Marcuse

One-Dimensional Man
One-Dimensional Man

"In One-Dimensional Man Herbert Marcuse has moved on to what is the central problem of our civilization—how to reconcile orginality and spontaneity and all the creative aspects of our human nature with a prevailing drive to rationality that tends to reduce all varieties of temperament and desire to one universal system of thought and behavior. He does not claim to solve this problem, but by presenting the alternatives in clear and critical terms, he makes the choice inevitable to every socially responsible individual. That is to say, he makes us realize that the choice is now between the life and the death of our civilization."

Herbert Read

“This is a provocative book of fundamental significance.”

Transaction

“One of the most radical and forceful thinkers of this time.”

The Nation

“The foremost literary symbol of the New Left.”

The New York Times
Herbert Marcuse

One-Dimensional Man

Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society

With an introduction by Douglas Kellner

London and New York
For Inge
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My wife is at least partly responsible for the opinions expressed in this book. I am infinitely grateful to her.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

by Douglas Kellner

Herbert Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man was one of the most important books of the 1960s. First published in 1964, it was immediately recognized as a significant critical diagnosis of the present age and was soon taken up by the emergent New Left as a damning indictment of contemporary Western societies, capitalist and communist. Conceived and written in the 1950s and early 1960s, the book reflects the stifling conformity of the era and provides a powerful critique of new modes of domination and social control. Yet it also expresses the hopes of a radical philosopher that human freedom and happiness could be greatly expanded beyond the one-dimensional thought and behavior prevalent in the established society. Holding onto the vision of liberation articulated in his earlier book Eros and Civilization,

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Marcuse, in his critique of existing forms of domination and oppression, urges that what is be constantly compared with what could be: a freer and happier mode of human existence.

On one hand, One-Dimensional Man is an important work of critical social theory that continues to be relevant today as the forces of domination that Marcuse dissected have become even stronger and more prevalent in the years since he wrote the book. In a prospectus describing his work, Marcuse writes: "This book deals with certain basic tendencies in contemporary industrial society which seem to indicate a new phase of civilization. These tendencies have engendered a mode of thought and behavior which undermines the very foundations of the traditional culture. The chief characteristic of this new mode of thought and behavior is the repression of all values, aspirations, and ideas which cannot be defined in terms of the operations and attitudes validated by the prevailing forms of rationality. The consequence is the weakening and even the disappearance of all genuinely radical critique, the integration of all opposition in the established system."\(^3\)

The book contains a theory of "advanced industrial society" that describes how changes in production, consumption, culture, and thought have produced an advanced state of conformity in which the production of needs and aspirations by the prevailing societal apparatus integrates individuals into the established societies. Marcuse describes what has become known as the "technological society," in which technology restructures labor and leisure, influencing life from the organization of labor to modes of thought. He also describes the mechanisms through which consumer capitalism integrates individuals into its world of thought and behavior. Rather than seeing these developments as beneficial to the individual, Marcuse sees them as a threat to

\(^3\) Herbert Marcuse, prospectus for One-Dimensional Man, Beacon Press archives, no date.
human freedom and individuality in a totally administered society.

Justifying these claims requires Marcuse to develop a critical, philosophical perspective from which he can criticize existing forms of thought, behavior, and social organization. Thus, One-Dimensional Man is also Marcuse's major philosophical work, articulating his Hegelian-Marxian concept of philosophy and critique of dominant philosophical and intellectual currents: positivism, analytic philosophy, technological rationality, and a variety of modes of conformist thinking. In this text, he both explicates his conception of dialectical philosophy and produces analyses of society and culture which exemplify his dialectical categories and method. Consequently, One-Dimensional Man presents a model both of Marcuse's critical social theory and of his critical philosophy inspired by his philosophical studies and his work with the Frankfurt School.4

THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN

During the 1920s and early 1930s Marcuse studied with Martin Heidegger in Freiburg, Germany and intensely appropriated the works of Hegel, Marx, phenomenology, existentialism, German idealism, and the classics of the Western philosophical tradition. While he later broke with Heidegger after the rise of National Socialism in Germany and Heidegger's affiliation with the Nazi party, he was influenced by Heidegger's critique of Western philosophy and his attempts to develop a new philosophy. He followed Heidegger and existentialism in seeking to deal with the concrete problems of the existing individual and was

impressed with the phenomenological method of Husserl and Heidegger which attempted to break with abstract philosophical theorizing and to conceptualize "the things themselves" as they appeared to consciousness.

In his early works, Marcuse himself attempted to synthesize Heidegger's phenomenological existentialism with Marxism, and in One-Dimensional Man one recognizes Husserlian and Heideggerian motifs in Marcuse's critiques of scientific civilization and modes of thought. In particular, Marcuse develops a conception of a technological world, similar in some respects to that developed by Heidegger, and, like Husserl and Heidegger, sees technological rationality colonizing everyday life, robbing individuals of freedom and individuality by imposing technological imperatives, rules, and structures upon their thought and behavior.

Marcuse thought that dialectical philosophy could promote critical thinking. One-Dimensional Man is perhaps Marcuse's most sustained attempt to present and develop the categories of the dialectical philosophy developed by Hegel and Marx. For Marcuse, dialectical thinking involved the ability to abstract one's perception and thought from existing forms in order to form more general concepts. This conception helps explain the difficulty of One-Dimensional Man and the demands that it imposes upon its reader. For Marcuse abstracts from the complexity and multiplicity of the existing society its fundamental tendencies and constituents, as well as those categories which constitute for him the forms of critical thinking. This demands that the reader also abstract from existing ways of looking at society and modes of thinking and attempt to perceive and think in a new way.

Uncritical thinking derives its beliefs, norms, and values from existing thought and social practices, while critical thought seeks alternative modes of thought and behavior from which it creates a standpoint of critique. Such a critical standpoint requires developing what Marcuse calls "negative thinking."
which “negates” existing forms of thought and reality from the perspective of higher possibilities. This practice presupposes the ability to make a distinction between existence and essence, fact and potentiality, and appearance and reality. Mere existence would be negated in favor of realizing higher potentialities while norms discovered by reason would be used to criticize and overcome lower forms of thought and social organization. Thus grasping potentialities for freedom and happiness would make possible the negation of conditions that inhibited individuals’ full development and realization. In other words, perceiving the possibility of self-determination and constructing one’s own needs and values could enable individuals to break with the existing world of thought and behavior. Philosophy was thus to supply the norms for social criticism and the ideal of liberation which would guide social change and individual self-transformation.

It is probably Marcuse’s involvement with the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School that most decisively influenced the genesis and production of One-Dimensional Man. After the emergence of Heidegger’s public support of National Socialism, and just on the eve of the triumph of the Nazi party, Marcuse had a job interview with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, received a position with them, and joined them in exile after Hitler’s ascendancy to power. First in Geneva, Switzerland, and then in New York, where the Institute affiliated with Columbia University, Marcuse enthusiastically joined in the Institute’s collective attempt to develop a critical theory of society. Along with the Institute’s director, Max Horkheimer, Marcuse was one of their philosophy specialists. He began his work with the Institute by producing a critique of fascist ideology; having turned away from his former teacher, he now appraised Heidegger’s work as part of the new tendency toward totalitarian thought that was dominant in Germany and which threatened the rest of the world as well.
During the 1930s, Marcuse worked intensively, attempting to explicate and develop philosophical concepts that would be most useful for critical social theory. This project involved the interrogation of the concepts of essence, happiness, freedom, and, especially, critical reason, which he believed was the central category of philosophical thought and critique. In each case, he took standard philosophical categories and provided them with a materialist base, showing how concepts of essence, for instance, are directly relevant to concrete human life. Understanding the essential features of the human being, on this view, illuminates the potentialities that can be realized by individuals and the social conditions that inhibit or foster their development.

This concern with critical reason and Hegelian and Marxian modes of dialectical thinking is evident in *Reason and Revolution* (1941), Marcuse’s first major work in English, in which he traces the rise of modern social theory through Hegel, Marx, and positivism. Marcuse’s Hegel is a critical dialectical thinker whom he tries to absolve of responsibility for the totalitarian states with which Hegel was often associated as a spiritual progenitor. Marcuse claims that Hegel instituted a method of rational critique that utilized the “power of negative thinking” to criticize irrational forms of social life. The close connection between Hegel and Marx and the ways that Marx developed and concretized Hegel’s dialectical method are the focal points of Marcuse’s interpretation, which remains to this day one of the most insightful studies of the relation between Hegel and Marx and the origins of modern social theory.

The contrast between one-dimensional and dialectical thinking is made already in his 1930s essays. For Marcuse, one-dimensional thought and action derive their standards and

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criteria from the existing society, eschewing transcendent standards and norms. Critical and dialectical thinking, by contrast, postulates norms of criticism, based on rational potentials for human happiness and freedom, which are used to negate existing states of affairs that oppress individuals and restrict human freedom and well-being. Dialectical thought thus posits the existence of another realm of ideas, images, and imagination that serves as a potential guide for a social transformation that would realize the unrealized potentialities for a better life. Marcuse believes that great philosophy and art are the locus of these potentialities and critical norms, and he decodes the best products of Western culture in this light.

Throughout the first decade of their period of exile, there was constant discussion within the Institute for Social Research of the need for a systematic treatise on dialectics which would lay out the categories, modes of thought, and method of dialectical and critical theory. Max Horkheimer was especially interested in this project and consulted with Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Karl Korsch, and others concerning how such an ambitious project might be developed. In the United States, Horkheimer and his associates found themselves in an environment in which scientific and pragmatic modes of thinking were dominant and dialectics was seen as a sort of obscurantist thinking. Concerned to establish the importance of dialectical thinking, Horkheimer and his associates discussed how the great book on dialectics might be conceived and written.

Marcuse was extremely eager to work on this project with Horkheimer, who felt himself to be too involved in his work as director of the Institute to be able to devote sufficient time and energy to the project. During the 1940s, however, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Adorno moved to California where they had an

opportunity to devote themselves full time to philosophical studies. Soon after, following the outbreak of World War Two, Marcuse went to Washington to work for the Office of Strategic Services and then the State Department as his contribution to the fight against fascism. Thus Adorno ended up as Horkheimer's collaborator on the project on dialectics, which became their book Dialectic of Enlightenment.\footnote{Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: Seabury, 1972; original 1947).}

THE GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN

In retrospect, One-Dimensional Man articulates precisely the Hegelian-Marxian philosophical project that Marcuse began developing in the 1930s in his work with the Frankfurt School. In particular, in the sections on “One-Dimensional Thought” and “The Chance of the Alternatives” Marcuse develops the modes of critical thinking and ideology critique distinctive of the Frankfurt School most fully. His analyses here exemplify Hegelian/ Marxian dialectical philosophy both in his relentless critique of existing modes of what he considers uncritical thought and in his working out of the categories of critical and dialectical thinking.

Chapters 1 through 4 of One-Dimensional Man, by contrast, connect with the Frankfurt School’s project of developing a Critical Theory of contemporary society, which they began producing in the 1930s.\footnote{On the critical social theory of the Frankfurt School, see Kellner, Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity and the essays collected in Stephen Bronner and Douglas Kellner, eds., Critical Theory and Society. A Reader (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).} The Frankfurt School critical social theorists were among the first to analyze the new configurations of the state and economy in contemporary capitalist societies, to criticize...
the key roles of mass culture and communications, to analyze new modes of technology and forms of social control, to discuss new modes of socialization and the decline of the individual in mass society, and—vis-à-vis classical Marxism—to analyze and confront the consequences of the integration of the working classes and the stabilization of capitalism for the project of radical social change. Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* is perhaps the fullest and most concrete development of these themes within the tradition of Frankfurt School Critical Theory.

One can trace the genesis of the major themes of Marcuse's magnus opus in his works from the early 1930s until its publication in 1964. In essays from the early 1940s, Marcuse is already describing how tendencies toward technological rationality were producing a system of totalitarian social control and domination. In a 1941 article, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," Marcuse sketches the historical decline of individualism from the time of the bourgeois revolutions to the rise of modern technological society. Individual rationality, he claims, was won in the struggle against regnant superstitions, irrationality, and domination, and posed the individual in a critical stance against society. Critical reason was thus a creative principle which was the source of both the individual's liberation and society's advancement. The development of modern industry and technological rationality, however, undermined the basis of individual rationality. As capitalism and technology developed, advanced industrial society demanded increasing

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10 Herbert Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," collected in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1985), pp. 138–62. Marcuse indicates in letters from the 1940s that he was working on a large manuscript criticizing contemporary forms of thought such as positivism, behaviorism, and other forms of one-dimensional thought; see the discussion in Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule*, and the collected letters from the period in the Marcuse Archive. Unfortunately, the manuscript has not yet turned up and may be lost.
accommodation to the economic and social apparatus and submission to increasing domination and administration. Hence, a "mechanics of conformity" spread throughout the society. The efficiency and power of administration overwhelmed the individual, who gradually lost the earlier traits of critical rationality (i.e., autonomy, dissent, the power of negation), thus producing a "one-dimensional society" and "one-dimensional man."

At the same time, however, Marcuse was working with Franz Neumann on a project entitled "Theory of Social Change" which they described as

A historical and theoretical approach to the development of a positive theory of social change for contemporary society. The major historical changes of social systems, and the theories associated with them will be discussed. Particular attention will be paid to such transitions as those from feudalism to capitalism, from laissez-faire to organized industrial society, from capitalism to socialism and communism.

A handwritten note, in Marcuse's writing, on the themes of the project indicates that he and Neumann intended to analyze conflicting tendencies toward social change and social cohesion; forces of freedom and necessity in social change; subjective and objective factors that produce social change; patterns of social change, such as evolution and revolution; and the nature of social change, whether progressive, regressive, or cyclical. They ultimately intended to develop a "theory of social change for our society." A seventeen-page typed manuscript in the Marcuse Archive, entitled "A History of the Doctrine of Social Change,"

11 Herbert Marcuse and Franz Neumann, "Theory of Social Change," unpublished text in Marcuse Archive, no date. The Marcuse Archive was opened in Frankfurt, Germany in October of 1990; it contains a wealth of unpublished manuscripts, lectures, and letters which will be published in forthcoming volumes.
presents an overview of the project. Marcuse and Neumann open by writing:

Since sociology as an independent science was not established before the 19th century, the theory of society up to that time was an integral part of philosophy or of those sciences (such as the economic or juristic), the conceptual structure of which was to a large extent based upon specific philosophical doctrines. This intrinsic connection between philosophy and the theory of society (a connection which will be explained in the text) formulates the pattern of all particular theories of social change occurring in the ancient world, in the middle ages, and on the commencement of modern times. One decisive result is the emphasis on the fact that social change cannot be interpreted within a particular social science, but must be understood within the social and natural totality of human life. This conception uses, to a large extent, psychological factors in the theories of social change. However, the derivation of social and political concepts from the “psyche” of man is not a psychological method in the modern sense but rather involves the negation of psychology as a special science. For the Greeks, psychological concepts were essentially ethical, social and political ones, to be integrated into the ultimate science of philosophy.¹²

This passage clearly reveals the typically Marcusean tendency, shared by the Frankfurt School, to integrate philosophy, social theory, and politics. While standard academic practice tended to separate these disciplines, Marcuse and his colleagues perceived their interrelation. Thus Marcuse and Neumann read ancient philosophy as containing a theory of social change that was

basically determined by a search for the conditions that would produce the highest fulfillment of the individual. They read Plato, therefore, as elaborating "that form of social order which can best guarantee the development of human potentialities under the prevailing conditions." For Plato, this involves conceptualizing the ideal forms of life and the reconstruction of society according to them: "The radical change of the traditional city state into the platonic state of estates implies a reconstruction of the economy in such a manner that the economic no longer determines the faculties and powers of man, but is rather determined by them."

