

Main Currents of Marxism
ITS ORIGINS, GROWTH AND DISSOLUTION

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI

*

3. THE BREAKDOWN

Translated from the Polish by P. S. Falla

Oxford New York
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

speak with much greater force in favour of a connection between Hegelianism and totalitarian ideas. It would, of course, be absurd to say that Hegel's doctrine leads to the commendation of modern totalitarian states, but it would be less absurd than to say the same thing of positivism. A deduction of this kind could be made from Hegelianism by stripping it of many important features, but from positivism no such deduction could be made at all: all that can be done is to assert without proof, as Marcuse does, that positivism means fact-worship, therefore it is conservative, therefore totalitarian. It is true that the Hegelian tradition played no essential part as a philosophic basis of non-Communist totalitarianism (Marcuse says nothing of the Communist variety in this context); but, when he comes to the instance of Giovanni Gentile, Marcuse simply declares that although Gentile used Hegel's name he actually had nothing in common with him, but was close to being a positivist. Here we have a confusion of the 'question of right' and the 'question of fact', as Marcuse seeks to rebut the possible objection that Hegelianism was, as a matter of fact, used as a justification of Fascism. It is no answer to this objection to say that it was used improperly.

In short, the whole of Marcuse's critique of positivism, and most of his interpretation of Hegel and Marx, are a farrago of arbitrary statements, both logical and historical. These statements, moreover, are integrally bound up with his positive views on the global liberation of mankind and his ideas on happiness, freedom, and revolution

2. *Critique of contemporary civilization*

Being in possession of transcendental norms, or the normative concept of 'humanity' as opposed to empirical human destiny, Marcuse examines the question why and in what respects our present civilization fails to correspond with this model. The basic determinant of the authentic concept of mankind is 'happiness', a notion which includes freedom and which Marcuse claims to find in Marx—although Marx does not actually use it and it is not clear how it can be deduced from his writings. In addition to the empirical fact that human beings seek 'happiness', we must begin by acknowledging that happiness is their due. To discover why they fail to assert this claim,

Marcuse takes as his starting-point Freud's philosophy of civilization. He accepts this to a large extent as far as the interpretation of past history is concerned, but calls it in question as regards the future; Freud, in fact, observed that there is no law which says that human beings are entitled to happiness or certain to obtain it. Freud's theory of instinct and the three levels of the psyche—the id, the ego, and super-ego—explains the conflict between the 'pleasure principle' and the 'reality principle' which has governed the whole development of civilization. In *Eros and Civilization* and in three lectures analysing and criticizing Freud's theory of history, Marcuse considers whether and how far that conflict is necessary. His arguments may be summarized as follows.

According to Freud there is an eternal, inevitable clash between civilized values and the demands of human instincts. All civilization has developed as a result of society's efforts to repress the instinctive desires of individuals. Eros, or the life-instinct, was not originally limited to sexuality in the reproductive sense: sexuality was a universal characteristic of the human organism as a whole. But, in order to engage in productive work, which in itself gives no pleasure, the human race found it necessary to confine the range of sexual experience to the genital sphere and to restrict even this narrowly conceived sexuality to the minimum. The store of energy thus released was devoted not to pleasure but to the struggle with man's surroundings. In the same way the other basic determinant of life, Thanatos or the death-instinct, was transformed in such a way that its energy, directed outwards in the form of aggression, could be used to overcome physical nature and increase the efficiency of labour. As a result, however, civilization necessarily took on a repressive character, as instincts were harnessed to tasks that were not 'natural' to them. Repression and sublimation were conditions of the development of culture, but at the same time, according to Freud, repression gave rise to a vicious circle. As labour came to be regarded as good in itself and the 'pleasure principle' was wholly subordinated to increasing its efficiency, human beings had to fight down their instincts unremittingly for the sake of these values, and the sum total of repression increased with the advance of civilization. Repression was a self-propelling mechanism, and the instruments produced by civilization to

lessen the suffering arising from repression themselves became organs of repression in a still higher degree. In this way the advantages and freedoms procured by civilization are paid for by increasing the loss of freedom, especially by the growing volume of alienated labour—the only kind of labour that our civilization permits.

