

BOOK REVIEWS

MARCUSE, HERBERT, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964. 260 pp. \$6.00.

Herbert Marcuse, professor of politics and philosophy at Brandeis, is a Hegelian. His book is replete with dialectic juxtapositions: the true consciousness which negates false consciousness, the false rationality which is irrational, the apparent irrational which represents real reality, the truth of unhappy consciousness which faces the ideology of the happy consciousness, and others. This Hegelian framework is utilized for the development of a social critical philosophy; but the author is at his best when he resorts to purely philosophical exposition, as in his account of the emergence of a "classical model of dialectical thought" in Greek philosophy (pp. 124-136).

The one-dimensional man of this book is Man succumbing to one-dimensional thought in one-dimensional society. Flattened out by the "conquest of transcendence" through the ideological modes of modern society, he is robbed of the opportunity to transcend the dimensions of (a) everyday experience by inner freedom, (b) operational practicality by concepts of metaphysical depth, and (c) the repressive social order by the projection of liberating historical alternatives. For Marcuse, one-dimensionality spells doom; he champions transcendence not as a philosophical preference but as a means of salvation.

Man is deprived of his inner freedom by being absorbed into the technological reality of his immediate existence. Even the artistic alienation of higher culture is abolished: art was "the unhappy consciousness of the divided world" but is now "desublimated" and made to work "for rather than against the status quo of general repression." In this way, it contributes to the creation of a "happy consciousness" in which the contradictions of the modern world are covered up. This falsely happy and happily false consciousness creates "the belief that the real is rational and that the system delivers the goods"; it is "one-dimensional thought" operating as conformistic ideology.

But the main assault against the higher truth of transcendental Reality is carried out, under the flag of scientific thinking, by all forms of modern positivism. Concepts are stripped of their higher

meanings by linguistic operationalism which makes them "synonymous with the corresponding sets of operations"; an "irreconcilably anti-critical and anti-dialectical" and thus "anti-historical" language is created which itself becomes a "technique of manipulation and control." It introduces a "false concreteness" by the atomization of facts and their integration in a "repressive whole." In the same fashion, a "de-realization of ideas" occurs; they are stamped "unscientific" and converted into harmless "ideals." The same instrumental operationalism is found in the social sciences. Functionalism, for instance, does not subject the chosen "system" to a critical analysis of "the very qualities which make the system an historical one and which give critical-transcendent meaning to its functions and dysfunctions." Operational sociology, in general, pretends to be neutral technology but functions as ideological support of the social status quo on the one hand, and therapeutic means for remedying flaws in its organization on the other. In its technical and social effects, scientific operationalism contributes "to the ever-more-effective domination of man by man. . ."

Marcuse counters one-dimensional ideology by "critical philosophy," and scientific operationalism by "critical theory." Genuine philosophy "responds to the facts of an antagonistic reality." The concepts of virtue, justice, piety, knowledge, etc. "become a subversive undertaking" for they "intend a new polis." The "power of negative thinking" is established in concepts standing "in tension with, and even in contradiction to, the prevailing universe of discourse and behavior." In unmasking the "false consciousness" and realizing "the unabridged and unexpurgated intent of certain key concepts," critical philosophy "reflects the unhappy consciousness of a divided world in which 'that which is' falls short of, and even denies, 'that which can be.'" Like critical philosophy, critical theory is based on the principle that "recognition of facts is critique of facts." It "analyzes society in the light of its used and unused or abused capabilities for improving the human condition." Refusing "to accept the given universe of facts as the final context of validation," it transcends the facts in terms of their "arrested and denied possibilities." Its concepts "define the irrational in the rational, the mystification in the reality." Thereby, they themselves attain an "unscientific, speculative" and thus ideological character. Socially, there is "no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet." Yet, critical theory is more than speculation: it is "grounded in the capabilities of the given society" and it is justified through the factual

correctness of its social criticism. It "insists that the need for qualitative change is as pressing as ever before," and the distinction between false and true consciousness is still meaningful. "Men must come to see it and to find their way from false to true consciousness, from their immediate to their real interest."