Marcuse and Neumann propose a systematic examination of ancient, medieval, and modern theories of social change with a view toward developing a contemporary theory of society and social change. They note that modern sociology "has severed the intrinsic connection between the theory of society and philosophy which is still operative in Marxism and has treated the problem of social change as a particular sociological question." They propose, by contrast, integrating philosophy, sociology, and political theory in a theory of social change for the present age.

A larger, forty-seven-page manuscript, titled "A Theory of Social Change," presents a more comprehensive analysis of some of the specific theories of social change that Marcuse and Neumann would analyze. This project is extremely interesting within the history of Critical Theory since it shows that in the 1940s there were two tendencies within Critical Theory: (1) the philosophical-cultural analysis of the trends of Western civilization being developed by Horkheimer and Adorno in Dialectic of Enlightenment, and (2) the more practical-political development of Critical Theory as a theory of social change proposed by Marcuse and Neumann. For Marcuse and Neumann, Critical Theory would be developed as a theory of social change that would connect philosophy, social theory, and radical politics—precisely the project of 1930s Critical Theory that Horkheimer
and Adorno were abandoning in the early 1940s in their turn toward philosophical and cultural criticism divorced from social theory and radical politics. Marcuse and Neumann, by contrast, were focusing precisely on the issue that Horkheimer and Adorno had neglected: the theory of social change.  

With their involvement in antifascist work for the U.S. government during the Second World War their work on the project was suspended, and there is no evidence that Marcuse and Neumann attempted to take it up again after the war. During his years of government service—from 1942 until the early 1950s—Marcuse continued to develop his Critical Theory and the themes that would become central to One-Dimensional Man. In a 1946 essay that contained thirty-three theses on the current world situation, Marcuse sketched what he saw as the social and political tendencies of the present moment.  

The text was prepared for the journal Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung, which the Institute for Social Research hoped to relaunch. The plan was for Marcuse, Horkheimer, Neumann, Adorno, and others to write articles on contemporary philosophy, art, social theory, politics, and so on, but this project also failed to come to fruition, perhaps because of growing philosophical and political differences between the members of the Institute. The return of Adorno and Horkheimer to Germany to re-establish the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt might also have undermined the project.

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13 In The Origins of Negative Dialectics (New York: The Free Press, 1977), Susan Buck-Morss argues that in the 1930s there were two models and tendencies of Critical Theory: the attempt by Marcuse, Horkheimer, and others to develop a Critical Theory of contemporary society and the attempts to develop a radical theory and cultural criticism developed by T. W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin. The discovery of the manuscripts by Marcuse and Neumann on theories of social change suggest that there were also two distinct tendencies within Critical Theory in the 1940s.

14 Herbert Marcuse, unpublished manuscript with no title, dated 1946, in Marcuse Archive. For a discussion of the manuscript's history, see Wiggershaus, Die Frankfurter Schule, pp. 429ff.
Marcuse’s “Theses,” like his later One-Dimensional Man, contain a Hegelian overview of the contemporary world situation that was deeply influenced by classical Marxism. In the theses, Marcuse anticipates many of the key positions of One-Dimensional Man, including the integration of the proletariat, the stabilization of capitalism, the bureaucratization of socialism, the demise of the revolutionary left, and the absence of genuine forces of progressive social change.

In general, the characteristic themes of Marcuse’s post-Second World War writings build on the Frankfurt School’s analyses of the role of technology and technological rationality, administration and bureaucracy, the capitalist state, mass media and consumerism, and new modes of social control, which in their view produced both a decline in the revolutionary potential of the working class and a decline of individuality, freedom, and democracy, as well as the stabilization of capitalism. In a 1954 epilogue to the second edition of Reason and Revolution, Marcuse claims that: “The defeat of Fascism and National Socialism has not arrested the trend towards totalitarianism. Freedom is on the retreat—in the realm of thought as well as in that of society.” In Marcuse’s view, the powers of reason and freedom are declining in “late industrial society”: “With the increasing concentration and effectiveness of economic, political, and cultural controls, the opposition in all these fields has been pacified, co-ordinated, or liquidated.” Indeed, reason has become an instrument of domination: “It helps to organize, administer, and anticipate the powers that be, and to liquidate the ‘power of Negativity.’ Reason has identified itself with the reality: what is actual is reasonable, although what is reasonable has not yet become actuality.”

Not only Hegel’s hope that reason would shape and control

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reality, but Marx's hope that reason would be embodied in a revolutionary class and rational socialist society, had come to naught. The proletariat was not the "absolute negation of capitalist society presupposed by Marx," and the contradictions of capitalism were not as explosive as Marx had forecast. Marcuse took over the term "organized capitalism" developed by the Austro-Marxist Rudolf Hilferding to describe the administrative-bureaucratic apparatus which organizes, manages, and stabilizes capitalist society. Economic planning in the state, automatization in the economy, the rationalization of culture in the mass media, and the increased bureaucratization of all modes of social, political, and economic life had created a "totally administered society" that was resulting in "the decline of the individual."

By the 1950s, Marcuse thus perceived that the unparalleled affluence of the consumer society and the apparatus of planning and management in advanced capitalism had produced new forms of social administration and a "society without opposition" that threatened individuality and that closed off possibilities of radical social change. In studies of the 1950s, he began sketching out a theory of a new type of technological society which would receive its fullest development in One-Dimensional Man. Marcuse's analysis is based on a conception of the historical rise of a technological world which overpowers and controls its subjects. In this technological world, Marcuse claims that metaphysics is superseded by technology, in that the previous metaphysical concept of subjectivity, which postulates an active subject confronting a controllable world of objects, is replaced by a one-dimensional technical world where "pure instrumentality" and "efficacy" of arranging means and ends within a pre-established universe is the "common principle of thought

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and action.” The self-contained and self-perpetuating technological world allows change only within its own institutions and parameters. In this sense, it is “one-dimensional” and “has become a universal means of domination” which congeals into a “second nature, schlechte Unmittelbarkeit (bad immediacy) which is perhaps more hostile and more destructive than primary nature, the pretechnical nature.”

There are two ways to read Marcuse’s theory of the one-dimensional technical world and society, which is the primary focus of One-Dimensional Man. One can interpret Marcuse’s theory as a global, totalizing theory of a new type of society that transcends the contradictions of capitalist society in a new order that eliminates individuality, dissent, and opposition. Indeed, there is a recurrent tendency in reading Marcuse to use “one-dimensionality” as a totalizing concept to describe an era of historical development which supposedly absorbs all opposition into a totalitarian, monolithic system. However, Marcuse himself rarely, if ever, uses the term “one-dimensionality” (i.e., as a totalizing noun) but instead tends to speak of “one-dimensional” man, society, or thought, applying the term as an adjective describing deficient conditions which he criticizes and contrasts with an alternative state of affairs. In fact, Marcuse introduces “one-dimensional” in his earlier writing as an epistemological concept that makes a distinction between one-dimensional and dialectical thought; in One-Dimensional Man it is extended to describe social and anthropological phenomena. In light of Marcuse’s criticism of “one-dimensional” states of affairs by posing alternatives that are to be fought for and realized, it is wrong to read him solely as a theorist of the totally administered society who completely rejects contradiction, conflict,

revolt, and alternative thought and action. In One-Dimensional Man and later works, he rejects a monolithic interpretation of the text as an epic of total domination that in a quasi-Hegelian fashion subsumes everything into a one-dimensional totality; it is preferable to read it as a dialectical text which contrasts one-dimensional with multidimensional thought and behavior.

Thus, I would propose interpreting “one-dimensional” as conforming to existing thought and behavior and lacking a critical dimension and a dimension of potentialities that transcend the existing society. In Marcuse’s usage the adjective “one-dimensional” describes practices that conform to pre-existing structures, norms, and behavior, in contrast to multidimensional discourse, which focuses on possibilities that transcend the established state of affairs. This epistemological distinction presupposes antagonism between subject and object so that the subject is free to perceive possibilities in the world that do not yet exist but which can be realized. In the one-dimensional society, the subject is assimilated into the object and follows the dictates of external, objective norms and structures, thus losing the ability to discover more liberating possibilities and to engage in transformative practice to realize them. Marcuse’s theory presupposes the existence of a human subject with freedom, creativity, and self-determination who stands in opposition to an object-world, perceived as substance, which contains possibilities to be realized and secondary qualities like values, aesthetic traits, and aspirations, which can be cultivated to enhance human life.

In Marcuse’s analysis, “one-dimensional man” has lost, or is losing, individuality, freedom, and the ability to dissent and to control one’s own destiny. The private space, the dimension of negation and individuality, in which one may become and remain a self, is being whittled away by a society which shapes aspirations, hopes, fears, and values, and even manipulates vital needs. In Marcuse’s view, the price that one-dimensional man
pays for satisfaction is to surrender freedom and individuality. One-dimensional man does not know its true needs because its needs are not its own—they are administered, superimposed, and heteronomous; it is not able to resist domination, nor to act autonomously, for it identifies with public behavior and imitates and submits to the powers that be. Lacking the power of authentic self-activity, one-dimensional man submits to increasingly total domination.

Marcuse is thus a radical individualist who is deeply disturbed by the decline of the traits of authentic individuality that he so highly values. One-dimensional society and one-dimensional man are the results of a long historical erosion of individuality which Marcuse criticized over several decades. One-Dimensional Man can thus be interpreted as an extended protest against the decline of individuality in advanced industrial society. The cognitive costs include the loss of an ability to perceive another dimension of possibilities that transcend the one-dimensional thought and society. Rooting his conception in Hegel’s dialectical philosophy, Marcuse insists on the importance of distinguishing between existence and essence, fact and potential, and appearance and reality. One-dimensional thought is not able to make these distinctions and thus submits to the power of the existing society, deriving its view of the world and mode of behavior from existing practices and modes of thought.

Marcuse is again reworking here the Hegelian-Marxian theme of reification and alienation, where the individual loses the power of comprehending and transforming subjectivity as it becomes dominated by alien powers and objects. For Marcuse, the distinguishing features of a human being are free and creative subjectivity. If in one’s economic and social life one is administered by a technical labor apparatus and conforms to dominant social norms, one is losing one’s potentialities of self-determination and individuality. Alienated from the powers of
being-a-self, one-dimensional man thus becomes an object of administration and conformity.

THE CRITICAL THEORY OF ONE-DIMENSIONAL SOCIETY

One-Dimensional Man raises the specter of the closing-off, or “atrophying,” of the very possibilities of radical social change and human emancipation. Marcuse depicts a situation in which there are no revolutionary classes or groups to militate for radical social change and in which individuals are integrated into the existing society, content with their lot and unable to perceive possibilities for a happier and freer life. There are tensions in the book, however, between the development of a more general theory of “advanced industrial society” and a more specific critique of contemporary capitalist societies, especially U.S. society, from which he derives most of his examples. Marcuse draws on the social analyses of C. Wright Mills, Daniel Bell, Vance Packard, and critical journalists like Fred Cook for examples of the trends that he sees in contemporary U.S. society. Yet he also draws on European theories, such as French theories of the technological society and the new working class, and he depicts trends in contemporary communist societies that he believes are similar to those in capitalist ones. Thus one can read the book as a general theory of contemporary advanced industrial, or technological, societies, or as a more specific analysis and critique of contemporary U.S. society during a period of affluence and muted social opposition.

Marcuse combines the perspectives of Marxian theory, the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, French social theory, and American social science to present a critical social theory of the present age. What is striking about the book is Marcuse’s posture of total critique and resolute opposition to contemporary advanced industrial societies, capitalist and communist, in
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their totality. While he frequently criticizes communist societies, building on his earlier critiques of Soviet Marxism (1958), he rejects the Cold War demonology which celebrates capitalist society in contrast to communism. Marcuse perceives destructive tendencies in advanced capitalism's most celebrated achievements and sees irrationality in its self-proclaimed rationality. He maintains that the society's prosperity and growth are based on waste and destruction, its progress fueled by exploitation and repression, while its freedom and democracy are based on manipulation. Marcuse slices through the ideological celebrations of capitalism and sharply criticizes the dehumanization and alienation in its opulence and affluence, the slavery in its labor system, the ideology and indoctrination in its culture, the fetishism in its consumerism, and the danger and insanity in its military-industrial complex. He concludes that despite its achievements, "this society is irrational as a whole. Its productivity is destructive of the free development of human needs and faculties . . . its growth dependent on the repression of the real possibilities for pacifying the struggle for existence—individual, national and international" (One-Dimensional Man, p. xl).

For Marcuse, commodities and consumption play a far greater role in contemporary capitalist society than that envisaged by Marx and most orthodox Marxists. Marcuse was one of the first critical theorists to analyze the consumer society through analyzing how consumerism, advertising, mass culture, and ideology integrate individuals into and stabilize the capitalist system. In describing how needs are produced which integrate individuals into a whole universe of thought, behavior, and satisfactions, he distinguishes between true and false needs and describes how individuals can liberate themselves from the prevailing needs and satisfactions to live a freer and happier life. He claims that

the system's widely touted individualism and freedom are forms from which individuals need to liberate themselves in order to be truly free. His argument is that the system's much lauded economic, political, and social freedoms, formerly a source of social progress, lose their progressive function and become subtle instruments of domination which serve to keep individuals in bondage to the system that they strengthen and perpetuate. For example, economic freedom to sell one's labor power in order to compete on the labor market submits the individual to the slavery of an irrational economic system; political freedom to vote for generally indistinguishable representatives of the same system is but a delusive ratification of a nondemocratic political system; intellectual freedom of expression is ineffectual when the media either co-opt and defuse, or distort and suppress, oppositional ideas, and when the image-makers shape public opinion so that it is hostile or immune to oppositional thought and action. Marcuse concludes that genuine freedom and well-being depend on liberation from the entire system of one-dimensional needs and satisfactions and require "new modes of realization . . . corresponding to the new capabilities of society" (One-Dimensional Man, p. 6).

Marcuse also analyzes changes in the labor process and new forms of integration of the working class into the existing capitalist society; developments within the capitalist state and the emergence of a one-dimensional politics; and the integration of thought, language, and culture. His critiques of contemporary modes of thought are especially provocative. He also critically analyzes new forms of technology and technological rationality which are producing a qualitatively different social structure, a totally administered society. Together, these analyses provide theoretical perspectives on the new forms of capitalist hegemony and stabilization which had emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s.

One-Dimensional Man continues to be relevant because of its
grasp of the underlying structures and tendencies of contemporary socioeconomic and political development. The scientific and technological rationalities that Marcuse describes are even more powerful today with the emergence of computerization, the proliferation of media and information, and the development of new techniques and forms of social control. And yet the society is more irrational than previously. Marcuse's description of 1964 still rings true today: "The union of growing productivity and growing destruction; the brinkmanship of annihilation; the surrender of thought, hope, and fear to the decisions of the powers that be; the preservation of misery in the face of unprecedented wealth constitute the most impartial indictment. . . . [Society's] sweeping rationality, which propels efficiency and growth is itself irrational" (One-Dimensional Man, pp. xliii–xliv).

