



Propriety of the Erich Fromm Document Center. For personal use only. Citation or publication of material prohibited without express written permission of the copyright holder.

Eigentum des Erich Fromm Dokumentationszentrums. Nutzung nur für persönliche Zwecke. Veröffentlichungen – auch von Teilen – bedürfen der schriftlichen Erlaubnis des Rechteinhabers.

76-7282

DENBO, Sheryl J., 1946-
SYNTHESIS OF LIBERATION: MARX -
FREUD AND THE NEW LEFT, AN EXAMINATION
OF THE WORK OF WILHELM REICH, ERICH
FROMM AND HERBERT MARCUSE.

Rutgers University The State University
of New Jersey, Ph.D., 1975
Sociology, general

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

© 1975

SHERYL J. DENBO

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED.

Denbo, S. J., 1975a: Synthesis of Liberation: Marx – Freud and the New Left. An Examination of the Work of Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse, Rutgers University Dissertation, New Jersey 1975, 245 pp.



Propriety of the Erich Fromm Document Center. For personal use only. Citation or publication of material prohibited without express written permission of the copyright holder.

Eigentum des Erich Fromm Dokumentationszentrums. Nutzung nur für persönliche Zwecke. Veröffentlichungen – auch von Teilen – bedürfen der schriftlichen Erlaubnis des Rechteinhabers.

**SYNTHESIS OF LIBERATION:
MARX - FREUD AND THE NEW LEFT,
AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORK OF WILHELM REICH,
ERICH FROMM AND HERBERT MARCUSE**

By SHERYL J. DENBO

**A thesis submitted to
The Graduate School
of
Rutgers University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Written under the direction of
Professor Peter Berger
of the Department of Sociology**

and approved by

Peter Berger
Linda M. Altema
Abraham D. Noveck
Peter Denis Balthus

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October, 1975



Propriety of the Erich Fromm Document Center. For personal use only. Citation or publication of material prohibited without express written permission of the copyright holder.

Eigentum des Erich Fromm Dokumentationszentrums. Nutzung nur für persönliche Zwecke. Veröffentlichungen – auch von Teilen – bedürfen der schriftlichen Erlaubnis des Rechteinhabers.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Synthesis of Liberation:

Marx - Freud and the New Left,

An Examination of the Work of Wilhelm Reich,

Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse

by SHERYL J. DENBO

Thesis director: Professor Peter Berger

This study attempts a systematic examination of the synthesis between Marx and Freud in the works of Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, and Herbert Marcuse. The author basically accepts the Frankfurt School's interpretation of Marx, agreeing that there is within the early Marx an implicit social psychology and that the works of the late Marx are based on a foundation of philosophical, anthropological, and social psychological assumptions that are most explicitly stated in the works of Marx's early period. The author takes exception with the thesis that Marx's implicit social psychology is in basic agreement with and therefore can be conceptualized and expanded by Freudian theory.

In the first three chapters, Reich, Fromm and Marcuse are examined on the following analytical categories: (1) anthropological assumptions; (2) theoretical synthesis between Marx and Freud; (3) sociological theory, methods and implication for praxis; (4) departure from Freud; (5) departure from Marx. Chapter V is an analytical comparison of Reich, Fromm and Marcuse on the above categories. In the concluding chapter, using a sociology of knowledge perspective,



Propriety of the Erich Fromm Document Center. For personal use only. Citation or publication of material prohibited without express written permission of the copyright holder.

Eigentum des Erich Fromm Dokumentationszentrums. Nutzung nur für persönliche Zwecke. Veröffentlichungen – auch von Teilen – bedürfen der schriftlichen Erlaubnis des Rechteinhabers.

specifically guided by the belief that ideas do not succeed in history because of their truth, but rather, because of their relationship to specific social processes (Berger, 1967), the author attempts to explain what made this synthesis between Marx and Freud not only a plausible reality, but also a desired goal for a generation of young radicals that formed what has come to be known as the New Left.