Critical theory, then, is itself ideological in that it depends on propagandistic appeal in a social world which is saturated with the propagandistic appeals of conformist ideologies. Marcuse bolsters his position with an extensive social criticism on the one hand, and an exposition of the principles of a better social order on the other. He directs his fire against the "Welfare and Warfare State" of the "affluent society." The development of modern technology has increased productivity to such a degree that "'social and cultural integration' of the laboring class with capitalist society" has become possible. But technical progress, simultaneously, has brought the development of destructive means which force modern societies into a permanent state of mobilization. Thus, all advanced industrial societies become totalitarian. Affluence and extended welfare systems merely allow them to replace rule by terror with rule by ideological manipulation. "The power over man which this society has acquired is daily absolved by its efficacy and productiveness." If it is repressive, it is so with the consent of "the administered individuals—who have made their mutilation into their own liberties and satisfactions"; "the Community is too well off to care!" Both corporations and governments are instrumental in maintaining and extending the new system; it is no longer a matter of "master and servant" but of "administration" in which it is not clear whether the technicians or their employers rule. The "insanity" of the whole resides, most of all, in "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." The system is potentially self-destructive.

Marcuse's outline of the world to come is as scanty as his social criticism is proliferous. It would realize a "pacified existence" without threat of war. Competition would be replaced by a centralized control of the economic apparatus, enabling the individual "to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own." New "modes of realization" would be introduced in the form of three freedoms: freedom from (a) economic control and daily struggle for existence; (b) machine politics, and (c) mass communication, indoctrination, and public opinion. False needs, which may be "most gratifying" to the individ-

ual but perpetuate the present social order, would be replaced by true needs promoting "the optimal development of . . . all individuals, under the optimal utilization of the material and intellectual resources available to man." Under these conditions, "the technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity."

This, then, is Marcuse's Utopia: an economy planned for peace, three negative freedoms, another variation of the principle of utility, and one uncharted realm. Of course, he is essentially concerned with the urgency of escaping total social disaster and, thus, his overriding problem is the escape route rather than the final destination of the flight. Indeed, the "way out" is the core of his whole social philosophy.

Like other radical historicists before him, Marcuse sees society as historical process: a moving complex of complementary and antagonistic forces and tendencies, holding together dialectically yet also producing the conditions for basic change in the strengthening of antithetical factors. Any social order "results from a determinate choice, seizure of one among other ways of comprehending, organizing, and transforming reality." This initial choice "defines the range of possibilities open on this way, and precludes alternative possibilities incompatible with it." It is a "historical project" realized in preference to other possible projects. "But against this project in full realization emerge other projects, and among them those which would change the established one in its totality." The realized historical project itself produces the possibilities of its transcendence. Men, then, may seize upon such a transcending project, make it their new choice and realize it by establishing a corresponding social order. They will succeed if they plan and act "in accordance with the real possibilities open at the attained level of the material and intellectual culture."

This theory of alternative historical projects opens a fruitful way of discussing problems of social change in terms of human choice and decision without ignoring the hard facts of given social conditions. However, Marcuse insists that the realization of a historical project hinges not only on these hard facts, but also on less tangible conditions. The chosen project, he argues, "must" demonstrate "its own *higher* rationality" in order "to falsify the established totality." Therefore, it *must* "offer the prospect of preserving and improving the productive achievement of civilization" and contain "a greater chance for the pacification of existence, within the framework of

institutions which offer a greater chance for the free development of human needs and faculties." In other words, it "*must*" be in agreement with Marcuse's Utopia. He admits that this notion contains a value judgment, but is not perturbed by it: ". . . the concept of truth cannot be divorced from the value of Reason." Maybe not. But a serious investigation of the fate of the historicistic projections of his predecessors should have taught him that there is no law which dictates that basic social change must be for the better in terms of humanistic ideals. Between 1929 and 1933, German society was certainly in a situation in which total change was not only possible but desperately needed. Karl Mannheim, the great exponent of Hegelian historicism in this period, pointed to one desirable historical project; he was so convinced of its truth that he completely overlooked the alternative "project" which Hitler discovered and realized without taking recourse to Reason either with a capital or a small "R." If there are historical alternatives to the present social system, they may point in Marcuse's as well as in the opposite direction.

The one-directedness of Marcuse's historical projection ties him strongly to earlier historicist orientations. The young Marx, for instance, envisaged the transition from capitalist to communist society as a historical necessity following from the dialectic mechanism of societal development: the "proletarian revolution" was not only unavoidable but practically on hand. Eighty years later, Karl Mannheim reaffirmed the validity of radical Hegelian historicism while correcting the time-error and the class-mistake of the early Marxian version: the great transformation was due only now, and it was to be initiated and directed by the "unattached intelligentsia" which had inherited the world-liberating mission of Marxism. After another thirty-five years, Marcuse again unfolds the banner of radical historicism. But, obviously, he is as much convinced of the historicistic failure of Mannheim's intelligentsia as the latter was convinced of that of Marx's proletariat. Who, then, is to follow Marcuse's banner?