Marcuse's critical theory of society brilliantly analyzes the tendencies toward social stability and integration achieved by contemporary capitalist societies, but downplays their crisis-tendencies and contradictions. Consequently, his theory of "one-dimensional society" cannot account either for the eruption of social revolt on a global scale in the 1960s, or the global crises of capitalism that have been occurring from the early 1970s to the present. In a sense, One-Dimensional Man articulates a stage of historical development that would soon be coming to a close and would give way to a new era marked by social turmoil and upheaval in the 1960s and a world crisis of capitalism in the 1970s. By failing to analyze in more detail counter-tendencies against one-dimensional society, he created a picture of a new type of social order able to absorb all opposition and to control thought and action indefinitely, thus permanently stabilizing the capitalist system.

Yet methodologically, Marcuse indicates that he is analyzing trends of social development to which there are counter-trends (One-Dimensional Man, pp. xlvi–xlviii). In the introduction he writes that his study "will vacillate throughout between two
contradictory hypotheses: (1) that advanced industrial society is capable of containing qualitative change for the foreseeable future; (2) that forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society” (p. xlv). Near the end of the book he writes: “The unification of opposites in the medium of technological rationality must be, in all its reality, an illusory unification, which eliminates neither the contradiction between the growing productivity and its repressive use, nor the vital need for solving the contradiction” (p. 260).

Thus Marcuse recognizes that both social conflicts and tendencies toward change continue to exist and that radical social transformation may eventually be possible. Although the focus of his analysis is on the containment of social change, he describes the society in the passage just cited as a “forced unity” or “illusory unification” rather than as one which has eliminated all contradictions and conflicts. Thus, to interpret properly both One-Dimensional Man and Marcuse’s project as a whole, One-Dimensional Man should be read in relation to Eros and Civilization as well as to the works that follow, such as An Essay on Liberation and Counterrevolution and Revolt. It is precisely the vision of “what could be” articulated in these texts that highlights the bleakness of “what is” in One-Dimensional Man. Marcuse continues to believe that contradictions exist between the higher possibilities of a free and pacified society and the existing social system. The problem presented in One-Dimensional Man is that one-dimensional thought cannot perceive this distinction, but Marcuse insists that it continues to exist, and, if perceived, could be a vehicle of individual and social transformation.

In his writings after One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse focuses more on social contradictions, struggles, and the disintegrating factors in existing societies, capitalist and communist. One-Dimensional Man should thus be read as a theory of the containment of social contradictions, forces of negation, and possibilities of liberation that exist but are suppressed. Even in One-Dimensional Man Marcuse
continues to point to these forces and possibilities, and to recognize the liberating potential hidden in the oppressive social system, especially in technology, which could be used to eliminate alienated labor and to produce a better life for all. Marcuse always stresses liberation, and his thought is animated by a utopian vision that life could be as it is in art and dreams if only a revolution would take place that would eliminate its repressive features.

A lesson that might be drawn from his work is that critical and dialectical social theory should analyze containment and stabilization as well as contestation and struggle. In some eras, stabilization and containment may predominate, while in others upheaval and struggle may be dominant, or both trends could be posed against each other. Certainly, from the 1980s to the present, conservative trends have been dominant. Yet to present an adequate model for contemporary social theory and politics, forms of both domination and resistance should be analyzed. Consequently, rather than conceptualizing contemporary societies as closed monoliths of domination, they should be analyzed as systems of contradictions, tensions, and conflicts which oscillate from stasis to change, from oppression and domination to struggle and resistance, and from stability and containment to conflict and crisis.

RECEPTION AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

In sharply criticizing contemporary capitalist societies, Marcuse went against the currents of conformist academic thinking and anticipated the multifaceted critiques of U.S. society that were to emerge in the 1960s. One-Dimensional Man had a curious reception and impact. It angered both orthodox Marxists, who could not accept such thorough-going revision of Marxism, and many others who were unable to assent to such radical critiques of contemporary capitalist society. The book was, however, well
received by the New Left and a generation dissatisfied with the current social order and the orthodoxies of the dominant Marxist and academic theories. For the New Left, One-Dimensional Man articulated what young radicals felt was wrong with society, and the book's dialectic of liberation and domination provided a framework for radical politics which struggled against domination and for liberation. Moreover, One-Dimensional Man showed that the problems confronting the emerging radical movement were not simply the Vietnam war, racism or inequality, but the system itself, and that solving a wide range of social problems required fundamental social restructuring. In this way, One-Dimensional Man played an important role in the political education of a generation of radicals and to this day has inspired those involved in the development of critical philosophy and social theory.

While One-Dimensional Man became associated with the radicalism of the New Left in the 1960s, the text has a paradoxical relation with the new radicalism whose possibility its analyses seem to deny. At the conclusion of the book, Marcuse speculated that there was 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. He thought there was hope that the civil rights movement might produce ferment which would lead to a new era of struggle, and he held onto the concept of the "Great Refusal" of forms of oppression and domination as his political ideal.

Almost on the eve of One-Dimensional Man's publication, in fact, the New Left and antiwar movement began to grow in response to the accelerating U.S. military intervention in Vietnam. During this period, a generation of radicals turned to Marcuse's book, which seemed to have denied the possibility of fundamental political change. During the heroic period of the New Left in the 1960s, One-Dimensional Man helped to show a generation of
political and cultural radicals what was wrong with the system they were struggling against, and thus played an important role in the student movement. Marcuse himself quickly rallied to the student activists' cause and was exhilarated when the Great Refusal was being acted out on a grand scale.

One-Dimensional Man also achieved a quite respectable, even laudatory, academic reception. It was reviewed in most major intellectual journals, many national magazines and newspapers, and many specialized academic journals in a wide variety of fields. The next was read as a classical study of contemporary trends of the current society in the same league with the works of C. Wright Mills, Daniel Bell, John Galbraith, and other critics of contemporary American society. The book also generated much controversy, however, especially when Marcuse was presented in the media as a “guru of the New Left.” For a generation of young radicals took up Marcuse’s texts as essential criticism of existing forms of thought and behavior, and Marcuse himself identified with the New Left and defended their politics and opposition.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Marcuse’s work was probably the most influential social theory of its day and was read and criticized by individuals from a variety of different perspectives. He modified some of his positions in his later writings in response to some of these criticisms, though he continued to be a radical critic of forms of domination and to champion what he perceived as forces of liberation. In particular, he went beyond his model of one-dimensional society in books like An Essay on Liberation (1969) and Counterrevolution and Revolt (1972) and celebrated all the most radical forms of oppositional thought and action. And then, in his last years, Marcuse turned positively to feminism and new social movements after the demise of the New Left in the early 1970s.

Near the end of his life, when I asked him what he thought of One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse replied that: “I stick to what I wrote
in *One-Dimensional Man,* insisting that his analysis of social trends had been confirmed by recent assaults on the changes that the struggles of the 1960s had been producing. Marcuse mentioned attacks on welfare programs, typified by Proposition 13 in California, which cut taxes for welfare spending; demands by government and business for cutbacks on social programs and a decrease in government regulation; the Berufsverbot in Germany and other repressions of radicals throughout the world; conservative attacks on abortion, feminism, and the Equal Rights Amendment; the increased strength of major transnational corporations; and conservative and neoconservative offenses in many areas of social and political life. He added, however, that the 1960s had unleashed new social forces, opening up new space for struggle that still existed and should be used by forces of opposition to militate for radical social change.

Marcuse died in 1979. Had he lived through the eras of Reagan and Bush no doubt he would have insisted that *One-Dimensional Man* is more relevant than ever after a decade of conservative hegemony, rampant capitalism, and a series of U.S. military interventions and covert operations in Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, and many parts of the world, culminating in the Persian Gulf war. Marcuse was a sharp critic of militarism and a lover of life who hated death and killing. He feared that more sophisticated technologies would “instrumentalize” war and produce ever more brutal forms of destruction—a vision amply confirmed in the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars.

Indeed, *One-Dimensional Man* provides a model analysis of the synthesis of business, the state, the media, and other cultural institutions under the hegemony of corporate capital which characterizes the U.S. economy and polity in the 1980s and early 1990s. While Marcuse does not adequately analyze the antagonisms that always exist between ruling groups and those in opposition to oppressive policies, he certainly provides illuminating perspectives on the sort of conservatism dominant in the past
decade. In particular, Reagan and Reaganism exemplified one-dimensional “positive thinking” to an extreme degree. The way that the media and political establishment went along with “Reaganism” in the 1980s indicates trends toward one-dimensional thought and politics that have only intensified in the early 1990s.

Marcuse’s One-Dimensional Man is especially relevant in regard to the resurgence of militarism during and after the Persian Gulf war. The syndrome of denial and projection and unleashing of aggressive energies was a familiar one for the Freudian Herbert Marcuse, who constantly argued that advanced industrial societies unleashed ever more lethal destructiveness which finds a mass base of approval in those who have been conditioned to approve of aggression. One-dimensional society operates by steering erotic and destructive instinctual energies into socially controlled modes of thought and behavior. Aggressive behavior thus provides a social bond, unifying those who gain in power and self-esteem through identifying with forms of aggression against shared objects of hate. This trend is all too visible in current American society, and Marcuse’s analyses of aggression and militarism should be read anew during this era of resurgent aggression and one-dimensional conservativism.

Yet the legacy of the 1960s, of which Marcuse was a vital part, lives on, and the Great Refusal is still practiced by oppositional groups and individuals who refuse to conform to existing oppression and domination. Marcuse should be widely read and studied again to help nourish a renewal of critical thinking and radical politics. For social domination continues to be a block to human freedom and happiness, and liberation continues to be a hope for those who refuse to join the contemporary celebration of militarism, the forces of conservatism, and unrestrained capitalism. For, quoting Walter Benjamin at the end of One-Dimensional Man, “It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us.”
The paralysis of criticism: society without opposition

Does not the threat of an atomic catastrophe which could wipe out the human race also serve to protect the very forces which perpetuate this danger? The efforts to prevent such a catastrophe overshadow the search for its potential causes in contemporary industrial society. These causes remain unidentified, unexposed, unattacked by the public because they recede before the all too obvious threat from without—to the West from the East, to the East from the West. Equally obvious is the need for being prepared, for living on the brink, for facing the challenge. We submit to the peaceful production of the means of destruction, to the perfection of waste, to being educated for a defense which deforms the defenders and that which they defend.

If we attempt to relate the causes of the danger to the way in which society is organized and organizes its members, we are immediately confronted with the fact that advanced industrial society becomes richer, bigger, and better as it perpetuates the
danger. The defense structure makes life easier for a greater number of people and extends man's mastery of nature. Under these circumstances, our mass media have little difficulty in selling particular interests as those of all sensible men. The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations, their satisfaction promotes business and the common-weal, and the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason.

And yet this society is irrational as a whole. Its productivity is destructive of the free development of human needs and faculties, its peace maintained by the constant threat of war, its growth dependent on the repression of the real possibilities for pacifying the struggle for existence—individual, national, and international. This repression, so different from that which characterized the preceding, less developed stages of our society, operates today not from a position of natural and technical immaturity but rather from a position of strength. The capabilities (intellectual and material) of contemporary society are immeasurably greater than ever before—which means that the scope of society's domination over the individual is immeasurably greater than ever before. Our society distinguishes itself by conquering the centrifugal social forces with Technology rather than Terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living.

To investigate the roots of these developments and examine their historical alternatives is part of the aim of a critical theory of contemporary society, a theory which analyzes society in the light of its used and unused or abused capabilities for improving the human condition. But what are the standards for such a critique?

Certainly value judgments play a part. The established way of organizing society is measured against other possible ways, ways which are held to offer better chances for alleviating man's struggle for existence; a specific historical practice is measured
against its own historical alternatives. From the beginning, any critical theory of society is thus confronted with the problem of historical objectivity, a problem which arises at the two points where the analysis implies value judgments:

1. the judgment that human life is worth living, or rather can be and ought to be made worth living. This judgment underlies all intellectual effort; it is the a priori of social theory, and its rejection (which is perfectly logical) rejects theory itself;

2. the judgment that, in a given society, specific possibilities exist for the amelioration of human life and specific ways and means of realizing these possibilities. Critical analysis has to demonstrate the objective validity of these judgments, and the demonstration has to proceed on empirical grounds. The established society has available an ascertainable quantity and quality of intellectual and material resources. How can these resources be used for the optimal development and satisfaction of individual needs and faculties with a minimum of toil and misery? Social theory is historical theory, and history is the realm of chance in the realm of necessity. Therefore, among the various possible and actual modes of organizing and utilizing the available resources, which ones offer the greatest chance of an optimal development?

The attempt to answer these questions demands a series of initial abstractions. In order to identify and define the possibilities of an optimal development, the critical theory must abstract from the actual organization and utilization of society's resources, and from the results of this organization and utilization. Such abstraction which refuses to accept the given universe of facts as the final context of validation, such "transcending" analysis of the facts in the light of their arrested and denied possibilities, pertains to the very structure of social theory. It is opposed to all metaphysics by virtue of the rigorously historical
character of the transcendence. The "possibilities" must be within the reach of the respective society; they must be definable goals of practice. By the same token, the abstraction from the established institutions must be expressive of an actual tendency—that is, their transformation must be the real need of the underlying population. Social theory is concerned with the historical alternatives which haunt the established society as subversive tendencies and forces. The values attached to the alternatives do become facts when they are translated into reality by historical practice. The theoretical concepts terminate with social change.

But here, advanced industrial society confronts the critique with a situation which seems to deprive it of its very basis. Technical progress, extended to a whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life (and of power) which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system and to defeat or refute all protest in the name of the historical prospects of freedom from toil and domination. Contemporary society seems to be capable of containing social change—qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new modes of human existence. This containment of social change is perhaps the most singular achievement of advanced industrial society; the general acceptance of the National Purpose, bipartisan policy, the decline of pluralism, the collusion of Business and Labor within the strong State testify to the integration of opposites which is the result as well as the prerequisite of this achievement.

A brief comparison between the formative stage of the theory of industrial society and its present situation may help to show how the basis of the critique has been altered. At its origins in

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1 The terms "transcend" and "transcendence" are used throughout in the empirical, critical sense: they designate tendencies in theory and practice which, in a given society, "overshoot" the established universe of discourse and action toward its historical alternatives (real possibilities).
the first half of the nineteenth century, when it elaborated the first concepts of the alternatives, the critique of industrial society attained concreteness in a historical mediation between theory and practice, values and facts, needs and goals. This historical mediation occurred in the consciousness and in the political action of the two great classes which faced each other in the society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the capitalist world, they are still the basic classes. However, the capitalist development has altered the structure and function of these two classes in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of historical transformation. An overriding interest in the preservation and improvement of the institutional status quo unites the former antagonists in the most advanced areas of contemporary society. And to the degree to which technical progress assures the growth and cohesion of communist society, the very idea of qualitative change recedes before the realistic notions of a non-explosive evolution. In the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the critique is thus thrown back to a high level of abstraction. There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet. Even the most empirical analysis of historical alternatives appears to be unrealistic speculation, and commitment to them a matter of personal (or group) preference.