PREFACE

This project was first motivated by my strongly ambivalent attraction to Herbert Marcuse's Eros and Civilization. Reared in an upwardly mobile middle-class Jewish family, attending what Kenniston (1968) has called a "protest prone" University, I came of age in the mid-1960's when interest in a Marx-Freud synthesis was perhaps at its height and when the New Left was an exciting new development on the American scene. Having what I can now call a typically New Left consciousness, I was fascinated by the brilliance of Marcuse's synthesis. At the time, I viewed my own political activities as therapeutic, although I would not have expressed it in quite that way. As my studies of Marx and Freud became more serious, I moved from my introduction to the Left through the works of Harrington, Whyte, Fromm and Mills into my own reading, first of Marx and then of Freud. When I returned to Marcuse, he had by now published his most popular book, One Dimensional Man. I was still fascinated, but now had a clearer consciousness of the sources of my ambivalence. On the one hand Marcuse's work articulated much of my own subjectively felt experience; on the other hand it was beginning to become clear that his work contained severe contradictions and misrepresentations.

Greatly influenced by the relatively new field of the sociology of knowledge, particularly as it was being redefined by Peter Berger, I began to want to understand the dynamics that made this



Marx-Freud synthesis attractive to myself and my cohorts. I decided to look more carefully and systematically at the synthesis between Marx and Freud that I knew intuitively was essentially related to the consciousness of the New Left. I chose Reich, and Fromm because they are with Marcuse the most popular and prolific exemplars of a Marx-Freud synthesis. In the case of Reich a Marx-Freud synthesis was at the very center of his prolific Marxist period, the period with which I will be dealing. In the case of Fromm and Marcuse, once they attempted the synthesis, the language of both Marx and Freud permeated all of their subsequent work.

Many young radicals were first introduced to Marx through Fromm's Marx's Concept of Man; and intellectually prepared for Marcuse's One Dimensional Man by his nine years earlier publication of The Sane Society. If it was Fromm who prepared many emerging new leftists for Marx and Marxism it was Reich who prepared them for Freud and feminism. One of the earliest and most original Marxist-feminists, Reich is the writer whose consciousness, more than Fromm's or Marcuse's remains with us in the 1970's.



Propriety of the Erich Fromm Document Center. For personal use only. Citation or publication of material prohibited without express written permission of the copyright holder.

Eigentum des Erich Fromm Dokumentationszentrums. Nutzung nur für persönliche Zwecke. Veröffentlichungen – auch von Teilen – bedürfen der schriftlichen Erlaubnis des Rechteinhabers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract 11

Preface, 1v

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I. WILHELM REICH. 21

Anthropological Assumptions. 21

Theoretical Synthesis, Marx and Freud. 25

Sociological Theory. 31

Departure from Freud 38

Departure from Marx. 46

CHAPTER II. ERICH FROMM 55

Anthropological Assumptions. 55

Theoretical Synthesis, Marx and Freud. 64

Sociological Theory. 72

Departures from Freud. 79

Departures from Marx 89

CHAPTER III. HERBERT MARCUSE. 104

Anthropological Assumptions. 104

Sociological Theory. 112

Theoretical Synthesis, Marx and Freud. 126

Departures from Freud. 135

Departures from Marx 151

CHAPTER IV. COMPARISONS 174

Introduction 174

The Nature of Man. 176

**The Nature of Society: Implications for Methodology
 and Political Praxis 179**

Theoretical Synthesis. 186

Departures from Freud. 192

Departures from Marx 196



Propriety of the Erich Fromm Document Center. For personal use only. Citation or publication of material prohibited without express written permission of the copyright holder.

Eigentum des Erich Fromm Dokumentationszentrums. Nutzung nur für persönliche Zwecke. Veröffentlichungen – auch von Teilen – bedürfen der schriftlichen Erlaubnis des Rechteinhabers.

CHAPTER V. THE NEW LEFT 199

Intellectual Roots of the Idea of Modernization. 199

The Rise of the Private Sphere 203

Factors Influencing the Rise of the New Left 210

The Ideology of the New Left 214

The Decline of the New Left. 228



INTRODUCTION

If we look briefly at the historical, biographical and intellectual influence surrounding Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse we find: (1) an extraordinary amount of similarity between their historical, biographical and intellectual influences; (2) a strong similarity between the issues that concerned them and the issues that were to become important to a generation of radicals from an extraordinarily different setting. Reich, Fromm and Marcuse were each born into German culture around the turn of the century. Hence, they were witness to the same world historical events. As young adults they experienced the nationalism and defeat of World War One; the success of the Russian Revolution; the fall of the German Reich and the establishment of the Weimar Republic; growing German industrialization, monopolization and trade unionism; the great depression; and, the rise of Nazism.