Asserting that the material and technical possibilities for the desired change of society exist, he observes that "these possibilities are gradually being realized through means and institutions which cancel their liberating potential, and this process affects not only the means but also the needs. The instruments of productivity and progress, organized into a totalitarian system, determine not only the actual but also the possible utilizations." The given social system, then, closes the door to the envisaged future, and Marcuse's historical alternatives simply turn into "enchained possibilities." The chain

can only be broken "*if and when*" the potential actors have become "conscious of themselves and of the conditions and processes" which determine their society. "None of the given alternatives is *by itself* determinate negation unless and until it is consciously seized . . ." Yet, "the people," he himself explains, who were "previously the ferment of social change, have 'moved up' to become the ferment of social cohesion." They close their eyes to historical alternatives because the social affluence of the Welfare and Warfare State affords them to share "the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment." Yet, "underneath the conservative popular base" exists a "substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors"; "their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not." Their revolt may indeed mark the beginning of the end, but "nothing indicates that this will be a good end." Their contribution to history may be nothing less than "the second period of barbarism."

Thus, Marcuse faces no dialectic contradiction, but a paradox: the erstwhile victims profit substantially from the maintenance and expansion of the "repressive" system. They would be qualified, but they refuse, to "consciously seize" the historical situation and its transcending possibilities. The new "outcasts and outsiders," by contrast, are capable of "revolutionary" action but unable to understand historicistically what they are doing. The substratum of racial pauperism cannot and the stratum of modern labor will not rise to the historical occasion. History, it seems, has run out of history-making classes; and Marcuse is left with an unattached philosophy.

Possibly, this is the reason for his preoccupation with abstract categories (Reason, Consciousness, etc.) rather than with social ideas and theories of political action. He has retreated beyond Marx into the realm of Hegelian idealism. His categories are endowed with the power to think, to will, and to draw conclusions; but, contrary to Hegel's categories of the "objective spirit," which work themselves out in the historical process, Marcuse's concepts remain impotent in the sphere of historical realities: they neither move nor change the world. This is Marcuse's peculiar philosophical style: the hypostatization of abstract categories combined with the admission that they are neither able to move men politically in the Marxian sense nor to direct the social process spiritually in the Hegelian sense. Historicism, he states himself with astonishing candor, is at a dead-end: "On theoretical as well as empirical grounds, the dialectical concept pronounces its own hopelessness."

Radical historicism, obviously, has run its course. In the early decades of modern industrialism, Marx and Engels announced "humanity's leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom," a "world-emancipating act." Mannheim, reviving the historicistic expectation in the critical period before Hitler's triumph, spoke still chiliastically of "the necessity of being continuously prepared for a synthesis in a world which is attaining one of the high points of its existence." But Marcuse, representing historicism in the atomic age, appears simply as an exponent of Hegel's Unhappy Consciousness. His critical theory, he informs us, "possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and the future"; it is "holding no promise and showing no success." In spite of his utopian project, he concludes with a gesture of selfless devotion to a hopeless cause: critical theory "wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal."

This is how the world of historicism ends: not with a bang but a whimper.

HELMUT R. WAGNER

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

SILBERMAN, CHARLES E., *Crisis in Black and White*. New York: Random House, 1964. 370 pp. \$5.95.

Despite its highly selective account of Negro-American history, and despite its many unsubstantiated generalizations concerning the psychological problems of Negroes in the United States today, Charles Silberman's *Crisis in Black and White* contains a provocative diagnosis of "the Negro problem," a diagnosis which ought to stimulate some rethinking among professional social scientists who have persisted in following traditional formulations. As a pertinent example, take his view that there is no American dilemma, that "white Americans are not torn and tortured by . . . conflict between their devotion to the American creed and their actual behavior," that in fact the United States is a racist society "in a sense and to a degree that we have refused so far to admit, much less face." And take his challenge to the "acculturation" thesis posited by such scholars as Philip M. Hauser and Oscar Handlin, a thesis which claims that Negro migrants, or their children, will be able to enter the dominant society once they are taught the ways of the dominant culture, or as it is put more bluntly, once they are taught not to throw beer cans out of tenement windows. "There may well be some Negroes," says Silber-