And yet: does this absence refute the theory? In the face of apparently contradictory facts, the critical analysis continues to insist that the need for qualitative change is as pressing as ever before. Needed by whom? The answer continues to be the same: by the society as a whole, for every one of its members. The union of growing productivity and growing destruction; the brinkmanship of annihilation; the surrender of thought, hope, and fear to the decisions of the powers that be; the preservation of misery in the face of unprecedented wealth constitute the most impartial indictment—even if they are not the raison d'être of this society but only its by-product: its sweeping
rationality, which propels efficiency and growth, is itself irrational.

The fact that the vast majority of the population accepts, and is made to accept, this society does not render it less irrational and less reprehensible. The distinction between true and false consciousness, real and immediate interest still is meaningful. But this distinction itself must be validated. Men must come to see it and to find their way from false to true consciousness, from their immediate to their real interest. They can do so only if they live in need of changing their way of life, of denying the positive, of refusing. It is precisely this need which the established society manages to repress to the degree to which it is capable of "delivering the goods" on an increasingly large scale, and using the scientific conquest of nature for the scientific conquest of man.

Confronted with the total character of the achievements of advanced industrial society, critical theory is left without the rationale for transcending this society. The vacuum empties the theoretical structure itself, because the categories of a critical social theory were developed during the period in which the need for refusal and subversion was embodied in the action of effective social forces. These categories were essentially negative and oppositional concepts, defining the actual contradictions in nineteenth century European society. The category "society" itself expressed the acute conflict between the social and political sphere—society as antagonistic to the state. Similarly, "individual," "class," "private," "family" denoted spheres and forces not yet integrated with the established conditions—spheres of tension and contradiction. With the growing integration of industrial society, these categories are losing their critical connotation, and tend to become descriptive, deceptive, or operational terms.

An attempt to recapture the critical intent of these categories, and to understand how the intent was cancelled by the social
reality, appears from the outset to be regression from a theory joined with historical practice to abstract, speculative thought: from the critique of political economy to philosophy. This ideological character of the critique results from the fact that the analysis is forced to proceed from a position “outside” the positive as well as negative, the productive as well as destructive tendencies in society. Modern industrial society is the pervasive identity of these opposites—it is the whole that is in question. At the same time, the position of theory cannot be one of mere speculation. It must be a historical position in the sense that it must be grounded on the capabilities of the given society.

This ambiguous situation involves a still more fundamental ambiguity. One-Dimensional Man will vacillate throughout between two contradictory hypotheses: (1) that advanced industrial society is capable of containing qualitative change for the foreseeable future; (2) that forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society. I do not think that a clear answer can be given. Both tendencies are there, side by side—and even the one in the other. The first tendency is dominant, and whatever preconditions for a reversal may exist are being used to prevent it. Perhaps an accident may alter the situation, but unless the recognition of what is being done and what is being prevented subverts the consciousness and the behavior of man, not even a catastrophe will bring about the change.

The analysis is focused on advanced industrial society, in which the technical apparatus of production and distribution (with an increasing sector of automation) functions, not as the sum-total of mere instruments which can be isolated from their social and political effects, but rather as a system which determines a priori the product of the apparatus as well as the operations of servicing and extending it. In this society, the productive apparatus tends to become totalitarian to the extent to which it determines not only the socially needed occupations,
skills, and attitudes, but also individual needs and aspirations. It thus obliterates the opposition between the private and public existence, between individual and social needs. Technology serves to institute new, more effective, and more pleasant forms of social control and social cohesion. The totalitarian tendency of these controls seems to assert itself in still another sense—by spreading to the less developed and even to the preindustrial areas of the world, and by creating similarities in the development of capitalism and communism.

In the face of the totalitarian features of this society, the traditional notion of the “neutrality” of technology can no longer be maintained. Technology as such cannot be isolated from the use to which it is put; the technological society is a system of domination which operates already in the concept and construction of techniques.

The way in which a society organizes the life of its members involves an initial choice between historical alternatives which are determined by the inherited level of the material and intellectual culture. The choice itself results from the play of the dominant interests. It anticipates specific modes of transforming and utilizing man and nature and rejects other modes. It is one “project” of realization among others. But once the project has become operative in the basic institutions and relations, it tends to become exclusive and to determine the development of the society as a whole. As a technological universe, advanced industrial society is a political universe, the latest stage in the realization of a specific historical project—namely, the experience, transformation, and organization of nature as the mere stuff of domination.

2 The term “project” emphasizes the element of freedom and responsibility in historical determination: it links autonomy and contingency. In this sense, the term is used in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre. For a further discussion see chapter 8 below.
As the project unfolds, it shapes the entire universe of discourse and action, intellectual and material culture. In the medium of technology, culture, politics, and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives. The productivity and growth potential of this system stabilize the society and contain technical progress within the framework of domination. Technological rationality has become political rationality.

In the discussion of the familiar tendencies of advanced industrial civilization, I have rarely given specific references. The material is assembled and described in the vast sociological and psychological literature on technology and social change, scientific management, corporative enterprise, changes in the character of industrial labor and of the labor force, etc. There are many unideological analyses of the facts—such as Berle and Means, The Modern Corporation and Private Property, the reports of the 76th Congress' Temporary National Economic Committee on the Concentration of Economic Power, the publications of the AFL-CIO on Automation and Major Technological Change, but also those of News and Letters and Correspondence in Detroit. I should like to emphasize the vital importance of the work of C. Wright Mills, and of studies which are frequently frowned upon because of simplification, overstatement, or journalistic ease—Vance Packard's The Hidden Persuaders, The Status Seekers, and The Waste Makers, William H. Whyte's The Organization Man, Fred J. Cook's The Warfare State belong in this category. To be sure, the lack of theoretical analysis in these works leaves the roots of the described conditions covered and protected, but left to speak for themselves, the conditions speak loudly enough. Perhaps the most telling evidence can be obtained by simply looking at television or listening to the AM radio for one consecutive hour for a couple of days, not shutting off the commercials, and now and then switching the station.

My analysis is focused on tendencies in the most highly developed contemporary societies. There are large areas within
and without these societies where the described tendencies do not prevail—I would say: not yet prevail. I am projecting these tendencies and I offer some hypotheses, nothing more.
Part I

One-Dimensional Society
A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress. Indeed, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of socially necessary but painful performances; the concentration of individual enterprises in more effective, more productive corporations; the regulation of free competition among unequally equipped economic subjects; the curtailment of prerogatives and national sovereignties which impede the international organization of resources. That this technological order also involves a political and intellectual coordination may be a regrettable and yet promising development.

The rights and liberties which were such vital factors in the origins and earlier stages of industrial society yield to a higher stage of this society: they are losing their traditional rationale and content. Freedom of thought, speech, and conscience were—just as free enterprise, which they served to promote and protect—essentially critical ideas, designed to replace an
obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one. Once institutionalized, these rights and liberties shared the fate of the society of which they had become an integral part. The achievement cancels the premises.

To the degree to which freedom from want, the concrete substance of all freedom, is becoming a real possibility, the liberties which pertain to a state of lower productivity are losing their former content. Independence of thought, autonomy, and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their basic critical function in a society which seems increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the individuals through the way in which it is organized. Such a society may justly demand acceptance of its principles and institutions, and reduce the opposition to the discussion and promotion of alternative policies within the status quo. In this respect, it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian or a non-authoritarian system. Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system itself appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole. Indeed, at least in so far as the necessities of life are involved, there seems to be no reason why the production and distribution of goods and services should proceed through the competitive concurrence of individual liberties.

Freedom of enterprise was from the beginning not altogether a blessing. As the liberty to work or to starve, it spelled toil, insecurity, and fear for the vast majority of the population. If the individual were no longer compelled to prove himself on the market, as a free economic subject, the disappearance of this kind of freedom would be one of the greatest achievements of civilization. The technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity. The very
structure of human existence would be altered; the individual would be liberated from the work world's imposing upon him alien needs and alien possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own. If the productive apparatus could be organized and directed toward the satisfaction of the vital needs, its control might well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy, but render it possible.

This is a goal within the capabilities of advanced industrial civilization, the "end" of technological rationality. In actual fact, however, the contrary trend operates: the apparatus imposes its economic and political requirements for defense and expansion on labor time and free time, on the material and intellectual culture. By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.¹

Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilizing, organizing, and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilization. And this productivity mobilizes society as a whole, above and beyond any particular individual or group interests.

¹ See p. 54.
The brute fact that the machine's physical (only physical?) power surpasses that of the individual, and of any particular group of individuals, makes the machine the most effective political instrument in any society whose basic organization is that of the machine process. But the political trend may be reversed; essentially the power of the machine is only the stored-up and projected power of man. To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the potential basis of a new freedom for man.

Contemporary industrial civilization demonstrates that it has reached the stage at which "the free society" can no longer be adequately defined in the traditional terms of economic, political, and intellectual liberties, not because these liberties have become insignificant, but because they are too significant to be confined within the traditional forms. New modes of realization are needed, corresponding to the new capabilities of society.

Such new modes can be indicated only in negative terms because they would amount to the negation of the prevailing modes. Thus economic freedom would mean freedom from the economy—from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals from politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of "public opinion" together with its makers. The unrealistic sound of these propositions is indicative, not of their utopian character, but of the strength of the forces which prevent their realization. The most effective and enduring form of warfare against liberation is the implanting of material and intellectual needs that perpetuate obsolete forms of the struggle for existence.

The intensity, the satisfaction and even the character of human needs, beyond the biological level, have always been
preconditioned. Whether or not the possibility of doing or leaving, enjoying or destroying, possessing or rejecting something is seized as a need depends on whether or not it can be seen as desirable and necessary for the prevailing societal institutions and interests. In this sense, human needs are historical needs and, to the extent to which the society demands the repressive development of the individual, his needs themselves and their claim for satisfaction are subject to overriding critical standards.

We may distinguish both true and false needs. "False" are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery, and injustice. Their satisfaction might be most gratifying to the individual, but this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained and protected if it serves to arrest the development of the ability (his own and others) to recognize the disease of the whole and grasp the chances of curing the disease. The result then is euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs.

Such needs have a societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control; the development and satisfaction of these needs is heteronomous. No matter how much such needs may have become the individual's own, reproduced and fortified by the conditions of his existence; no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning—products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression.

The prevalence of repressive needs is an accomplished fact, accepted in ignorance and defeat, but a fact that must be undone in the interest of the happy individual as well as all those whose misery is the price of his satisfaction. The only needs that have an
unqualified claim for satisfaction are the vital ones—nourishment, clothing, lodging at the attainable level of culture. The satisfaction of these needs is the prerequisite for the realization of all needs, of the unsublimated as well as the sublimated ones.

For any consciousness and conscience, for any experience which does not accept the prevailing societal interest as the supreme law of thought and behavior, the established universe of needs and satisfactions is a fact to be questioned—questioned in terms of truth and falsehood. These terms are historical throughout, and their objectivity is historical. The judgment of needs and their satisfaction, under the given conditions, involves standards of priority—standards which refer to the optimal development of the individual, of all individuals, under the optimal utilization of the material and intellectual resources available to man. The resources are calculable. “Truth” and “falsehood” of needs designate objective conditions to the extent to which the universal satisfaction of vital needs and, beyond it, the progressive alleviation of toil and poverty, are universally valid standards. But as historical standards, they do not only vary according to area and stage of development, they also can be defined only in (greater or lesser) contradiction to the prevailing ones. What tribunal can possibly claim the authority of decision?

In the last analysis, the question of what are true and false needs must be answered by the individuals themselves, but only in the last analysis; that is, if and when they are free to give their own answer. As long as they are kept incapable of being autonomous, as long as they are indoctrinated and manipulated (down to their very instincts), their answer to this question cannot be taken as their own. By the same token, however, no tribunal can justly arrogate to itself the right to decide which needs should be developed and satisfied. Any such tribunal is reprehensible, although our revulsion does not do away with the question:
how can the people who have been the object of effective and productive domination by themselves create the conditions of freedom?²

The more rational, productive, technical, and total the repressive administration of society becomes, the more unimaginable the means and ways by which the administered individuals might break their servitude and seize their own liberation. To be sure, to impose Reason upon an entire society is a paradoxical and scandalous idea—although one might dispute the righteousness of a society which ridicules this idea while making its own population into objects of total administration. All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individual’s own. The process always replaces one system of preconditioning by another; the optimal goal is the replacement of false needs by true ones, the abandonment of repressive satisfaction.

The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation—liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comfortable—while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefaction; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.

Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination. The range of choice open

² See p. 43.
to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but what can be chosen and what is chosen by the individual. The criterion for free choice can never be an absolute one, but neither is it entirely relative. Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear—that is, if they sustain alienation. And the spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.

Our insistence on the depth and efficacy of these controls is open to the objection that we overrate greatly the indoctrinating power of the "media," and that by themselves the people would feel and satisfy the needs which are now imposed upon them. The objection misses the point. The preconditioning does not start with the mass production of radio and television and with the centralization of their control. The people enter this stage as preconditioned receptacles of long standing; the decisive difference is in the flattening out of the contrast (or conflict) between the given and the possible, between the satisfied and the unsatisfied needs. Here, the so-called equalization of class distinctions reveals its ideological function. If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television program and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population.

Indeed, in the most highly developed areas of contemporary society, the transplantation of social into individual needs is so effective that the difference between them seems to be purely
theoretical. Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination? Between the automobile as nuisance and as convenience? Between the horrors and the comforts of functional architecture? Between the work for national defense and the work for corporate gain? Between the private pleasure and the commercial and political utility involved in increasing the birth rate?

We are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilization: the rational character of its irrationality. Its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced.

The prevailing forms of social control are technological in a new sense. To be sure, the technical structure and efficacy of the productive and destructive apparatus has been a major instrumentality for subjecting the population to the established social division of labor throughout the modern period. Moreover, such integration has always been accompanied by more obvious forms of compulsion: loss of livelihood, the administration of justice, the police, the armed forces. It still is. But in the contemporary period, the technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests—to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible.

No wonder then that, in the most advanced areas of this
civilization, the social controls have been introjected to the point where even individual protest is affected at its roots. The intellectual and emotional refusal "to go along" appears neurotic and impotent. This is the socio-psychological aspect of the political event that marks the contemporary period: the passing of the historical forces which, at the preceding stage of industrial society, seemed to represent the possibility of new forms of existence.

But the term "introjection" perhaps no longer describes the way in which the individual by himself reproduces and perpetuates the external controls exercised by his society. Introjection suggests a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which a Self (Ego) transposes the "outer" into the "inner." Thus introjection implies the existence of an inner dimension distinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigencies—an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious apart from public opinion and behavior. The idea of "inner freedom" here has its reality: it designates the private space in which man may become and remain "himself."

Today this private space has been invaded and whittled down by technological reality. Mass production and mass distribution claim the entire individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory. The manifold processes of introjection seem to be ossified in almost mechanical reactions. The result is, not adjustment but mimesis: an immediate identification of the individual with his society and, through it, with the society as a whole.