Historical Setting

As many historians have indicated, World War One was an occasion for an impressive manifestation of German solidarity. Socialist and monarchist alike rallied with enthusiasm to the nationalist cause. Again, in 1918 four years later, there was a great surge of optimism with the armistice, for with defeat, the end of the war had brought down the German Kaiser. The new German republic seemed to be bringing in a new era, a fresh start. In November 1919 the revolt of the German workers and soldiers forced the abdication



of the Kaiser and the signing of a long awaited peace. The Majority Socialists or Social Democrats, as they were also called, declared a democratic socialist republic, forming a coalition government with several other more conservative parties. Only weeks after the establishment of the republic, the left wing of the Social Democratic Party, calling themselves the Spartican League, attempted an uprising aimed at moving the government further to the left. The social democrats suppressed the uprising and killed its leaders: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Rosa Luxemburg, a dedicated revolutionary who stressed democracy, organizational flexibility and mass revolution from below, had been an outspoken critic of her own Social Democratic Party because of its increasingly conservative policies and because of its compromises with the right. She was also friendly towards, but critical of, the newly established Russian Bolshevism.

. . . Where Lenin stressed Ultra-centralism, Luxemburg stressed democracy and organizational flexibility. Where Lenin emphasized the dominant role of the professional revolutionist, Luxemburg countered with emphasis on the mass movement and its elemental upsurge Why? Because these various forces played clearly different roles in Russia and in Germany. The "professional revolutionists" whom Luxemburg encountered in Germany were not, as in Russia, the radical instrument for gathering together loose and scattered local organizations, uniting them into one national party Quite the contrary. In Germany, "the professionals" were the careerists, the conservative trade union bureaucrats, the lords of the ossifying party machine, the reformist parliamentarianians, the whole crew who finally succeeded in disemboweling the movement (Shauchlman, 1938:143).

After the killing of Luxemburg and Liebknecht many left the social Democratic Party to join the Communist Party of Germany which soon became known for its domination by Moscow and its sacrifice of the interests of the German workers to party needs.



When the Weimar Republic finally crumbled in 1933, the Social Democrats and the Communists could look back on fourteen years of disunity, "unmitigated by a single instance of genuine interparty cooperation" (Deak, 1968:137). With the Communists yielding to the authority of Russia and to a rather mechanical Marxism, and with the Socialists bending so far to accommodate the right as to more often than not make them undistinguishable from it, many left wing intellectuals in Germany found themselves without a party. The Communists and Socialists found themselves unable or unwilling to launch a united front against the growing German Fascism. Fascism was being tremendously aided by the massive unemployment brought by the great depression. While the Social Democrats were being pulled to the right by the industrialists, the Communists launched their most bitter attack against them and not against the Fascists. Those hit hardest by the depression, the working and middle classes, were growing uneasy with the impotency of parliamentary politics while those who managed industry were afraid that the economic crises would move workers to the left.

The hope that many left wing intellectuals had placed in the German Republic was completely dispelled. There was deep, widespread discontent with politics in the Republic. "We young students did not read the newspapers in those years," Hannah Arendt recalled. "George Grosz's cartoons seemed to us not satires but realistic reportage: we knew those types; they were all around us. Should we mount the barricades for that?" (Gay, 1968:70). Disappointed in the faded possibilities of socialism at home, disturbed by the growing German Fascism, they were also increasingly wary of Lenin's



emphasis on party discipline and centralism. In 1924 Lenin died. In 1929 Trotsky was expelled from Russia. No revolution had succeeded in Western Europe. By the later twenties and early thirties Stalin and Stalinism with it's 'revolution in one country' had won out in the Soviet Union. Many left wing German intellectuals had assumed that man was good and that given the opportunity he would spontaneously create a peaceful socialist society. They were now faced with a quite different reality.

It has been claimed that one of the outcomes of the end of the War and the declaration of peace was a wide spread movement in Germany for sexual freedom. One male author went so far as to suggest that the sole achievement of the War and the revolution was the emancipation of German women and with it a drastic change in sexual mores (Ossietsky, 1928:478-80). As proof of this, it has been pointed out that in post-war Germany there was: a boom in erotic literature (pornography) and in the display of female nudity in cabarets and theaters as well as a somewhat relaxed attitude toward prostitutes and homosexuals. Those sexual activities that were geared toward the pleasure and entertainment of the bourgeois male were now permitted, while, abortion remained illegal even in the case of rape and incest. There is, nonetheless, evidence that in the Germany of the 1920's there was a change in public attitudes, a "readiness to try to understand ideas that earlier had been considered incomprehensible, perverse, or depressing . . ." (Hughes, 1959:381).

