forms. He also constantly cited the unity of production and destruction, highlighting the ways that creation of wealth produced systematic poverty, war, and violence. Hence, for Marcuse there was an “objective ambiguity” to even the seeming achievements of advanced industrial society which had the wealth, science, technology, and industry to alleviate poverty and suffering, but used the instruments of production to

enhance domination, violence, aggression, and injustice. Since this dialectic continues unabated into the twenty-first century, Marcuse's critique of the growing distance between the possibilities of justice, the alleviation of poverty and suffering, and a freer and happier life for all in contrast to growing inequality, intensified violence, and proliferating suffering is as relevant as ever.

In contrast to his Frankfurt School colleagues who were becoming increasingly depoliticized,⁵ Marcuse constantly attempted to politicize critical theory and to detect forces of resistance and transformation to contrast forces of domination and repression. After a period of pessimism during the phase of *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse was encouraged by the global forces of revolt, centered around the student and antiwar movement, the counterculture, national liberation movements, and what became known as the new social movements. Marcuse sought in these forces the instruments of radical social change that classical Marxism found in the proletariat.

But just as oppositional working-class movements were defeated in the course of the twentieth century and the working class, in Marcuse's view, was integrated into contemporary capitalism, so too, for the most part, were the radical movements of the 1960s defeated or integrated into the triumphant system of global capitalism by the late 1970s.⁶ Up until his death in 1979, however, Marcuse continued to seek agents of social change in oppositional social movements and in the most critical and radical forms of art and philosophy.⁷ During the 1960s and 1970s, Marcuse's work generated fierce controversy and polemics, and most studies of his work are highly tendentious and frequently sectarian. *One-Dimensional Man* was severely criticized by orthodox Marxists and theorists of various political and theoretical commitments. Despite its negativity, it influenced many in the New Left as it articulated their growing dissatisfaction with both capitalist societies and Soviet communist societies. Moreover, Marcuse himself continued to foster demands for revolutionary change and defended the emerging forces of radical opposition, thus winning him the hatred of establishment forces and the respect of the new radicals.

5 See Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, and Kraushaar *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*.

6 See Katsiaficas's balanced study *The Imagination of the New Left* for detailed analyses of the suppression and dissolution of many New Left groups combined with the continuing impact of the movements of the period. For Katsiaficas, the period from the late 1960s to the early 1970s was a "world-historical epoch," similar to the 1848–9, 1907, and 1917–18 upheavals, where forces throughout the world struggled for emancipation and created long-term changes in the political, cultural, and personal spheres.

7 Subsequent volumes in this series will present Marcuse's writings on philosophy and art.

One-Dimensional Man came out as the civil rights movement intensified and an antiwar coalition was beginning to arise against U.S. involvement in Vietnam.⁸ Marcuse's sharp critique of the totality of advanced capitalist and state socialist societies won him a large audience among the growing struggles against racism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression. During the 1960s when he gained world renown as Guru of the New Left, Marcuse was probably the most controversial public intellectual of the day, as students painted "Marx, Mao, and Marcuse" on walls, the media debated his work, and intellectuals of every tendency criticized his views. Simply reducing Marcuse to the politics of the 1960s, however, does him a disservice, as it covers over his important contributions to philosophy and social theory, by reducing his thought to his political positions of the day.⁹

Marcuse was not the first Marxist to formulate theories of the integration of the working class and capitalist stabilization, but few on the Left have presented such a theory so bluntly and at the same time vigorously sought alternative forces. Marcuse's dilemma was that he wanted at the same time to remain a Marxist, be loyal to the project of critical theory developed by the Institute for Social Research, be an independent thinker, and be committed to the struggles of the New Left. In view of his writings and activity both before and after the publication of *One-Dimensional Man*, it is clear that he fervently desired *total revolution*, described as a radical upheaval and overthrow of the previously existing order, bringing about wide-ranging changes that would eliminate capitalism and establish a new liberated society and way of life.

Marcuse often stated that his experiences in the German Revolution of 1918 gave him a sense that genuine revolution was characterized by a totality of upheaval – a view articulated at the time by Rosa Luxemburg, whom he greatly admired and who decisively influenced his concept of "revolution."¹⁰ Consequently, with such an expansive vision of radical and systemic transformation, any reforms or social change that did not lead to an overthrow of capitalism only impressed Marcuse as a cosmetic improvement of the existing system. In situations when such radical social upheaval appeared unlikely, Marcuse was bound to become distrustful about the

8 See Marcuse's statement against the Vietnam war in this collection, pp. 43–6.

9 See the volumes in the Routledge *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse* series dealing with *Technology, War and Fascism* and *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*; Jürgen Habermas's afterword to the latter volume makes the point that one of Marcuse's enduring legacies is his philosophical and theoretical contributions. Subsequent volumes in this series will deal with Marcuse's philosophical contributions, his aesthetics, his engagement with Freud and psychoanalysis, and his contributions to Marxism. Thus it is a mistake to reduce Marcuse's contributions simply to his writings on the New Left. This volume will accordingly attempt to show how Marcuse's politics are grounded in his theory and how both his theory and politics were an important influence on the New Left that continue to be of theoretical and political value in the contemporary era.

10 See Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse*, Chapter 1.

possibility of progressive social transformation. Nonetheless, he constantly affirms the relevance and importance of the Marxian critique of capitalism, and near the end of *One-Dimensional Man* reaffirms his belief in the superior rationality of socialism:

the facts are all there which validate the critical theory of this society and of its fatal development: the increasing irrationality of the whole; waste and restriction of productivity; the need for aggressive expansion; the constant threat of war; intensified exploitation; dehumanization. And they all point to the historical alternative: the planned utilization of resources for the satisfaction of vital needs with a minimum of toil, the transformation of leisure into free time, the pacification of the struggle for existence.

(ODM, pp. 252–3)

This affirmation of his continued commitment to socialism is followed by a poignant and revealing passage in which Marcuse articulates his anger and regret that there is not in fact a revolutionary situation, or class, to carry through the Marxian theory of revolution:

the facts and the alternatives are there like fragments which do not connect, or like a world of mute objects without a subject, without the practice which would move these objects in the new direction. Dialectical theory is not refuted, but it cannot offer the remedy. It cannot be positive . . . On theoretical as well as empirical grounds, the dialectical concept pronounces its own hopelessness.

(ODM, p. 253)

Whereas, previously, the critical theory of society could count on oppositional forces within the society, disintegrating tendencies that would activate these forces, and the “liberation of *inherent* possibilities” (ODM, pp. 254ff.), by the early 1960s Marcuse no longer saw in the early 1960s any possibility for revolutionary forces to explode the society from within, believing that advanced capitalism is so totalitarian and pleasantly repressive that only *absolute refusal* can be sustained as a “truly revolutionary mode of opposition” (ODM, pp. 255ff.). Marcuse explicitly renounces here advocacy of any reformism, or piecemeal change, and claims that only non-integrated “outsiders” can be a genuinely revolutionary force (ODM, pp. 256–7).

In 1964 Marcuse perceived only a slight chance that the most exploited and persecuted outsiders, in alliance with an enlightened intelligentsia, might mark “the beginning of the end” and signify some hope for social change:

However, underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable. They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. Thus their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an