This immediate, automatic identification (which may have been characteristic of primitive forms of association) reappears in high industrial civilization; its new "immediacy," however, is the product of a sophisticated, scientific management and

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3 The change in the function of the family here plays a decisive role: its "socializing" functions are increasingly taken over by outside groups and media. See my Eros and Civilization (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 96ff.
organization. In this process, the "inner" dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down. The loss of this dimension, in which the power of negative thinking—the critical power of Reason—is at home, is the ideological counterpart to the very material process in which advanced industrial society silences and reconciles the opposition. The impact of progress turns Reason into submission to the facts of life, and to the dynamic capability of producing more and bigger facts of the same sort of life. The efficiency of the system blunts the individuals' recognition that it contains no facts which do not communicate the repressive power of the whole. If the individuals find themselves in the things which shape their life, they do so, not by giving, but by accepting the law of things—not the law of physics but the law of their society.

I have just suggested that the concept of alienation seems to become questionable when the individuals identify themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them and have in it their own development and satisfaction. This identification is not illusion but reality. However, the reality constitutes a more progressive stage of alienation. The latter has become entirely objective; the subject which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence. There is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in all forms. The achievements of progress defy ideological indictment as well as justification; before their tribunal, the "false consciousness" of their rationality becomes the true consciousness.

This absorption of ideology into reality does not, however, signify the "end of ideology." On the contrary, in a specific sense advanced industrial culture is more ideological than its predecessor, inasmuch as today the ideology is in the process of production itself.* In a provocative form, this proposition reveals

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the political aspects of the prevailing technological rationality. The productive apparatus and the goods and services which it produces "sell" or impose the social system as a whole. The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole. The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life—much better than before—and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension.

The trend may be related to a development in scientific method: operationalism in the physical, behaviorism in the social sciences. The common feature is a total empiricism in the treatment of concepts; their meaning is restricted to the representation of particular operations and behavior. The operational point of view is well illustrated by P. W. Bridgman's analysis of the concept of length:

5 P. W. Bridgman, The Logic of Modern Physics (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 5. The operational doctrine has since been refined and qualified. Bridgman himself has extended the concept of "operation" to include the "paper-and-pencil" operations of the theorist (in Philipp J. Frank, The Validation of Scientific
We evidently know what we mean by length if we can tell what the length of any and every object is, and for the physicist nothing more is required. To find the length of an object, we have to perform certain physical operations. The concept of length is therefore fixed when the operations by which length is measured are fixed: that is, the concept of length involves as much and nothing more than the set of operations by which length is determined. In general, we mean by any concept nothing more than a set of operations; the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations.

Bridgman has seen the wide implications of this mode of thought for the society at large:⁶

To adopt the operational point of view involves much more than a mere restriction of the sense in which we understand ‘concept,’ but means a far-reaching change in all our habits of thought, in that we shall no longer permit ourselves to use as tools in our thinking concepts of which we cannot give an adequate account in terms of operations.

Bridgman’s prediction has come true. The new mode of thought is today the predominant tendency in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and other fields. Many of the most seriously troublesome concepts are being “eliminated” by showing that no adequate account of them in terms of operations or behavior can be given. The radical empiricist onslaught (I shall subsequently, in chapters VII and VIII, examine its claim to be empiricist) thus provides the methodological justification for the debunking of

the mind by the intellectuals—a positivism which, in its denial of the transcending elements of Reason, forms the academic counterpart of the socially required behavior.

Outside the academic establishment, the “far-reaching change in all our habits of thought” is more serious. It serves to coordinate ideas and goals with those exacted by the prevailing system, to enclose them in the system, and to repel those which are irreconcilable with the system. The reign of such a one-dimensional reality does not mean that materialism rules, and that the spiritual, metaphysical, and bohemian occupations are petering out. On the contrary, there is a great deal of “Worship together this week,” “Why not try God,” Zen, existentialism, and beat ways of life, etc. But such modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to the status quo and no longer negative. They are rather the ceremonial part of practical behaviorism, its harmless negation, and are quickly digested by the status quo as part of its healthy diet.

One-dimensional thought is systematically promoted by the makers of politics and their purveyors of mass information. Their universe of discourse is populated by self-validating hypotheses which, incessantly and monopolistically repeated, become hypnotic definitions or dictations. For example, “free” are the institutions which operate (and are operated on) in the countries of the Free World; other transcending modes of freedom are by definition either anarchism, communism, or propaganda. “Socialistic” are all encroachments on private enterprises not undertaken by private enterprise itself (or by government contracts), such as universal and comprehensive health insurance, or the protection of nature from all too sweeping commercialization, or the establishment of public of services which may hurt private profit. This totalitarian logic of accomplished facts has its Eastern counterpart. There, freedom is the way of life instituted by a communist regime, and all other transcending
modes of freedom are either capitalistic, or revisionist, or leftist sectarianism. In both camps, non-operational ideas are non-behavioral and subversive. The movement of thought is stopped at barriers which appear as the limits of Reason itself.

Such limitation of thought is certainly not new. Ascending modern rationalism, in its speculative as well as empirical form, shows a striking contrast between extreme critical radicalism in scientific and philosophic method on the one hand, and an uncritical quietism in the attitude toward established and functioning social institutions. Thus Descartes' ego cogitans was to leave the "great public bodies" untouched, and Hobbes held that "the present ought always to be preferred, maintained, and accounted best." Kant agreed with Locke in justifying revolution if and when it has succeeded in organizing the whole and in preventing subversion.

However, these accommodating concepts of Reason were always contradicted by the evident misery and injustice of the "great public bodies" and the effective, more or less conscious rebellion against them. Societal conditions existed which provoked and permitted real dissociation from the established state of affairs; a private as well as political dimension was present in which dissociation could develop into effective opposition, testing its strength and the validity of its objectives.

With the gradual closing of this dimension by the society, the self-limitation of thought assumes a larger significance. The interrelation between scientific-philosophical and societal processes, between theoretical and practical Reason, asserts itself "behind the back" of the scientists and philosophers. The society bars a whole type of oppositional operations and behavior; consequently, the concepts pertaining to them are rendered illusory or meaningless. Historical transcendence appears as metaphysical transcendence, not acceptable to science and scientific thought. The operational and behavioral point of view, practiced as a "habit of thought" at large, becomes the view of the
established universe of discourse and action, needs and aspirations. The "cunning of Reason" works, as it so often did, in the interest of the powers that be. The insistence on operational and behavioral concepts turns against the efforts to free thought and behavior from the given reality and for the suppressed alternatives. Theoretical and practical Reason, academic and social behaviorism meet on common ground: that of an advanced society which makes scientific and technical progress into an instrument of domination.

"Progress" is not a neutral term; it moves toward specific ends, and these ends are defined by the possibilities of ameliorating the human condition. Advanced industrial society is approaching the stage where continued progress would demand the radical subversion of the prevailing direction and organization of progress. This stage would be reached when material production (including the necessary services) becomes automated to the extent that all vital needs can be satisfied while necessary labor time is reduced to marginal time. From this point on, technical progress would transcend the realm of necessity, where it served as the instrument of domination and exploitation which thereby limited its rationality; technology would become subject to the free play of faculties in the struggle for the pacification of nature and of society.

Such a state is envisioned in Marx's notion of the "abolition of labor." The term "pacification of existence" seems better suited to designate the historical alternative of a world which—through an international conflict which transforms and suspends the contradictions within the established societies—advances on the brink of a global war. "Pacification of existence" means the development of man's struggle with man and with nature, under conditions where the competing needs, desires, and aspirations are no longer organized by vested interests in domination and scarcity—an organization which perpetuates the destructive forms of this struggle.
Today's fight against this historical alternative finds a firm mass basis in the underlying population, and finds its ideology in the rigid orientation of thought and behavior to the given universe of facts. Validated by the accomplishments of science and technology, justified by its growing productivity, the status quo defies all transcendence. Faced with the possibility of pacification on the grounds of its technical and intellectual achievements, the mature industrial society closes itself against this alternative. Operationalism, in theory and practice, becomes the theory and practice of containment. Underneath its obvious dynamics, this society is a thoroughly static system of life: self-propelling in its oppressive productivity and in its beneficial coordination. Containment of technical progress goes hand in hand with its growth in the established direction. In spite of the political fetters imposed by the status quo, the more technology appears capable of creating the conditions for pacification, the more are the minds and bodies of man organized against this alternative.

The most advanced areas of industrial society exhibit throughout these two features: a trend toward consummation of technological rationality, and intensive efforts to contain this trend within the established institutions. Here is the internal contradiction of this civilization: the irrational element in its rationality. It is the token of its achievements. The industrial society which makes technology and science its own is organized for the ever-more-effective utilization of its resources. It becomes irrational when the success of these efforts opens new dimensions of human realization. Organization for peace is different from organization for war; the institutions which served the struggle for existence cannot serve the pacification of existence. Life as an end is qualitatively different from life as a means.

Such a qualitatively new mode of existence can never be envisaged as the mere by-product of economic and political changes, as the more or less spontaneous effect of the new
institutions which constitute the necessary prerequisite. Qualitative change also involves a change in the technical basis on which this society rests—one which sustains the economic and political institutions through which the “second nature” of man as an aggressive object of administration is stabilized. The techniques of industrialization are political techniques; as such, they prejudge the possibilities of Reason and Freedom.

To be sure, labor must precede the reduction of labor, and industrialization must precede the development of human needs and satisfactions. But as all freedom depends on the conquest of alien necessity, the realization of freedom depends on the techniques of this conquest. The highest productivity of labor can be used for the perpetuation of labor, and the most efficient industrialization can serve the restriction and manipulation of needs.

When this point is reached, domination—in the guise of affluence and liberty—extends to all spheres of private and public existence, integrates all authentic opposition, absorbs all alternatives. Technological rationality reveals its political character as it becomes the great vehicle of better domination, creating a truly totalitarian universe in which society and nature, mind and body are kept in a state of permanent mobilization for the defense of this universe.
The society of total mobilization, which takes shape in the most advanced areas of industrial civilization, combines in productive union the features of the Welfare State and the Warfare State. Compared with its predecessors, it is indeed a “new society.” Traditional trouble spots are being cleaned out or isolated, disrupting elements taken in hand. The main trends are familiar: concentration of the national economy on the needs of the big corporations, with the government as a stimulating, supporting, and sometimes even controlling force; hitching of this economy to a world-wide system of military alliances, monetary arrangements, technical assistance and development schemes; gradual assimilation of blue-collar and white-collar population, of leadership types in business and labor, of leisure activities and aspirations in different social classes; fostering of a pre-established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose; invasion of the private household by the togetherness of public opinion; opening of the bedroom to the media of mass communication.
In the political sphere, this trend manifests itself in a marked unification or convergence of opposites. Bipartisanship in foreign policy overrides competitive group interests under the threat of international communism, and spreads to domestic policy, where the programs of the big parties become ever more undistinguishable, even in the degree of hypocrisy and in the odor of the clichés. This unification of opposites bears upon the very possibilities of social change where it embraces those strata on whose back the system progresses—that is, the very classes whose existence once embodied the opposition to the system as a whole.

In the United States, one notices the collusion and alliance between business and organized labor; in Labor Looks at Labor: A Conversation, published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in 1963, we are told that:

"What has happened is that the union has become almost indistinguishable in its own eyes from the corporation. We see the phenomenon today of unions and corporations jointly lobbying. The union is not going to be able to convince missile workers that the company they work for is a fink outfit when both the union and the corporation are out lobbying for bigger missile contracts and trying to get other defense industries into the area, or when they jointly appear before Congress and jointly ask that missiles instead of bombers should be built or bombs instead of missiles, depending on what contract they happen to hold."

The British Labor Party, whose leaders compete with their Conservative counterparts in advancing national interests, is hard put to save even a modest program of partial nationalization. In West Germany, which has outlawed the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, having officially rejected its Marxist programs, is convincingly proving its respectability. This is the situation in
the leading industrial countries of the West. In the East, the gradual reduction of direct political controls testifies to increasing reliance on the effectiveness of technological controls as instruments of domination. As for the strong Communist parties in France and Italy, they bear witness to the general trend of circumstances by adhering to a minimum program which shelves the revolutionary seizure of power and complies with the rules of the parliamentary game.

However, while it is incorrect to consider the French and Italian parties “foreign” in the sense of being sustained by a foreign power, there is an unintended kernel of truth in this propaganda: they are foreign inasmuch as they are witnesses of a past (or future?) history in the present reality. If they have agreed to work within the framework of the established system, it is not merely on tactical grounds and as short-range strategy, but because their social base has been weakened and their objectives altered by the transformation of the capitalist system (as have the objectives of the Soviet Union which has endorsed this change in policy). These national Communist parties play the historical role of legal opposition parties “condemned” to be non-radical. They testify to the depth and scope of capitalist integration, and to the conditions which make the qualitative difference of conflicting interests appear as quantitative differences within the established society.

No analysis in depth seems to be necessary in order to find the reasons for these developments. As to the West: the former conflicts within society are modified and arbitrated under the double (and interrelated) impact of technical progress and international communism. Class struggles are attenuated and “imperialist contradictions” suspended before the threat from without. Mobilized against this threat, capitalist society shows an internal union and cohesion unknown at previous stages of industrial civilization. It is a cohesion on very material grounds;
mobilization against the enemy works as a mighty stimulus of production and employment, thus sustaining the high standard of living.

On these grounds, there arises a universe of administration in which depressions are controlled and conflicts stabilized by the beneficial effects of growing productivity and threatening nuclear war. Is this stabilization "temporary" in the sense that it does not affect the roots of the conflicts which Marx found in the capitalist mode of production (contradiction between private ownership of the means of production and social productivity), or is it a transformation of the antagonistic structure itself, which resolves the contradictions by making them tolerable? And, if the second alternative is true, how does it change the relationship between capitalism and socialism which made the latter appear the historical negation of the former?

CONTAINMENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The classical Marxian theory envisages the transition from capitalism to socialism as a political revolution: the proletariat destroys the political apparatus of capitalism but retains the technological apparatus, subjecting it to socialization. There is continuity in the revolution: technological rationality, freed from irrational restrictions and destructions, sustains and consummates itself in the new society. It is interesting to read a Soviet Marxist statement on this continuity, which is of such vital importance for the notion of socialism as the determinate negation of capitalism:¹

"(1) Though the development of technology is subject to the

economic laws of each social formation, it does not, like other economic factors, end with the cessation of the laws of the formation. When in the process of revolution the old relations of production are broken up, technology remains and, subordinated to the economic laws of the new economic formation, continues to develop further, with added speed. (2) Contrary to the development of the economic basis in antagonistic societies, technology does not develop through leaps but by a gradual accumulation of elements of a new quality, while the elements of the old quality disappear. (3) [irrelevant in this context].”

In advanced capitalism, technical rationality is embodied, in spite of its irrational use, in the productive apparatus. This applies not only to mechanized plants, tools, and exploitation of resources, but also to the mode of labor as adaptation to and handling of the machine process, as arranged by “scientific management.” Neither nationalization nor socialization alter by themselves this physical embodiment of technological rationality; on the contrary, the latter remains a precondition for the socialist development of all productive forces.