There was in the Germany in this period, a visible retreat into the private sphere. In response to the inefficiency of the Weimar Republic, many German intellectuals, it has been claimed,



made, in effect, an informal agreement with the State: they would abstain from criticism, even from politics in general, if the State would in turn allow them the freedom to lead somewhat irregular private lives and hold rather unorthodox philosophical opinions (Gay, 1968:72). Further, although Tonnies' classic Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft was first published in 1887 it made its fortune in Weimar German (Gay, 1968:80). It was in particular, German youths, the young German intelligentsia who were responding not only to the impotency of the German Republic, but to the fragmentation and apparent meaninglessness that had come with modernization. There was, what one author has described as a "hunger for wholeness" (Gay, 1968:96). It brought with it a "peculiarly undoctrinaire, unanalytical, in fact, unpolitical socialism" (Gay, 1968:79); that defined the enemy as: "the dehumanizing machine, capitalist materialism, godless rationalism, rootless society, cosmopolitan Jews, and that all-devouring monster, the city" (Gay, 1968:96). One response to the problems of modernity that these German youths were feeling so intensely was an increased emphasis on and concern about the individual. German youths of this period were attracted to Heidegger (Gay, 1968) who declared reason and intelligence inadequate guides for existence, and to Herman Hesse's Demian (Hughes, 1958) that traced the development of a character who was in search of himself. In short, German youths began to examine more intensely questions of authenticity and identity.



Biographical Notes

Wilhelm Reich

Wilhelm Reich was born on March 24, 1897, in Galicia, (then the eastern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, today an area that is divided between the Soviet Union and Poland) into a family of Jewish origin, members of the landed gentry. Not only did Judaism play no part in his upbringing, but Reich, whose family spoke German and placed a pronounced stress on German culture, was not allowed to play with either the children of the nearby Ukrainian peasants or with the Yiddish-speaking children of the few Jewish families in the area (Ilse Ollendorff Reich, 1969:22-3). Until the age of fourteen he was educated at home by private tutors in preparation for his entrance into the German Gymnasium. Shortly before he entered the Gymnasium, his mother, with whom he had been very close, died by suicide. Ilse Ollendorff, Reich's third wife claims that "there is little doubt that Reich played a role in his mother's death by revealing her love affair with one of the tutors to his father" (1969:25). The father, devastated by his wife's death, died shortly after. Although Reich was rarely known to mention his family, he often spoke nostalgically of the physical surroundings of his childhood. As an adolescent he maintained a plant and insect collection. His later antipathy to mechanistic industrial society has been traced to this early closeness to nature (Robinson, 1969:12). With the death of both of his parents and the military takeover of his family estate, Reich, a homeless war veteran, went at the close of World War One to Vienna where he became at twenty-one, a relatively impoverished student of medicine.



Attracted to Freud's theories of sexuality, Reich decided almost immediately to take up psychoanalysis and within two years of arriving in Vienna he became a member of the Vienna psychoanalytical society and a practicing psychoanalyst (Rycroft, 1969:3). Reich had not only his patients referred to him by Freud but had also published four papers on psychoanalysis within the first three years of his contact with the discipline. In 1922 he obtained his medical degree and became first an assistant director and later, in 1928, the director of the first free psychoanalytic clinic in Vienna.

Interested from the first in how poverty contributed to neurosis, Reich came to believe that psychological problems were at root social problems. His interest in politics began to grow. Describing the Vienna that Reich experienced in the 1920's Rycroft tells us:

The former metropolis of a large polyglot empire had suddenly become the capital of a small and impoverished republic. The glory and the tinsel had departed with the Hapsburgs; the hierarchial, largely Catholic and feudal structure of society had collapsed, leaving a void waiting to be filled (1969:4).

Traditional society had passed. Modern society was emerging and with it came the problems and the hopes of the working class which had been foreshadowed by the theories of Karl Marx. Interested in the social problems he saw surrounding him, and dedicated to solving them, Reich began to read the social and anthropological studies of Kautsky, Engles and, of course, Marx. The events in and around Vienna in 1927 lead Reich to join the Austrian Social Democratic Party, with which he quickly became disillusioned. He turned to the Communist Party, joining an associate organization called Workers Help.