Marcuse takes note of this theory but modifies it in an essential respect, thus rebutting Freud's pessimistic predictions. Civilization, he says, has as a matter of fact developed by repressing instincts, but there is no law of biology or history which requires this to be so forever. The process of repression was 'rational' in the sense that, as long as basic commodities were scarce, men could only live and improve their condition by diverting their instinctual energies into 'unnatural' channels so as to further material production. But, once technology made it possible to satisfy human needs without repression, this became an irrational anachronism. Since unpleasant work can be reduced to a minimum and there is no threat of a scarcity of goods, civilization no longer requires us to thwart our instincts: we can allow them to revert to their proper function, which is a condition of human happiness. 'Free time can become the content of life and work can become the free play of human capacities. In this way the repressive structure of the instincts would be explosively transformed: the instinctual energies that would no longer be caught up in ungratifying work would become free and, as Eros, would strive to universalize libidinous relationships and develop a libidinous civilization' (*Five Lectures*, p. 22). Production will cease to be regarded as a value in itself; the vicious circle of increasing production and increasing repression will be broken; the pleasure principle and the intrinsic value of pleasure will come into their own, and alienated labour will cease to exist.

Marcuse makes it clear, however, that in speaking of 'libidinous civilization' and the return of instinctual energy to its proper functions he does not have in mind 'pansexualism' or the abolition of sublimation, whereby, according to Freud, men have found an illusory satisfaction of their frustrated desires in cultural creativity. The liberated energy will not manifest itself in a purely sexual form but will eroticize all human activities; these will all be pleasurable, and pleasure will be recognized as an end

in itself. 'Incentive to work are no longer necessary. For if work itself becomes the free play of human abilities, then no suffering is needed to compel men to work' (*ibid.*, p. 41). In general there will be no need for social control of the individual, whether through institutions or in an internalized manner—and these, according to Marcuse, are both features of totalitarianism. There will thus no longer be any 'collectivization' of the ego: life will be rational and the individual will once more be fully autonomous.

This 'Freudian' aspect of Marcuse's Utopia presents obscurities at all its vital points. Freud's theory was that the repression of instincts was necessary not only to liberate the energy needed for production but also to make possible the existence of any social life at all in the specifically human sense. Instincts are directed towards the satisfaction of purely individual desires; the death-instinct, according to Freud, can either work towards self-destruction or be transformed into external aggression; man ceases to be an enemy to himself, only in so far as he becomes an enemy to others. The only way to prevent the death-instinct becoming a permanent source of enmity between each human being and all his fellow humans is to force its energies into other channels. The libido is likewise asocial, as it treats other human beings only as possible objects of sexual satisfaction. In short, the instincts not only have no power, left to themselves, to create human society or form the basis of a community, but their natural effect is to make such a community impossible. Leaving aside the difficult question how, in that case, societies can ever have come into existence, the situation is, in Freud's view, that the society which does exist can only maintain itself by numerous taboos, commands, and prohibitions, which keep the instincts under control at the price of unavoidable suffering.

Marcuse does not address himself to this question. He seems to agree with Freud that the suppression of instincts has been necessary 'up to now', but holds that it has been an anachronism since the abolition of scarcity. But, while disputing Freud's theory of the eternal conflict between instincts and civilization, he accepts the view that instincts are essentially devoted to satisfying the individual's 'pleasure principle'. It is not clear, in view of this, how the 'libidinous civilization' can maintain

itself and what forces will keep human society in being. Does Marcuse hold, in opposition to Freud, that man is naturally good and inclined to live in harmony with others, and that aggression is an accidental aberration of history which will disappear along with alienated labour? He does not say so, and inasmuch as he accepts the Freudian concept and classification of instincts, he expressly suggests the contrary. Even if he were right in asserting that 'in principle' mankind has plenty of everything and that there is no essential problem about the satisfaction of material needs, it is still not at all clear what forces are to maintain the new civilization in which all instincts have been liberated and allowed to revert to their native channels. Marcuse seems to be unconcerned with these problems, as he is interested in society chiefly in so far as it constitutes a barrier to instinct, i.e. to individual satisfaction. He seems to believe that as all questions of material existence have been solved, moral commands and prohibitions are no longer relevant. Thus when Jerry Rubin, the American hippie ideologist, says in his book that machines will henceforth do all the work and leave people free to copulate whenever and wherever they like, he is expressing, albeit in a primitive and juvenile way, the true essence of Marcuse's Utopia. As to Marcuse's qualifications of the notion of eroticism, they are too vague to convey any tangible meaning. What could the eroticization of the whole man signify, except his complete absorption in sensual pleasures? The utopian slogan is void of content; nor can we see how Marcuse imagines that the Freudian sublimation would remain in force after all the factors that brought it about had ceased to operate. According to Freud sublimation, expressed in cultural creativity, is only an illusory, ersatz satisfaction of instinctual appetites that civilization does not permit us to gratify. This theory can be and has been criticized, but Marcuse does not attempt to do so. He seems to assume that cultural creativity has in the past been an ersatz as described by Freud, but that it will nevertheless go on in the future although there will be no need for such sublimation.