To be sure, Marx held that organization and direction of the productive apparatus by the “immediate producers” would introduce a qualitative change in the technical continuity: namely, production toward the satisfaction of freely developing individual needs. However, to the degree to which the established technical apparatus engulfs the public and private existence in all spheres of society—that is, becomes the medium of control and cohesion in a political universe which incorporates the laboring classes—to that degree would the qualitative change involve a change in the technological structure itself. And such change would presuppose that the laboring classes are alienated from this universe in their very existence, that their consciousness is that of the total impossibility to continue to exist in this universe, so that the
need for qualitative change is a matter of life and death. Thus, the negation exists prior to the change itself, the notion that the liberating historical forces develop within the established society is a cornerstone of Marxian theory.²

Now it is precisely this new consciousness, this "space within," the space for the transcending historical practice, which is being barred by a society in which subjects as well as objects constitute instrumentalities in a whole that has its raison d'être in the accomplishments of its overpowering productivity. Its supreme promise is an ever-more-comfortable life for an ever-growing number of people who, in a strict sense, cannot imagine a qualitatively different universe of discourse and action, for the capacity to contain and manipulate subversive imagination and effort is an integral part of the given society. Those whose life is the hell of the Affluent Society are kept in line by a brutality which revives medieval and early modern practices. For the other, less underprivileged people, society takes care of the need for liberation by satisfying the needs which make servitude palatable and perhaps even unnoticeable, and it accomplishes this fact in the process of production itself. Under its impact, the laboring classes in the advanced areas of industrial civilization are undergoing a decisive transformation, which has become the subject of a vast sociological research. I shall enumerate the main factors of this transformation:

(1) Mechanization is increasingly reducing the quantity and intensity of physical energy expended in labor. This evolution is of great bearing on the Marxian concept of the worker (proletarian). To Marx, the proletarian is primarily the manual laborer who expends and exhausts his physical energy in the work process, even if he works with machines. The purchase and use of this physical energy, under subhuman conditions, for the private

² See p. 44f.
appropriation of surplus-value entailed the revolting inhuman aspects of exploitation; the Marxian notion denounces the physical pain and misery of labor. This is the material, tangible element in wage slavery and alienation—the physiological and biological dimension of classical capitalism.

"Pendant les siècles passés, une cause importante d’aliénation résidait dans le fait que l’être humain prêtait son individualité biologique à l’organisation technique: il était porteur d’outils; les ensembles techniques ne pouvaient se constituer qu’en incorporant l’homme comme porteur d’outils. Le caractère déformant de la profession était à la fois psychique et somatique."3

Now the ever-more-complete mechanization of labor in advanced capitalism, while sustaining exploitation, modifies the attitude and the status of the exploited. Within the technological ensemble, mechanized work in which automatic and semi-automatic reactions fill the larger part (if not the whole) of labor time remains, as a life-long occupation, exhausting, stupefying, inhuman slavery—even more exhausting because of increased speed-up, control of the machine operators (rather than of the product), and isolation of the workers from each other.4 To be sure, this form of drudgery is expressive of arrested, partial automation, of the coexistence of automated, semi-automated, and non-automated sections within the same plant, but even under

3 "During the past centuries, one important reason for alienation was that the human being lent his biological individuality to the technical apparatus: he was the bearer of tools; technical units could not be established without incorporating man as bearer of tools into them. The nature of this occupation was such that it was both psychologically and physiologically deforming in its effect." Gilbert Simondon, Du Mode d’existence des objets techniques (Paris: Aubier, 1958), p. 103, note.

these conditions, "for muscular fatigue technology has substituted tension and/or mental effort." For the more advanced automated plants, the transformation of physical energy into technical and mental skills is emphasized:

"... skills of the head rather than of the hand, of the logician rather than the craftsman; of nerve rather than muscle; of the pilot rather than the manual worker; of the maintenance man rather than the operator."

This kind of masterly enslavement is not essentially different from that of the typist, the bank teller, the high-pressure salesman or saleswoman, and the television announcer. Standardization and the routine assimilate productive and non-productive jobs. The proletarian of the previous stages of capitalism was indeed the beast of burden, by the labor of his body procuring the necessities and luxuries of life while living in filth and poverty. Thus he was the living denial of his society. In contrast, the organized worker in the advanced areas of the technological society lives this denial less conspicuously and, like the other human objects of the social division of labor, he is being incorporated into the technological community of the administered population. Moreover, in the most successful areas of automation, some sort of technological community seems to

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6 Ibid., p. 195.
7 One must insist on the inner connection between the Marxian concepts of exploitation and impoverishment in spite of later redefinitions, in which impoverishment either becomes a cultural aspect, or relative to such an extent that it applies also to the suburban home with automobile, television, etc. "Impoverishment" connotes the absolute need and necessity of subverting intolerable conditions of existence, and such absolute need appears in the beginnings of all revolution against the basic social institutions.
integrate the human atoms at work. The machine seems to instill some drugging rhythm in the operators:

“It is generally agreed that interdependent motions performed by a group of persons which follow a rhythmic pattern yield satisfaction—quite apart from what is being accomplished by the motions”,

and the sociologist-observer believes this to be a reason for the gradual development of a “general climate” more “favorable both to production and to certain important kinds of human satisfaction.” He speaks of the “growth of a strong in-group feeling in each crew” and quotes one worker as stating: “All in all we are in the swing of things . . .” The phrase admirably expresses the change in mechanized enslavement: things swing rather than oppress, and they swing the human instrument—not only its body but also its mind and even its soul. A remark by Sartre elucidates the depth of the process:

“Aux premiers temps des machines semi-automatiques, des enquêtes ont montré que les ouvrières spécialisées se laissaient aller, en travaillant, à une rêverie d’ordre sexuel, elles se rappellaient la chambre, le lit, la nuit, tout ce qui ne concerne que la personne dans la solitude du couple fermé sur soi. Mais c’est la machine en elle qui rêvait de caresses . . .”

8 Charles R. Walker, loc. cit., p. 104.
9 Ibid., p. 104f.
10 “Shortly after semi-automatic machines were introduced, investigations showed that female skilled workers would allow themselves to lapse while working into a sexual kind of daydream; they would recall the bedroom, the bed, the night and all that concerns only the person within the solitude of the couple alone with itself. But it was the machine in her which was dreaming of caresses . . .” Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique de la raison dialectique, tome I (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 290.
The machine process in the technological universe breaks the innermost privacy of freedom and joins sexuality and labor in one unconscious, rhythmic automatism—a process which parallels the assimilation of jobs.

(2) The assimilating trend shows forth in the occupational stratification. In the key industrial establishments, the "blue-collar" work force declines in relation to the "white-collar" element; the number of non-production workers increases.\(^1\) This quantitative change refers back to a change in the character of the basic instruments of production.\(^2\) At the advanced stage of mechanization, as part of the technological reality, the machine is not

"une unité absolute, mais seulement une réalité technique individualisée, ouverte selon deux voies: celle de la relation aux éléments, et celle des relations interindividuelles dans l'ensemble technique."\(^3\)

To the extent to which the machine becomes itself a system of mechanical tools and relations and thus extends far beyond the individual work process, it asserts its larger dominion by reducing the "professional autonomy" of the laborer and integrating him with other professions which suffer and direct the technical ensemble. To be sure, the former "professional" autonomy of the laborer was rather his professional enslavement.


\(^2\) See p. 25.

\(^3\) "an absolute unity, but only an individualized technical reality open in two directions, that of the relation to the elements and that of the relation among the individuals in the technical whole." Gilbert Simondon, loc. cit., p. 146.
But this specific mode of enslavement was at the same time the source of his specific, professional power of negation—the power to stop a process which threatened him with annihilation as a human being. Now the laborer is losing the professional autonomy which made him a member of a class set off from the other occupational groups because it embodied the refutation of the established society.

The technological change which tends to do away with the machine as individual instrument of production, as "absolute unit," seems to cancel the Marxian notion of the "organic composition of capital" and with it the theory of the creation of surplus value. According to Marx, the machine never creates value but merely transfers its own value to the product, while surplus value remains the result of the exploitation of living labor. The machine is embodiment of human labor power, and through it, past labor (dead labor) preserves itself and determines living labor. Now automation seems to alter qualitatively the relation between dead and living labor; it tends toward the point where productivity is determined "by the machines, and not by the individual output."¹⁴ Moreover, the very measurement of individual output becomes impossible:

"Automation in its largest sense means, in effect, the end of measurement of work. . . . With automation, you can't measure output of a single man; you now have to measure simply equipment utilization. If that is generalized as a kind of concept . . . there is no longer, for example, any reason at all to pay a man by the piece or pay him by the hour," that is to say, there is no more reason to keep up the "dual pay system" of salaries and wages."¹⁵

Daniel Bell, the author of this report, goes further; he links this

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¹⁵ Automation and Major Technological Change, loc. cit., p. 8.
technological change to the historical system of industrialization itself: the meaning of

industrialization did not arise with the introduction of factories, it "arose out of the measurement of work. It's when work can be measured, when you can hitch a man to the job, when you can put a harness on him, and measure his output in terms of a single piece and pay him by the piece or by the hour, that you have got modern industrialization."\textsuperscript{16}

What is at stake in these technological changes is far more than a pay system, the relation of the worker to other classes, and the organization of work. What is at stake is the compatibility of technical progress with the very institutions in which industrialization developed.

(3) These changes in the character of work and the instruments of production change the attitude and the consciousness of the laborer, which become manifest in the widely discussed "social and cultural integration" of the laboring class with capitalist society. Is this a change in consciousness only? The affirmative answer, frequently given by Marxists, seems strangely inconsistent. Is such a fundamental change in consciousness understandable without assuming a corresponding change in the "societal existence"? Granted even a high degree of ideological independence, the links which tie this change to the transformation of the productive process militate against such an interpretation. Assimilation in needs and aspirations, in the standard of living, in leisure activities, in politics derives from an integration in the plant itself, in the material process of production. It is certainly questionable whether one can speak of "voluntary integration" (Serge Mallet) in any other than an ironical sense.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
In the present situation, the negative features of automation are predominant: speed-up, technological unemployment, strengthening of the position of management, increasing impotence and resignation on the part of the workers. The chances of promotion decline as management prefers engineers and college graduates.\(^\text{17}\) However, there are other trends. The same technological organization which makes for a mechanical community at work also generates a larger interdependence which\(^\text{18}\) integrates the worker with the plant. One notes an "eagerness" on the part of the workers "to share in the solution of production problems," a "desire to join actively in applying their own brains to technical and production problems which clearly fitted in with the technology."\(^\text{19}\) In some of the technically most advanced establishments, the workers even show a vested interest in the establishment—a frequently observed effect of "workers' participation" in capitalist enterprise. A provocative description, referring to the highly Americanized Caltex refineries at Ambès, France, may serve to characterize this trend. The workers of the plant are conscious of the links which attach them to the enterprise:

Liens professionnels, liens sociaux, liens matériels: le métier appris dans la raffinerie, l'habitude des rapports de production quis’y sont établis, les multiples avantages sociaux qui, en cas de mort subite, de maladie grave, d'incapacité de travail, de vieillesse enfin, lui sont assurés par sa seule appartenance à la firme, prolongeant au-delà de la période productive de leur vie la sûreté des lendemains. Ainsi, la notion de ce contrat vivant et indestructible avec la ‘Caltex’ les amène à se préoccuper,

\(^\text{17}\) Charles R. Walker, loc. cit., p. 97ff. See also Ely Chinoy, Automobile Workers and the American Dream (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955) passim.


\(^\text{19}\) Charles R. Walker, loc. cit., p. 213f.
avec une attention et une lucidité inattendue, de la gestion financière de l’entreprise. Les délégués aux Comités d’entreprise épluchent la comptabilité de la société avec le soin jaloux qu’y accorderaient des actionnaires consciencieux. La direction de la Caltex peut certes se frotter les mains lorsque les syndicats acceptent de surseoir à leurs revendications de salaires en présence des besoins d’investissements nouveaux. Mais elle commence à manifester les plus ‘légitimes’ inquiétudes lorsque, prenant au mot les bilans truqués de la filiale française, ils s’inquiètent des marchés ‘désavantageux’ passés par celles-ci et poussent l’audace jusqu’à contester les prix de revient et suggérer des propositions économiques!20

20 “Professional, social, material links: the skill they acquired in the refinery, the fact that they got used to certain production relationships which were established there; the manifold social benefits on which they can count in case of sudden death, serious illness, incapacity to work, finally old age, merely because they belong to the firm, extending their security beyond the productive period of their lives. Thus the notion of a living and indestructible contract with Caltex makes them think with unexpected attention and lucidity about the financial management of the firm. The delegates to the “Comités d’entreprise” examine and discuss the accounts of the company with the same jealous care that conscientious shareholders would devote to it. The board of directors of Caltex can certainly rub their hands with joy when the unions agree to put off their salary demands because of the need for new investments. But they begin to show signs of ‘legitimate’ anxiety when the delgates take seriously the faked balance sheets of the French branches and worry about disadvantageous deals concluded by these branches, daring to go as far as to contest the production costs and suggesting money-saving measures.” Serge Mallet, Le Salaire de la technique, in: La Nef, no. 25, Paris 1959, p. 40. For the integrating trend in the United States here is an amazing statement by a union leader of the United Automobile Workers: “Many times . . . we would meet in a union hall and talk about the grievances that workers had brought in and what we are going to do about them. By the time I had arranged a meeting with management the next day, the problem had been corrected and the union didn’t get credit for redressing the grievance. It’s become a battle of loyalties. . . . All the things we fought for the corporation is now giving the workers. What we have to find are
(4) The new technological work-world thus enforces a weakening of the negative position of the working class: the latter no longer appears to be the living contradiction to the established society. This trend is strengthened by the effect of the technological organization of production on the other side of the fence: on management and direction. Domination is transfigured into administration. The capitalist bosses and owners are losing their identity as responsible agents; they are assuming the function of bureaucrats in a corporate machine. Within the vast hierarchy of executive and managerial boards extending far beyond the individual establishment into the scientific laboratory and research institute, the national government and national purpose, the tangible source of exploitation disappears behind the façade of objective rationality. Hatred and frustration are deprived of their specific target, and the technological veil conceals the reproduction of inequality and enslavement. With technical progress as its instrument, unfreedom—in the sense of man’s subjection to his productive apparatus—is perpetuated and intensified in the form of many liberties and comforts. The novel feature is the overwhelming rationality in this irrational enterprise, and the depth of the pre-conditioning which shapes the instinctual drives and aspirations of the individuals and obscures the difference between false and true consciousness. For in reality, neither the utilization of

other things the worker wants which the employer is not willing to give him. . . . We’re searching. We’re searching.” Labor Looks At Labor. A Conversation, (Santa Barbara: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1963) p. 16f.

21 Is it still necessary to denounce the ideology of the “managerial revolution?” Capitalist production proceeds through the investment of private capital for the private extraction and appropriation of surplus value, and capital is a social instrument for the domination of man by man. The essential features of this process are in no way altered by the spread of stock-holding, the separation of ownership from management, etc.

22 See p. 11.
administrative rather than physical controls (hunger, personal dependence, force), nor the change in the character of heavy work, nor the assimilation of occupational classes, nor the equalization in the sphere of consumption compensate for the fact that the decisions over life and death, over personal and national security are made at places over which the individuals have no control. The slaves of developed industrial civilization are sublimated slaves, but they are slaves, for slavery is determined

"pas par l'obéissance, ni par la rudesse des labours, mais par le statu d'instrument et la réduction de l'homme à l'état de chose."