Reich grew increasingly more radical. Both his theory and his praxis reflected his growing awareness of the essential connection between the sexual and social revolution. His writing during this extremely prolific Marxist period (roughly from 1927 to 1936) include: "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis," an essay written in 1929, in which Reich explicitly argues for a Marx-Freud synthesis (Reich, 1972). Sexual Maturity, Abstinence, and Conjugal Morality, 1930, a critique of bourgeois sexual morality; The Imposition of Sexual Morality, 1932, a study of the anthropological origins of sexual repression; The Sexual Struggle of Youth, 1932, an examination of the sexual problems of young people and their connections with a need for a socialist revolution; The Mass Psychology of Fascism, 1933, an investigation of the personality structure that leads to the success of fascism. "What is Class Consciousness" 1934, a re-examination of class consciousness; and finally, The Sexual Revolution, 1936, combining a revised edition of Sexual Maturity, Abstinence, and Conjugal Morality with a history of the sexual reforms and subsequent reactions in the Soviet Union.

To implement his theories, Reich established in 1929 six socialist centers for sexual counseling aimed at helping working class people ease their emotional problems while recognizing their social roots. Although Reich had himself moved considerably to the left, he was increasingly critical of the inadequacy of the left in dealing with both the day-to-day problems of the workers and with the mounting terrorism of the reactionaries in Austria. In 1930, Reich left Vienna for Berlin where he felt the atmosphere was more conducive



for his work. Some psychoanalysts in Berlin were open to Reich's theory of the liberating significance of complete orgasm. Many, including among them Erich Fromm, had outspoken Marxist leanings. Reich found in Berlin the company of a group of young Marxist psychoanalysts, strongly interested in revolutionary social change. Reich joined the German Communist Party and established under their sponsorship sexual political organizations that came to be known as Sex-Pol. He lectured on sexual questions to working class and student audiences and membership grew considerably.

Reich continued, however, to criticize the Communist Party for being out-of-touch and predicted that many Communists would turn to Fascism. Marxists, he claimed, had a tendency toward vulgar economic determinism and did not understand the connection between personality (what he called character-structure) and socio-economic forces. Reich was particularly distressed with the inadequacy with which the Communist Party was dealing with growing German Fascism. Reich's concern led to the publication of The Mass Psychology of Fascism in which he tried to combine a Marxist concept of ideology with the insight into character that he found in psychoanalysis. Around the time of the publication of The Mass Psychology of Fascism the Communist Party decided that Reich's stress on sexual and political revolution was a political liability and his books were no longer to be distributed. In February, 1933, he was expelled from the Party.

While the Communists were finding Reich's stress on sexuality un-Marxist or perhaps just embarrassing, his psychoanalytic colleagues were finding his Communist politics equally un-Freudian



and embarrassing. Reich had become increasingly outspoken about Freud's neglect of the immense political implications of the social influences on personality. Further, since the psychoanalytic society had hoped to "ride the tide of Fascism by claiming to be a pure science" (Rycoft, 1969:7), Reich's political activities were more than a little embarrassing. In 1933 Reich was forced to leave Berlin because of the growing Fascist repression. He went to Copenhagen where he was refused a post as teacher of psychoanalysis because Freud had denied his support. The Danish Communist Party expelled him before he even applied for admission; and, shortly after that, he was officially excluded from an International Psychoanalytic Associate Conference in Lucern. He spent the next three years in isolation in Oslo, Norway.

Reich considered himself to be too radical for even the world of Freud and Marx. Psychoanalysis had failed to fulfill its early promise while Marxism had been betrayed by its very own Stalin. "As a protagonist of health against sickness, Reich fancied himself foredoomed to persecution by the sick" (Rieff, 1966:182). His interest in politics gradually diminished. Perhaps looking for something more concrete and dependable Reich ventured out of the world of psychology and sociology; leaving psychoanalysis and Marxism he entered into the world of natural science. His aim was to discover the visible-material nature of the libido. In 1939 he came to the United States where he established the science of orgonomy; the study and harnessing of the energy of life. Reich died in 1957 while in jail for failure to respond to a court injunction against the sale and distribution of his orgone boxes.