Marcuse's whole inversion of Freud's theory seems to have no intelligible purpose other than a return to pre-social existence. Marcuse, of course, does not spell out this conclusion, but it is not clear how he can avoid it without contradiction. His

critique on Marx at this point is extremely dubious. Marx thought that the perfect society of the future would be so constituted that each individual would treat his own powers and abilities as direct social forces, thus removing the conflict between individual aspirations and communal needs. But Marx, on the other hand, did not hold Freud's view as to the nature of instincts. One cannot without contradiction maintain that men are instinctively and inevitably enemies of one another, and yet that their instincts must be liberated so that they can live together in peace and harmony.

3. 'One-dimensional man'

Marcuse, however, also criticizes modern civilization, especially that of America, in terms that do not necessarily involve Freud's philosophy of history but revert to the theme of his Hegelian studies, i.e. the transcendental norms of rationality as they affect the problem of human liberation. *One-Dimensional Man* is a study of this kind.

The prevailing civilization, he argues, is one-dimensional in all its aspects: science, art, philosophy, everyday thinking, political systems, economics, and technology. The lost 'second dimension' is the negative and critical principle—the habit of contrasting the world as it is with the true world revealed by the normative concepts of philosophy, which enable us to understand the true nature of freedom, beauty, reason, the joy of living, and so on.

The philosophical conflict between dialectical and 'formal' thinking goes back to Plato and Aristotle: the former extolled the importance of normative concepts with which to compare the objects of experience, while the latter developed 'sterile' formal logic and thus 'separated truth from reality'. What we need now, according to Marcuse, is to return to the ontological concept of truth as being not merely a characteristic of propositions, but reality itself: not empirical, directly accessible reality, but of a higher order, that which we perceive in universals. The intuition of universals leads us into a world which, though non-empirical, exists in its own way and ought to exist. 'In the equation Reason = Truth = Reality . . . Reason is the subversive power, the "power of the negative" that establishes, as theoretical and practical Reason, the truth for

men and things—that is, the conditions in which men and things become what they really are' (*One-Dimensional Man*, p. 123). The truth of concepts is grasped by 'intuition', which is 'the result of methodic intellectual mediation' (p. 126). This truth is normative in character, and in it Logos and Eros coincide. This is beyond the scope of formal logic, which tells us nothing about the 'essence of things' and restricts the sense of the word 'is' to purely empirical statements. But when we make statements like 'virtue is knowledge' or 'man is free', 'if these propositions are to be true, then the copula "is" states an "ought", a desideratum. It judges conditions in which virtue is *not* knowledge', etc. (p. 133). Thus the word 'is' has a twofold meaning, an empirical and a normative, and this duality is the subject of all genuine philosophy. Or again, one may speak of 'essential' and 'apparent' truths: dialectic consists in maintaining the tension between what is essential, or what ought to be, and what appears (i.e. facts); accordingly, dialectic is a critique of actual conditions and a lever of social liberation. In formal logic this tension is banished and 'thought is indifferent towards its objects' (p. 136), and this is why true philosophy developed beyond it. Dialectic cannot in principle be formalized, as it is thought determined by reality itself. It is a critique of direct experience, which perceives things in their accidental shape and does not penetrate to the deeper reality.

The Aristotelian mode of thought, which confines knowledge to direct experience and to the formal rules of reasoning, is the basis of all modern science, which deliberately ignores the normative 'essence' of things and relegates the question of 'what ought to be' to the realm of subjective preference. This science and the technology based on it have created a world in which man's rule over nature goes hand in hand with enslavement to society. Science and technology of this kind have indeed raised living standards, but they have brought oppression and destruction in their wake.

Scientific-technical rationality and manipulation are welded together into new forms of social control. Can one rest content with the assumption that this unscientific outcome is the result of a specific societal *application* of science? I think that the general direction in which it came to be applied was inherent in pure science even where no practical purposes were intended . . . The quantification of nature,

which led to its explication in terms of mathematical structures, separated reality from all inherent ends and, consequently, separated the true from the good, science from ethics . . . The precarious ontological link between Logos and Eros is broken, and scientific rationality emerges as essentially neutral . . . Outside this rationality, one lives in a world of values, and values separated out from the objective reality becomes subjective. (*One-Dimensional Man*, pp. 146-7.)