This is the pure form of servitude: to exist as an instrument, as a thing. And this mode of existence is not abrogated if the thing is animated and chooses its material and intellectual food, if it does not feel its being-a-thing, if it is a pretty, clean, mobile thing. Conversely, as reification tends to become totalitarian by virtue of its technological form, the organizers and administrators themselves become increasingly dependent on the machinery which they organize and administer. And this mutual dependence is no longer the dialectical relationship between Master and Servant, which has been broken in the struggle for mutual recognition, but rather a vicious circle which encloses both the Master and the Servant. Do the technicians rule, or is their rule that of the others, who rely on the technicians as their planners and executors?

"... the pressures of today's highly technological arms race

23 "neither by obedience nor by hardness of labor but by the status of being a mere instrument, and the reduction of man to the state of a thing." François Perroux, La Coexistence pacifique (Paris, Presses Universitaires, 1958), vol. III, p. 600.
have taken the initiative and the power to make the crucial decisions out of the hands of responsible government officials and placed it in the hands of technicians, planners and scientists employed by vast industrial empires and charged with responsibility for their employers' interests. It is their job to dream up new weapons systems and persuade the military that the future of their military profession, as well as the country, depends upon buying what they have dreamed up.”

As the productive establishments rely on the military for self-preservation and growth, so the military relies on the corporations “not only for their weapons, but also for knowledge of what kind of weapons they need, how much they will cost, and how long it will take to get them.” A vicious circle seems indeed the proper image of a society which is self-expanding and self-perpetuating in its own preestablished direction—driven by the growing needs which it generates and, at the same time, contains.

PROSPECTS OF CONTAINMENT

Is there any prospect that this chain of growing productivity and repression may be broken? An answer would require an attempt to project contemporary developments into the future, assuming a relatively normal evolution, that is, neglecting the very real possibility of a nuclear war. On this assumption, the Enemy would remain “permanent”—that is, communism would continue to coexist with capitalism. At the same time, the latter would continue to be capable of maintaining and even increasing the standard of living for an increasing part of the

25 Ibid.
population—in spite of and through intensified production of the means of destruction, and methodical waste of resources and faculties. This capability has asserted itself in spite of and through two World Wars and immeasurable physical and intellectual regression brought about by the fascist systems.

The material base for this capability would continue to be available in

(a) the growing productivity of labor (technical progress);
(b) the rise in the birth rate of the underlying population;
(c) the permanent defense economy;
(d) the economic-political integration of the capitalist countries, and the building up of their relations with the underdeveloped areas.

But the continued conflict between the productive capabilities of society and their destructive and oppressive utilization would necessitate intensified efforts to impose the requirements of the apparatus on the population—to get rid of excess capacity, to create the need for buying the goods that must be profitably sold, and the desire to work for their production and promotion. The system thus tends toward both total administration and total dependence on administration by ruling public and private managements, strengthening the preestablished harmony between the interest of the big public and private corporations and that of their customers and servants. Neither partial nationalization nor extended participation of labor in management and profit would by themselves alter this system of domination—as long as labor itself remains a prop and affirmative force.

There are centrifugal tendencies, from within and from without. One of them is inherent in technical progress itself, namely, automation. I suggested that expanding automation is more than quantitative growth of mechanization—that it is a change in the
character of the basic productive forces. It seems that automation to the limits of technical possibility is incompatible with a society based on the private exploitation of human labor power in the process of production. Almost a century before automation became a reality, Marx envisaged its explosive prospects:

As large-scale industry advances, the creation of real wealth depends less on the labor time and the quantity of labor expended than on the power of the instrumentalities (Agentien) set in motion during the labor time. These instrumentalities, and their powerful effectiveness, are in no proportion to the immediate labor time which their production requires; their effectiveness rather depends on the attained level of science and technological progress; in other words, on the application of this science to production. . . . Human labor then no longer appears as enclosed in the process of production—man rather relates himself to the process of production as supervisor and regulator (Wächter und Regulator). . . . He stands outside of the process of production instead of being the principal agent in the process of production. . . . In this transformation, the great pillar of production and wealth is no longer the immediate labor performed by man himself, nor his labor time, but the appropriation of his own universal productivity (Produktivkraft), i.e., his knowledge and his mastery of nature through his societal existence—in one word: the development of the societal individual (des gesellschaftlichen Individuums). The theft of another man’s labor time, on which the [social] wealth still rests today, then appears as a miserable basis compared with the new basis which large-scale industry itself has created. As soon as human labor, in its immediate form, has ceased to be the great source of wealth, labor time will cease, and must of

26 See p. 30.
necessity cease to be the measure of wealth, and the exchange value must of necessity cease to be the measure of use value. The surplus labor of the mass [of the population] has thus ceased to be the condition for the development of social wealth (des allgemeinen Reichtums), and the idleness of the few has ceased to be the condition for the development of the universal intellectual faculties of man. The mode of production which rests on the exchange value thus collapses . . .

Automation indeed appears to be the great catalyst of advanced industrial society. It is an explosive or non-explosive catalyst in the material base of qualitative change, the technical instrument of the turn from quantity to quality. For the social process of automation expresses the transformation, or rather transubstantiation of labor power, in which the latter, separated from the individual, becomes an independent producing object and thus a subject itself.

Automation, once it became the process of material production, would revolutionize the whole society. The reification of human labor power, driven to perfection, would shatter the reified form by cutting the chain that ties the individual to the machinery—the mechanism through which his own labor enslaves him. Complete automation in the realm of necessity would open the dimension of free time as the one in which man's private and societal existence would constitute itself. This would be the historical transcendence toward a new civilization.

At the present stage of advanced capitalism, organized labor rightly opposes automation without compensating employment. It insists on the extensive utilization of human labor power in material production, and thus opposes technical progress. However, in doing so, it also opposes the more efficient

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27 Karl Marx, Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie (Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1953), p. 592f. See also p. 596. My translation.
utilization of capital; it hampers intensified efforts to raise the productivity of labor. In other words, continued arrest of automation may weaken the competitive national and international position of capital, cause a long-range depression, and consequently reactivate the conflict of class interests.

This possibility becomes more realistic as the contest between capitalism and communism shifts from the military to the social and economic field. By the power of total administration, automation in the Soviet system can proceed more rapidly once a certain technical level has been attained. This threat to its competitive international position would compel the Western world to accelerate rationalization of the productive process. Such rationalization encounters stiff resistance on the part of labor, but resistance which is not accompanied by political radicalization. In the United States at least, the leadership of labor in its aims and means does not go beyond the framework common to the national and group interest, with the latter submitting or subjected to the former. These centrifugal forces are still manageable within this framework.

Here, too, the declining proportion of human labor power in the productive process means a decline in political power of the opposition. In view of the increasing weight of the white-collar element in this process, political radicalization would have to be accompanied by the emergence of an independent political consciousness and action among the white-collar groups—a rather unlikely development in advanced industrial society. The stepped-up drive to organize the growing white-collar element in the industrial unions,28 if successful at all, may result in a growth of trade union consciousness of these groups, but hardly in their political radicalization.

"Politically, the presence of more white-collar workers in labor

28 Automation and Major Technological Change, loc. cit., p. 11f.
unions will give liberal and labor spokesmen a chance more
truthfully to identify 'the interests of labor' with those of the
community as a whole. The mass base of labor as a pressure
group will be further extended, and labor spokesmen will
inevitably be involved in more far-reaching bargains over the
national political economy."^29

Under these circumstances, the prospects for a streamlined con-
tainment of the centrifugal tendencies depend primarily on the
ability of the vested interests to adjust themselves and their
economy to the requirements of the Welfare State. Vastly
increased government spending and direction, planning on a
national and international scope, an enlarged foreign aid pro-
gram, comprehensive social security, public works on a grand
scale, perhaps even partial nationalization belong to these
requirements.30 I believe that the dominant interests will gradu-
ally and hesitantly accept these requirements and entrust their
prerogatives to a more effective power.

Turning now to the prospects for the containment of social
change in the other system of industrial civilization, in Soviet
society,31 the discussion is from the outset confronted with a
double incomparability: (a) chronologically, Soviet society is
at an earlier stage of industrialization, with large sectors still at
the pre-technological stage, and (b) structurally, its economic

^29 C. Wright Mills, White Collar (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956),
p. 319f.

^30 In the less advanced capitalist countries, where strong segments of the mili-
tant labor movement are still alive (France, Italy), their force is pitted against
that of accelerated technological and political rationalization in authoritarian
form. The exigencies of the international contest are likely to strengthen the
latter and to make for adoption of and alliance with the predominant tenen-
cies in the most advanced industrial areas.

^31 For the following see my Soviet Marxism (New York: Columbia University
and its political institutions are essentially different (total nationalization, and dictatorship).

The interconnection between the two aspects aggravates the difficulties of the analysis. The historical backwardness not only enables but compels Soviet industrialization to proceed without planned waste and obsolescence, without the restrictions on productivity imposed by the interests of private profit, and with planned satisfaction of still unfulfilled vital needs after, and perhaps even simultaneously with, the priorities of military and political needs.

Is this greater rationality of industrialization only the token and advantage of historical backwardness, likely to disappear once the advanced level is reached? Is it the same historical backwardness which, on the other hand, enforces—under the conditions of the competitive coexistence with advanced capitalism—the total development and control of all resources by a dictatorial regime? And, after having attained the goal of “catching up and overtaking,” would Soviet society then be able to liberalize the totalitarian controls to the point where a qualitative change could take place?

The argument from historical backwardness—according to which liberation must, under the prevailing conditions of material and intellectual immaturity, necessarily be the work of force and administration—is not only the core of Soviet Marxism, but also that of the theorists of “educational dictatorship” from Plato to Rousseau. It is easily ridiculed but hard to refute because it has the merit to acknowledge, without much hypocrisy, the conditions (material and intellectual) which serve to prevent genuine and intelligent self-determination.

Moreover, the argument debunks the repressive ideology of freedom, according to which human liberty can blossom forth in a life of toil, poverty, and stupidity. Indeed, society must first create the material prerequisites of freedom for all its members before it can be a free society; it must first create the wealth before
being able to distribute it according to the freely developing needs of the individual; it must first enable its slaves to learn and see and think before they know what is going on and what they themselves can do to change it. And, to the degree to which the slaves have been preconditioned to exist as slaves and be content in that role, their liberation necessarily appears to come from without and from above. They must be "forced to be free," to "see objects as they are, and sometimes as they ought to appear," they must be shown the "good road" they are in search of.\footnote{Rousseau, \textit{The Social Contract}, Book I, Chap. VII; Book II, ch. VI.—See p. 6.}

But with all its truth, the argument cannot answer the time-honored question: who educates the educators, and where is the proof that they are in possession of "the good?" The question is not invalidated by arguing that it is equally applicable to certain democratic forms of government where the fateful decisions on what is good for the nation are made by elected representatives (or rather endorsed by elected representatives)—elected under conditions of effective and freely accepted indoctrination. Still, the only possible excuse (it is weak enough!) for "educational dictatorship" is that the terrible risk which it involves may not be more terrible than the risk which the great liberal as well as the authoritarian societies are taking now, nor may the costs be much higher.

However, the dialectical logic insists, against the language of brute facts and ideology, that the slaves must be \textit{free} for their liberation before they can become free, and that the end must be operative in the means to attain it. Marx's proposition that the liberation of the working class must be the action of the working class itself states this \textit{a priori}. Socialism must become reality with the first act of the revolution because it must already be in the consciousness and action of those who carried the revolution.

True, there is a "first phase" of socialist construction during which the new society is "still stamped with the birth marks of
the old society from whose womb it emerges," but the qualitative change from the old to the new society occurred when this phase began. According to Marx, the "second phase" is literally constituted in the first phase. The qualitatively new mode of life generated by the new mode of production appears in the socialist revolution, which is the end and at the end of the capitalist system. Socialist construction begins with the first phase of the revolution.

By the same token, the transition from "to each according to his work" to "to each according to his needs" is determined by the first phase—not only by the creation of the technological and material base, but also (and this is decisive!) by the mode in which it is created. Control of the productive process by the "immediate producers" is supposed to initiate the development which distinguishes the history of free men from the prehistory of man. This is a society in which the former objects of productivity first become the human individuals who plan and use the instruments of their labor for the realization of their own humane needs and faculties. For the first time in history, men would act freely and collectively under and against the necessity which limits their freedom and their humanity. Therefore all repression imposed by necessity would be truly self-imposed necessity. In contrast to this conception, the actual development in present-day communist society postpones (or is compelled to postpone, by the international situation) the qualitative change to the second phase, and the transition from capitalism to socialism appears, in spite of the revolution, still as quantitative change. The enslavement of man by the instruments of his labor continues in a highly rationalized and vastly efficient and promising form.

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The situation of hostile coexistence may explain the terroristic features of Stalinist industrialization, but it also set in motion the forces which tend to perpetuate technical progress as the instrument of domination; the means prejudice the end. Again assuming that no nuclear warfare or other catastrophe cuts off its development, technical progress would make for continued increase in the standard of living and for continued liberalization of controls. The nationalized economy could exploit the productivity of labor and capital without structural resistance\textsuperscript{34} while considerably reducing working hours and augmenting the comforts of life. And it could accomplish all this without abandoning the hold of total administration over the people. There is no reason to assume that technical progress plus nationalization will make for "automatic" liberation and release of the negating forces. On the contrary, the contradiction between the growing productive forces and their enslaving organization—openly admitted as a feature of Soviet socialist development even by Stalin\textsuperscript{35}—is likely to flatten out rather than to aggravate. The more the rulers are capable of delivering the goods of consumption, the more firmly will the underlying population be tied to the various ruling bureaucracies.

But while these prospects for the containment of qualitative change in the Soviet system seem to be parallel to those in advanced capitalist society, the socialist base of production introduces a decisive difference. In the Soviet system, the organization of the productive process certainly separates the "immediate producers" (the laborers) from control over the means of production and thus makes for class distinctions at the very base of the system. This separation was established by

\textsuperscript{34} On the difference between built-in and manageable resistance see my Soviet Marxism, loc. cit., p. 109ff.

political decision and power after the brief "heroic period" of the Bolshevik Revolution, and has been perpetuated ever since. And yet it is not the motor of the productive process itself; it is not built into this process as is the division between capital and labor, derived from private ownership of the means of production. Consequently, the ruling strata are themselves separable from the productive process—that is, they are replaceable without exploding the basic institutions of society.

This is the half-truth in the Soviet-Marxist thesis that the prevailing contradictions between the "lagging production relations and the character of the productive forces" can be resolved without explosion, and that "conformity" between the two factors can occur through "gradual change." The other half of the truth is that quantitative change would still have to turn into qualitative change, into the disappearance of the State, the Party, the Plan, etc. as independent powers superimposed on the individuals. Inasmuch as this change would leave the material base of society (the nationalized productive process) intact, it would be confined to a political revolution. If it could lead to self-determination at the very base of human existence, namely in the dimension of necessary labor, it would be the most radical and most complete revolution in history. Distribution of the necessities of life regardless of work performance, reduction of working time to a minimum, universal all-sided education toward exchangeability of functions—these are the preconditions but not the contents of self-determination. While the creation of these preconditions may still be the result of superimposed administration, their establishment would mean the end of this administration. To be sure, a mature and free industrial society would continue to depend on a division of labor which involves inequality of functions. Such inequality is necessitated by genuine social needs, technical requirements, and the

36 Ibid., p. 14f.
physical and mental differences among the individuals. However, the executive and supervisory functions would no longer carry the privilege of ruling the life of others in some particular interest. The transition to such a state is a revolutionary rather than evolutionary process, even on the foundation of a fully nationalized and planned economy.

