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Herbert Marcuse: Prophet of Violence

New Left court philosopher would 'repress' all opposing ideas

By DONALD FEDER

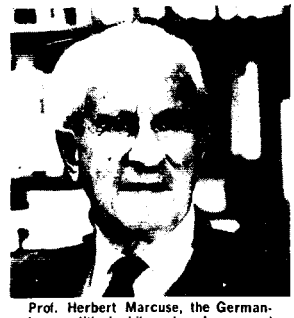
When left-wing students recently staged a demonstration which closed the University of Rome, they carried banners reading "Marx, Marcuse, and Mao." As one of the students explained it, "We see Marx as the prophet, Marcuse as his interpreter, and Mao as the sword." This spring witnessed violent student demonstrations in Italy, Germany, France and America. Behind them was the philosophy of one man, Dr. Herbert Marcuse.

At 70 years of age, the jovial, snowy-haired Dr. Marcuse hardly gives the appearance of a prophet of violence. His students at the University of California at San Diego, where he teaches political philosophy, are charmed by his kindly Kris Kringle smile, old-world German accent and quiet self-demeaning nature. Yet his revolutionary, quasi-Marxist writings have inspired thousands of students to the worst kind of nihilistic violence.

Born in 1898 in Berlin, Herbert Marcuse came from a well-to-do, cultured German family. He received a baptism of fire in radical Marxist tactics when he joined the Spartacist League of the German Communist, Rosa Luxemburg. After earning a Ph. D. in philosophy from the University of Freiburg in 1922, Marcuse and Theodor Adorno founded the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research. The institute studied the application of Marxist principle to the then emerging science of sociology.

In 1933, with the rise of Nazism, Marcuse left Germany and spent the next three years in Geneva. He came to America in 1936 to become a lecturer at Columbia University. As did many anti-Nazi refugees, he contributed substantially to America's war effort, serving several years in the Office of Strategic Service. After the war he reentered academic life as an instructor at Harvard, Columbia, Brandeis and, finally, the University of California at San Diego, where he still teaches.

Dr. Marcuse's philosophy, a weird mixture of Freud and Marx, is perfectly suited to the New Left. Although his books are too polemical to be assigned as required reading by most universities, they are worshipfully studied by Students for a Democratic Society and their comrades-in-arms.



Prof. Herbert Marcuse, the German-born political philosopher, has served as a catalyst for much of the current disorder on and off college campuses throughout the world.

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'Socially Useful Destructiveness'

In the best known of these books, *The One Dimensional Man*, Marcuse launches a rather novel attack against modern industrial society: By providing man with an abundance of food, clothing and material comforts, this society robbed the individual of his desire for intellectual growth and self-expression. Since it is obvious that a Socialist revolution will not be brought about by the now docile masses, Marcuse abandons the proletariat as the medium for the desired social upheaval. Instead he finds much promise in students and the "oppressed" minorities. Using what Marcuse terms "socially useful destructiveness," they will apply the pressure necessary to obliterate our bourgeois-industrial state.

And what comes after the Revolution? Why, rule by the elite, of course. Marcuse would replace representative democracy with a dictatorship controlled by those who rigidly adhere to his Marxist views.

According to the professor, majority rule should be replaced by the "morality" of a presumedly infallible minority and such outmoded middle-class customs as freedom of speech should be abolished.

In an essay entitled "Repressive Tolerance" (in his book, *A Critique Of Pure Tolerance*) Marcuse states that all right-of-center opinion should be suppressed. He includes in this right-of-center category anyone who favors armaments for defense ("chauvinists") or opposes the extension of social services, such as Medicare ("self-appointed conservatives"). In reviewing Marcuse's "Negations," Max Geltman warned that "Herbert Marcuse would put you and me in jail: would stop our mouths, close down our publishing ventures, and—if he could achieve it—foreclose our thinking. . . ." Even ultra-liberal Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. has realized the fascistic nature of Marcuse's proposals. "That [Marcuse's] would be a system," said Schlesinger, "which would abrogate, for example, the Bill of Rights, which would deny freedom of expression to those who took views which Herbert would consider anti-public."