Thus, Marcuse continues, the ideas of goodness, beauty, and justice are deprived of universal validity and relegated to the sphere of personal taste. Science tries to concern itself only with what is measurable and can be put to technical use; it no longer asks what things are, only how they work, and proclaims itself indifferent to the purpose they are used for. In the scientific world-picture things have lost all ontological consistency, and even matter has somehow disappeared. Socially, the function of science is basically conservative, as it affords no ground for social protest. 'Science, *by virtue of its own method* and concepts, has projected and promoted a universe in which the domination of nature has remained linked to the domination of man' (*ibid.*, p. 166). What is required is a new, qualitative, normative science which 'would arrive at essentially different concepts of nature and establish essentially different facts' (*ibid.*).

This deformed science, leading to the enslavement of man, finds its philosophical expression in positivism, and particularly analytical philosophy and operationalism. These doctrines reject all concepts that do not bear a 'functional' sense or make it possible to foresee and influence events. Yet such concepts are the most important of all, as they enable us to transcend the world as it is. Worse still, positivism preaches tolerance of all values and thus displays its own reactionary character, as it countenances no restrictions of any kind in regard to social practice and value-judgements.

Given the predominance of this functional attitude to thought, it follows that society must be composed of one-dimensional beings. It becomes a victim of false consciousness, and the fact that most people accept the system does not make it any more rational. A society of this kind (by which Marcuse means chiefly America) can absorb all forms of opposition without injury to itself, as it has emptied the opposition of its critical content. It is capable of satisfying a host of human needs,

but these needs are themselves bogus: they are foisted on individuals by interested exploiters, and they serve to perpetuate injustice, poverty, and aggression. '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' (p. 5). As to which needs are 'true' and which are false, no one can decide this except the individuals concerned, and that only when they are rescued from manipulation and external pressure. But the modern economic system is devised to multiply artificial needs in a condition of freedom which is itself an instrument of domination. 'The range of choice open 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' (p. 7).

In this world people and things are reduced, without exception, to a functional role, deprived of 'substance' and autonomy. Art is likewise involved in the universal degradation of conformism, not because it abandons cultural values but because it includes them in the existing order. Higher European culture was once basically feudal and non-technical, moving in spheres independent of commerce and industry. The civilization of the future must recover that independence by creating a second dimension of thoughts and feelings, upholding the spirit of negation, and restoring universal Eros to its throne. (At this point Marcuse for once gives a practical instance of what he means by 'libidinous civilization', pointing out that it is much more comfortable to make love in a meadow than in an automobile on a Manhattan street.) The new civilization must also be opposed to liberty as we know it, for 'inasmuch as the greater liberty involves a contraction rather than extension and development of instinctual needs, it works *for* rather than *against* the status quo of general repression' (p. 74).

4. *The revolution against freedom*

Is there a way out of the system which multiplies bogus needs and offers the means of satisfying them, and which binds the multitude under a spell of false consciousness? Yes, says Marcuse, there is. We must completely 'transcend' existing society and strive for a 'qualitative change'; we must destroy the very

'structure' of reality so that people can develop their needs in freedom; we must have a new technology (not simply a new application of the present one) and recapture the unity of art and science, science and ethics; we must set free our imaginations and harness science to the liberation of mankind.

But who is to do all this when a majority of the people, and especially of the working class, are absorbed by the system and are not interested in the 'global transcendence' of the existing order? The answer, according to *One-Dimensional Man*, is that 'underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable. They exist outside the democratic process . . . The fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period' (pp. 256-7).

It appears, then, that the lumpenproletariat of the racial minorities of the United States is the section of humanity ordained above all others to restore the unity of Eros and Logos, to create the new qualitative science and technology, and to free mankind from the tyranny of formal logic, positivism, and empiricism. However, Marcuse explains elsewhere that we can also count on other forces, namely students and the peoples of economically and technically backward countries. The alliance of these three groups is the chief hope for the liberation of humanity. Student movements of revolt are 'a decisive factor of transformation', though in themselves insufficient to bring it about (see 'The Problems of Violence and the Radical Opposition', in *Five Lectures*). Revolutionary forces must use violence, because they represent a higher justice and because the present system is itself one of institutionalized violence. It is absurd to talk of confining resistance within legal limits, for no system, not even the freest, can sanction the use of violence against itself. Violence is justified, however, when the aim is liberation. It is, moreover, an important and encouraging sign that the students' political revolt is combined with a movement towards sexual liberation.