Can one assume that the communist system, in its established forms, would develop (or rather be forced to develop by virtue of the international contest) the conditions which would make for such a transition? There are strong arguments against this assumption. One emphasizes the powerful resistance which the entrenched bureaucracy would offer—a resistance which finds its raison d'être precisely on the same grounds that impel the drive for creating the preconditions for liberation, namely, the life-and-death competition with the capitalist world.

One can dispense with the notion of an innate "power-drive" in human nature. This is a highly dubious psychological concept and grossly inadequate for the analysis of societal developments. The question is not whether the communist bureaucracies would "give up" their privileged position once the level of a possible qualitative change has been reached, but whether they will be able to prevent the attainment of this level. In order to do so, they would have to arrest material and intellectual growth at a point where domination still is rational and profitable, where the underlying population can still be tied to the job and to the interest of the state or other established institutions. Again, the decisive factor here seems to be the global situation of co-existence, which has long since become a factor in the internal situation of the two opposed societies. The need for the all-out utilization of technical progress, and for survival by virtue of a superior standard of living may prove stronger than the resistance of the vested bureaucracies.

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I should like to add a few remarks on the often-heard opinion that the new development of the backward countries might not only alter the prospects of the advanced industrial countries, but also constitute a "third force" that may grow into a relatively independent power. In terms of the preceding discussion: is there any evidence that the former colonial or semi-colonial areas might adopt a way of industrialization essentially different from capitalism and present-day communism? Is there anything in the indigenous culture and tradition of these areas which might indicate such an alternative? I shall confine my remarks to models of backwardness already in the process of industrialization—that is, to countries where industrialization coexists with an unbroken pre- and anti-industrial culture (India, Egypt).

These countries enter upon the process of industrialization with a population untrained in the values of self-propelling productivity, efficiency, and technological rationality. In other words, with a vast majority of population which has not yet been transformed into a labor force separated from the means of production. Do these conditions favor a new confluence of industrialization and liberation—an essentially different mode of industrialization which would build the productive apparatus not only in accord with the vital needs of the underlying population, but also with the aim of pacifying the struggle for existence?

Industrialization in these backward areas does not take place in a vacuum. It occurs in a historical situation in which the social capital required for primary accumulation must be obtained largely from without, from the capitalist or communist bloc—or from both. Moreover, there is a widespread presumption that remaining independent would require rapid industrialization and attainment of a level of productivity which would assure at least relative autonomy in competition with the two giants.

In these circumstances, the transformation of underdeveloped
into industrial societies must as quickly as possible discard the pre-technological forms. This is especially so in countries where even the most vital needs of the population are far from being satisfied, where the terrible standard of living calls first of all for quantities en masse, for mechanized and standardized mass production and distribution. And in these same countries, the dead weight of pre-technological and even pre-"bourgeois" customs and conditions offers a strong resistance to such a superimposed development. The machine process (as social process) requires obedience to a system of anonymous powers—total secularization and the destruction of values and institutions whose desanctification has hardly begun. Can one reasonably assume that, under the impact of the two great systems of total technological administration, the dissolution of this resistance will proceed in liberal and democratic forms? That the underdeveloped countries can make the historical leap from the pre-technological to the post-technological society, in which the mastered technological apparatus may provide the basis for a genuine democracy? On the contrary, it rather seems that the superimposed development of these countries will bring about a period of total administration more violent and more rigid than that traversed by the advanced societies which can build on the achievements of the liberalistic era. To sum up: the backward areas are likely to succumb either to one of the various forms of neo-colonialism, or to a more or less terroristic system of primary accumulation.

However, another alternative seems possible. If industrialization and the introduction of technology in the backward countries encounter strong resistance from the indigenous and traditional modes of life and labor—a resistance which is not abandoned even at the very tangible prospect of a better and

37 For the following see the magnificent books by René Dumont, especially Terres vivantes (Paris: Plon, 1961).
easier life—could this pre-technological tradition itself become the source of progress and industrialization?

Such indigenous progress would demand a planned policy which, instead of superimposing technology on the traditional modes of life and labor, would extend and improve them on their own grounds, eliminating the oppressive and exploitative forces (material and religious) which made them incapable of assuring the development of a human existence. Social revolution, agrarian reform, and reduction of over-population would be prerequisites, but not industrialization after the pattern of the advanced societies. Indigenous progress seems indeed possible in areas where the natural resources, if freed from suppressive encroachment, are still sufficient not only for subsistence but also for a human life. And where they are not, could they not be made sufficient by the gradual and piecemeal aid of technology—within the framework of the traditional forms?

If this is the case, then conditions would prevail which do not exist in the old and advanced industrial societies (and never existed there)—namely, the “immediate producers” themselves would have the chance to create, by their own labor and leisure, their own progress and determine its rate and direction. Self-determination would proceed from the base, and work for the necessities could transcend itself toward work for gratification.

But even under these abstract assumptions, the brute limits of self-determination must be acknowledged. The initial revolution which, by abolishing mental and material exploitation, is to establish the prerequisites for the new development, is hardly conceivable as spontaneous action. Moreover, indigenous progress would presuppose a change in the policy of the two great industrial power blocs which today shape the world—abandonment of neo-colonialism in all its forms. At present, there is no indication of such a change.
THE WELFARE AND WARFARE STATE

By way of summary: the prospects of containment of change, offered by the politics of technological rationality, depend on the prospects of the Welfare State. Such a state seems capable of raising the standard of administered living, a capability inherent in all advanced industrial societies where the streamlined technical apparatus—set up as a separate power over and above the individuals—depends for its functioning on the intensified development and expansion of productivity. Under such conditions, decline of freedom and opposition is not a matter of moral or intellectual deterioration or corruption. It is rather an objective societal process insofar as the production and distribution of an increasing quantity of goods and services make compliance a rational technological attitude.

However, with all its rationality, the Welfare State is a state of unfreedom because its total administration is systematic restriction of (a) "technically" available free time;\(^{38}\) (b) the quantity and quality of goods and services "technically" available for vital individual needs; (c) the intelligence (conscious and unconscious) capable of comprehending and realizing the possibilities of self-determination.

Late industrial society has increased rather than reduced the need for parasitical and alienated functions (for the society as a whole, if not for the individual). Advertising, public relations, indoctrination, planned obsolescence are no longer unproductive overhead costs but rather elements of basic production costs. In order to be effective, such production of socially necessary waste requires continuous rationalization—the relentless utilization of advanced techniques and science. Consequently, a rising standard of living is the almost

\(^{38}\) "Free" time, not "leisure" time. The latter thrives in advanced industrial society, but it is unfree to the extent to which it is administered by business and politics.
unavoidable by-product of the politically manipulated industrial society, once a certain level of backwardness has been overcome. The growing productivity of labor creates an increasing surplus product which, whether privately or centrally appropriated and distributed, allows an increased consumption—notwithstanding the increased diversion of productivity. As long as this constellation prevails, it reduces the use-value of freedom; there is no reason to insist on self-determination if the administered life is the comfortable and even the “good” life. This is the rational and material ground for the unification of opposites, for one-dimensional political behavior. On this ground, the transcending political forces within society are arrested, and qualitative change appears possible only as a change from without.

Rejection of the Welfare State on behalf of abstract ideas of freedom is hardly convincing. The loss of the economic and political liberties which were the real achievement of the preceding two centuries may seem slight damage in a state capable of making the administered life secure and comfortable. If the individuals are satisfied to the point of happiness with the goods and services handed down to them by the administration, why should they insist on different institutions for a different production of different goods and services? And if the individuals are pre-conditioned so that the satisfying goods also include thoughts, feelings, aspirations, why should they wish to think, feel, and imagine for themselves? True, the material and mental commodities offered may be bad, wasteful, rubbish—but Geist and knowledge are no telling arguments against satisfaction of needs.

The critique of the Welfare State in terms of liberalism and conservatism (with or without the prefix “neo-”) rests, for its validity, on the existence of the very conditions which the Welfare State has surpassed—namely, a lower degree of social wealth.

39 See p. 4.
and technology. The sinister aspects of this critique show forth in the fight against comprehensive social legislation and adequate government expenditures for services other than those of military defense.

Denunciation of the oppressive capabilities of the Welfare State thus serves to protect the oppressive capabilities of the society prior to the Welfare State. At the most advanced stage of capitalism, this society is a system of subdued pluralism, in which the competing institutions concur in solidifying the power of the whole over the individual. Still, for the administered individual, pluralistic administration is far better than total administration. One institution might protect him against the other; one organization might mitigate the impact of the other; possibilities of escape and redress can be calculated. The rule of law, no matter how restricted, is still infinitely safer than rule above or without law.

However, in view of prevailing tendencies, the question must be raised whether this form of pluralism does not accelerate the destruction of pluralism. Advanced industrial society is indeed a system of countervailing powers. But these forces cancel each other out in a higher unification—in the common interest to defend and extend the established position, to combat the historical alternatives, to contain qualitative change. The countervailing powers do not include those which counter the whole. They tend to make the whole immune against negation from within as well as without; the foreign policy of containment appears as an extension of the domestic policy of containment.

The reality of pluralism becomes ideological, deceptive.

It seems to extend rather than reduce manipulation and coordination, to promote rather than counteract the fateful integration. Free institutions compete with authoritarian ones in making the Enemy a deadly force within the system. And this deadly force stimulates growth and initiative, not by virtue of the magnitude and economic impact of the defense “sector,” but by virtue of the fact that the society as a whole becomes a defense society. For the Enemy is permanent. He is not in the emergency situation but in the normal state of affairs. He threatens in peace as much as in war (and perhaps more than in war); he is thus being built into the system as a cohesive power.

Neither the growing productivity nor the high standard of living depend on the threat from without, but their use for the containment of social change and perpetuation of servitude does. The Enemy is the common denominator of all doing and undoing. And the Enemy is not identical with actual communism or actual capitalism—he is, in both cases, the real spectre of liberation.

Once again: the insanity of the whole absolves the particular insanities and turns the crimes against humanity into a rational enterprise. When the people, aptly stimulated by the public and private authorities, prepare for lives of total mobilization, they are sensible not only because of the present Enemy, but also because of the investment and employment possibilities in industry and entertainment. Even the most insane calculations are rational: the annihilation of five million people is preferable to that of ten million, twenty million, and so on. It is hopeless to argue that a civilization which justifies its defense by such a calculus proclaims its own end.

Under these circumstances, even the existing liberties and escapes fall in place within the organized whole. At this stage of the regimented market, is competition alleviating or intensifying the race for bigger and faster turnover and obsolescence? Are the political parties competing for pacification or for a
stronger and more costly armament industry? Is the production of “affluence” promoting or delaying the satisfaction of still unfulfilled vital needs? If the first alternatives are true, the contemporary form of pluralism would strengthen the potential for the containment of qualitative change, and thus prevent rather than impel the “catastrophe” of self-determination. Democracy would appear to be the most efficient system of domination.

The image of the Welfare State sketched in the preceding paragraphs is that of a historical freak between organized capitalism and socialism, servitude and freedom, totalitarianism and happiness. Its possibility is sufficiently indicated by prevalent tendencies of technical progress, and sufficiently threatened by explosive forces. The most powerful, of course, is the danger that preparation for total nuclear war may turn into its realization: the deterrent also serves to deter efforts to eliminate the need for the deterrent. Other factors are at play which may preclude the pleasant juncture of totalitarianism and happiness, manipulation and democracy, heteronomy and autonomy—in short, the perpetuation of the preestablished harmony between organized and spontaneous behavior, preconditioned and free thought, expediency and conviction.

Even the most highly organized capitalism retains the social need for private appropriation and distribution of profit as the regulator of the economy. That is, it continues to link the realization of the general interest to that of particular vested interests. In doing so, it continues to face the conflict between the growing potential of pacifying the struggle for existence, and the need for intensifying this struggle; between the progressive “abolition of labor” and the need for preserving labor as the source of profit. The conflict perpetuates the inhuman existence of those who form the human base of the social pyramid—the outsiders and the poor, the unemployed and unemployable, the
persecuted colored races, the inmates of prisons and mental institutions.

In contemporary communist societies, the enemy without, backwardness, and the legacy of terror perpetuate the oppressive features of "catching up with and surpassing" the achievements of capitalism. The priority of the means over the end is thereby aggravated—a priority which could be broken only if pacification is achieved—and capitalism and communism continue to compete without military force, on a global scale and through global institutions. This pacification would mean the emergence of a genuine world economy—the demise of the nation state, the national interest, national business together with their international alliances. And this is precisely the possibility against which the present world is mobilized:

L'ignorance et l'inconscience sont telles que les nationalismes demeurent florissants. Ni l'armement ni l'industrie du XXᵉ siècle ne permettent aux patries d'assurer leur sécurité et leur vie sinon en ensembles organisés de poids mondial, dans l'ordre militaire et économique. Mais à l'Ouest non plus qu'à l'Est, les croyances collectives n'assimilent les changements réels. Les Grands forment leurs empires, ou en réparent les architectures sans accepter les changements de régime économique et politique qui donneraient efficacité et sens à l'une et à l'autre coalitions.

and:

Dupes de la nation et dupes de la classe, les masses souffrantes sont partout engagées dans les duretés de conflits où leurs seuls ennemis sont des maires qui emploient sciemment les mystifications de l'industrie et du pouvoir.

La collusion de l'industrie moderne et du pouvoir territorialisé est un vice dont la réalité est plus profonde que les institutions
et les structures capitalistes et communistes et qu’aucune dialectique nécessaire ne doit nécessairement extirper.\footnote{\textit{Ignorance and unconsciousness are such that nationalism continues to flourish. Neither twentieth century armaments nor industry allow “fatherlands” to insure their security and their existence except through organisations which carry weight on a world wide scale in military and economic matters. But in the East as well as in the West, collective beliefs don’t adapt themselves to real changes. The great powers shape their empires or repair the architecture thereof without accepting changes in the economic and political regime which would give effectiveness and meaning to one or the other of the coalitions.”}}

The fateful interdependence of the only two “sovereign” social systems in the contemporary world is expressive of the fact that the conflict between progress and politics, between man and his masters has become total. When capitalism meets the challenge of communism, it meets its own capabilities: spectacular development of all productive forces after the subordination of the private interests in profitability which arrest such development. When communism meets the challenge of capitalism, it too meets its own capabilities: spectacular comforts, liberties, and alleviation of the burden of life. Both systems have these capabilities distorted beyond recognition and, in both cases, the reason is in the last analysis the same—the struggle against a form of life which would dissolve the basis for domination.

\footnote{\textit{“Duped by the nation and duped by the class, the suffering masses are everywhere involved in the harshness of conflict in which their only enemies are masters who knowingly use the mystifications of industry and power. The collusion of modern industry and territorial power is a vice which is more profoundly real than capitalist and communist institutions and structures and which no necessary dialectic necessarily eradicates.” François Perroux, loc. cit., vol. III, p. 631–632; 633.}}