Marcuse himself gives a very concise summation of his idea of toleration when he states, "Liberating tolerance, then, would mean intolerance against movements from the Right, and toleration of movements from the Left."

As frightening as it is to read the totalitarian views of Herbert Marcuse, it is even more frightening to see those views used as the basis for the actions of the violence-prone New Left.

In July 1967 Marcuse visited the Free University of Berlin for a series of lectures and debates. According to the June 30, 1967, New York *Times*, he told his audiences "what the students wanted to hear . . . advice on how to revolt against their country's present parliamentary system." Later in an interview, Dr. Marcuse said that Rudi Dutschke, one of the radical leaders of Socialist German students, was "a sweet demagogue."

"He is a highly intelligent, honest, and active student," declared Marcuse, "one of the great hopes of all those who work for a better society."

Rudi and his allies, by their own admission, want to abolish political parties and replace them with plebiscite democracies operating through workers' and students' councils. This sounds suspiciously like the workers' and soldiers' soviets of Russian communism.

When this same "sweet demagogue" was shot on April 11, 1968, hordes of his student followers staged a wholesale attack on the Springer newspapers and magazines. To express their displeasure with Springer's staunch anti-communism, the German New Leftists stopped part of the circulation in Berlin and six other cities for several days. This violent attempt at censorship ended up in two deaths, hundreds of injuries and an enormous amount of property damage.

'Deny Speech to Chauvinists'

Also inspired by Marcuse's doctrine, 200 members of Germany's equivalent of the SDS stormed America House in Frankfurt. Their objective was to prevent a panel discussion on the war in Viet Nam. Marcuse had written that the proper society would "deny free speech to the chauvinists" and his followers obey.

This spring Marcuse traveled to Paris for a UNESCO symposium on Marx. After consulting with the North Vietnamese delegation, presumedly on how to defeat the "imperialists," he conferred with Parisian students and encouraged them to open rebellion. He left France just before the violent, crippling general strike began. As one of his students so aptly stated, "he's where the action is."

Although the terror which gripped France for the better part of a month has been well documented, two incidents stand out. On May 7, to shouts of "Guevara, Guevara," Communist students hoisted the Viet Cong flag on the Eiffel Tower and spat on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. At the same time, their comrades in the Saint Germain-des-Pres destroyed a South Vietnamese pavilion, beat up the exhibitors and looted funds collected to help Vietnamese war orphans. More of Marcuse's new "morality" in action.

The leader of these "students" is Danny Cohn-Bendit, another disciple of Marcuse. Cohn-Bendit has stated quite succinctly, "We are not worried about what to build later. For the moment we are concerned with the destruction of the existing system." Destruction for destruction's sake: pure Marcuse.

Despite his frequent foreign excursions, Marcuse has not neglected the Revolution on the home front. "Well, I certainly supported the demands of the Columbia students," he declared. When questioned about the widespread destruction of private property which took place, he placidly replied, "nice separations between theory and tactics cannot always be made. . . ." And what of the tactics of Prof. Marcuse's Columbia followers? Jeffrey Hart writes in *National Review*, "Some intimation of their moral quality can be gleaned from the manners of the revolutionaries who occupied President Kirk's office at Columbia: excrement in the waste-baskets, obscenities scrawled on pictures of the president's family, filth and random destruction everywhere."

Rudi Dutschke, the extremely radical "sweet demagogue" of the German left, is a strong disciple of Marcuse.

The seeds of revolution which Herbert Marcuse planted in his politico-philosophic works have begun to bear their fruit. The little Frankensteins who destroy and suppress from Columbia to the Sorbonne are his intellectual heirs. Unless responsible students and professors take steps to prevent the oncoming holocaust, the universities of the free world may be the first institutions to fall victim to Herbert Marcuse's philosophy of terror.

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