Violence is inevitable because the present system afflicts the majority with a false consciousness from which only a few can liberate themselves. Capitalism has devised such means of assimilating all forms of culture and thought that it can disarm

its critics by turning their criticism into an element of the system; what is needed, therefore, is criticism by violence, which cannot be thus digested. Freedom of speech and assembly, tolerance, and democratic institutions, are all means of perpetuating the spiritual dominance of capitalist values. It follows that those endowed with a true and unmystified consciousness must strive for liberation from democratic freedoms and tolerance.

Marcuse has no hesitation in drawing this conclusion, which he expresses perhaps with most clarity in his essay on 'Repressive Tolerance' (in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* by Robert Paul Wolff and others, 1969). In the past, he argues, tolerance was a liberating ideal, but today it is an instrument of oppression, as it strengthens a society which, with the assent of the majority, builds nuclear arsenals, pursues imperialist policies, and so on. Tolerance of this kind is a tyranny of the majority against liberationist ideals; moreover, it tolerates doctrines and movements that ought not to be tolerated, as they are wrong and evil. Every particular fact and institution must be judged from the point of view of the 'whole' to which they belong, and since in this case the 'whole' is the capitalist system, which is inherently evil, freedom and tolerance within the system are likewise evil in themselves. Therefore a true, deeper tolerance must involve intolerance towards false ideas and movements. 'The tolerance which enlarged the range and content of freedom was always partisan—intolerant toward the protagonists of the repressive status quo' (p. 99). When it is a question of establishing a new society (which, as it belongs to the future, cannot be described or defined except as the contrary of the present one), indiscriminate tolerance cannot be permitted. True tolerance 'cannot protect false words and wrong deeds which demonstrate that they contradict and counteract the possibilities of liberation' (p. 102). 'Society cannot be indiscriminate where the pacification of existence, where freedom and happiness themselves are at stake: here, certain things cannot be said, certain ideas cannot be expressed, certain policies cannot be proposed, certain behaviour cannot be permitted without making tolerance an instrument for the continuation of servitude' (*ibid.*). Freedom of speech is good, not because there is no such thing as objective truth, but because such truth exists and can

be discovered; hence freedom of speech cannot be justified if it is shown to be perpetuating untruth. Such freedom assumes that all desirable changes can be effected through rational discussion within the 'system'; but in fact everything that can be achieved in this way serves to corroborate the system. 'A free society is indeed unrealistically and undefinably different from the existing ones. Under these circumstances, whatever improvement may occur "in the normal course of events" and without subversion is likely to be an improvement in the direction determined by the particular interests which control the whole' (p. 107). Freedom to express various opinions is bound to mean that the opinions expressed will reflect establishment interests, because of the establishment's power to form opinion. True, the mass media describe the atrocities of the modern world, but they do so in an impassive, impartial manner. 'If objectivity has anything to do with truth, and if truth is more than a matter of logic and science, then this kind of objectivity is false, and this kind of tolerance inhuman' (p. 112). To combat indoctrination and develop the forces of liberation 'may require apparently undemocratic means. They would include the withdrawal of toleration of speech and assembly from groups and movements which promote aggressive policies, armament, chauvinism, discrimination on the grounds of race and religion, or which oppose the extension of public services, social security, medical care, etc. Moreover, the restoration of freedom of thought may necessitate new and rigid restrictions on teachings and practices in the educational institutions' (p. 114), as those enclosed within these institutions have no real freedom of choice. If it is asked who is entitled to decide when intolerance and violence are justified, the answer depends on which cause is to be served thereby. 'Liberating tolerance . . . would mean intolerance against movements from the Right and toleration of movements from the Left' (pp. 122-3). This simple formula epitomizes the kind of 'tolerance' that Marcuse advocates. His object, he declares, is not to set up a dictatorship but to achieve 'true democracy' by combating the idea of tolerance, on the ground that the vast majority cannot form right judgements when their minds are deformed by democratic sources of information.

Marcuse did not write from a Communist standpoint but

rather from that of the 'New Left', which broadly shared his ideas. His attitude to existing forms of Communism was one of mixed criticism and approbation, expressed in highly vague and ambiguous terms. He uses the words 'totalitarian' and 'totalitarianism' in such a way that they would fit the U.S.S.R. as well as the U.S.A., but generally disparages the latter as compared with the former. He recognizes that one system is pluralistic and the other based on terror, but does not regard this as an essential distinction: "'totalitarian" here is redefined to mean not only terroristic but also pluralistic absorption of all effective opposition by the established society' (*Five Lectures*, p. 48). "'Totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political co-ordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests' (*One-Dimensional Man*, p. 3). 'In the realm of culture, the new totalitarianism manifests itself precisely in a harmonizing pluralism, where the most contradictory works and truths peacefully coexist in indifference' (*ibid.*, p. 61). '... is there today, in the orbit of advanced industrial civilization, a society which is not under an authoritarian regime?' (*ibid.*, p. 102).

Terror, in short, can either be exerted by terror or by democracy, pluralism, and tolerance. But when terror is exercised for the purpose of liberation there is a promise that it will come to an end, whereas terror in the form of freedom lasts forever. On the other hand, Marcuse repeatedly expresses the view that the Soviet and capitalist systems are growing more alike, as types of the same process of industrialization. In *Soviet Marxism* he sharply criticizes Marxist state doctrine and claims that the system based upon it is not a dictatorship of the proletariat but a method of speeding up industrialization by means of a dictatorship over the proletariat and peasantry, the Marxist ideology being skewed for this purpose. He realizes the primitive intellectual level of the Soviet version of Marxism and the fact that it serves purely pragmatic aims. On the one hand, he believes that Western capitalism and the Soviet system show marked signs of converging in the direction of increased centralization, bureaucracy, economic rationalization, regimented education and information services, the work ethos, production, etc. On the other hand, however, he sees more hope for the Soviet

system than for capitalism because, in the former, bureaucracy cannot become completely entrenched or perpetuate its interests: 'in the last resort' it must take second place to over-all technical, economic, and political aims which are incompatible with a system of government by repression. In a state based on class, rational technical and economic development conflicts with the interests of the exploiters. The same situation occurs in Soviet society, as the bureaucracy tries to exploit progress for its own ends, but there is a possibility of the conflict being resolved in the future, which is not the case with capitalism.

5. Commentary

While Marcuse's early works may be regarded as expressing a version of Marxism (based, it is true, on a false Young Hegelian interpretation of Hegel), his later writings, though they frequently invoke the Marxist tradition, have little in common with it. What he offers is Marxism without the proletariat (irrevocably corrupted by the welfare society), without history (as the vision of the future is not derived from a study of historical changes but from an intuition of true human nature), and without the cult of science; a Marxism, furthermore, in which the value of liberated society resides in pleasure and not in creative work. All this is a pale and distorted reflection of the original Marxist message. Marcuse, in fact, is a prophet of semi-romantic anarchism in its most irrational form. Marxism, it is true, contains a romantic strain—a yearning for the lost values of pre-industrial society, for unity between man and nature and direct communication among human beings, and also the belief that man's empirical life can and should be reconciled with this true essence. But Marxism is not itself if it is stripped of all other elements than these, including its theory of the class struggle and all its scientific and scientific aspects.

However, the main point about Marcuse's writing is not that he professes to be a Marxist despite clear evidence to the contrary, but that he seeks to provide a philosophical basis for a tendency already present in our civilization, which aims at destroying that civilization from within for the sake of an apocalypse of the New World of Happiness of which, in the nature of things, no description can be given. Worse still, the only feature of the

Main Currents of Marxism. Volume I: The Founders. Volume II: The Golden Age. Despite the importance of Marxism as the official ideology of the Soviet Union and its vast popularity among Western intellectuals, there has not until now been available for the lay reader a detailed, knowledgeable, clearly written, and easily accessible account of the doctrine and the ideas and contributions of its main adherents. Such a work now exists in the form of three massive volumes single-handedly written by Leszek Kolakowski, a Polish philosopher currently a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. Main Currents of Marxism remains the indispensable book in its field. Do you want to read the rest of this article? Request full-text. It would be too late for marxism, I believe, if it persists in seeking to "reconstruct" itself and to seek comfort in the current problems of capitalism while being blind to its own. View. Show abstract. 16 results for main currents of marxism: Save main currents of marxism: to get e-mail alerts and updates on your eBay Feed. Unfollow main currents of marxism: to stop getting updates on your eBay feed. You'll receive email and Feed alerts when new items arrive. Turn off email alerts.