Erich Fromm

Descending from a long line of Rabbies, Erich Fromm was born in Frankfurt-Am-Main, Germany on March 23, 1900 into an orthodox, middle-class family. We are most fortunate in the case of Fromm, for he has taken the time to give us what he calls an "intellectual biography" (Fromm, 1962:3-12); that is, he has himself traced the origins of his primary intellectual interest in Freud and Marx. He tells us that, "having been an only child, with an anxious and moody father and a depression-prone mother was enough to arouse my interest in the strange and mysterious reasons for human reaction" (Fromm, 1962:3-4). Strongly influenced by his deep religious roots, Fromm remained a practicing Jew and studied the old testament until well into his twenties. Fromm recalls that his childhood was greatly influenced by these studies. He traced his interest in Marx to his early study of the Bible, where he learned of the:

promise of the "end of days" when nations . . .
"shall not lift swords against nation" . . . when
all nations shall be friends . . . (Fromm, 1962:5).

Fromm's evaluation of the impact of Judaism on Sigmund Freud came, it seems, from his own Jewish experience. He had said of Freud:

Freud's Jewish background . . . added to his embrace of the enlightenment spirit. The Jewish tradition itself was one of the reasons . . . a somewhat despised minority had a strong emotional interest to defeat the powers of darkness, of irrationality, of superstition, which blocked the road to its own emancipation and progress (1969:3).

Of his own childhood Fromm explains:



The vision of universal peace and harmony between all nations touched me deeply when I was twelve and thirteen years old. Probably the immediate reason for the absorption by the idea of peace and internationalism is to be found in the situation in which I found myself; a Jewish boy in a Christian environment, experiencing small episodes of anti-semitism, but more importantly a feeling of strangeness and of clannishness on both sides (Fromm, 1962:5).

Frankfort was, during Fromm's childhood, a leading business and industrial center of Europe; and, Fromm's father was an independent businessman. It has been recorded that Fromm was acutely aware of being caught between two worlds: the pre-modern world of family and Jewish tradition and the modern world of business and commerce. He felt at once a stranger and a participant in this new capitalist society. He experienced his existence as dichotomized and emotionally polarized, and he believed that it was this that provided the impetus for his desire to create a new synthesis (Hausdorff, 1972:12). Thus, it seems that to Fromm Marx represented the old, the tradition that he wanted to save while Freud was useful in exploring the new, modern nature of man. In spite of the fact that Fromm's life work and professional training centered around psychoanalysis, Marx remained for him, the more important of the two figures (Fromm, 1962: 12).

Fromm tells us that at age twelve he was strongly influenced by the suicide of a beautiful young woman following the death of her father, an old and unattractive man. She left behind only her wish to be buried with him. Fromm, who was himself very attracted to the woman, was struck by the question of how it was possible that a lovely young woman should be so in love with her father as to prefer his company in death, to life (Fromm, 1962:4). This early experience prepared the way for his later interest in psychoanalysis.



Fromm was fourteen when World War One began. He called it, "the event that determined more than anything else, my development" (Fromm, 1962:6). He was greatly affected by the fact that both sides claimed to be fighting for peace and freedom and that millions, believing national propaganda, were allowing themselves to be killed for the sake of national territory. The experience of World War One heightened Fromm's concern for peace and his belief in internationalism and developed in him, "the wish to understand the irrationality of human mass behavior" (Fromm, 1962:9).

Fromm attended the University of Heidelberg where he studied psychology, philosophy and sociology and obtained his Ph.D. at the age of twenty-two with a thesis on socio-psychological structures in three Jewish sects. He obtained training in psychoanalysis at the University of Munich and completed his formal education in 1931 at the Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute. In Berlin he was a member of the same informal group of Marxist-psychoanalysts that Reich belonged to. Unlike most of the others, he was neither a member of the Communist Party nor a graduate of a medical school. He was, in fact, never to take an active role in politics; and although loosely affiliated with the left, he did not join a party until much later.* During the next three years Fromm was affiliated with the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, established with his first wife, Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, the Frankfurt Psychoanalytical Institute; and taught at the Institute for Social Research, the home of what was to become known as the

*in 1962 he recorded that he had recently joined the American Socialist Party (Fromm, 1962:10).



Frankfort School. Primarily devoting himself to a clinical practice, Fromm managed to also write several interesting articles, including an attempted synthesis between Marx and Freud; a psychoanalytic analysis of authority; and a study of the feeling of impotency in modern society. Originally an orthodox Freudian, Fromm gradually modified his views because of disagreements with what he perceived as Freud's neglect of social and economic factors and overemphasis on unconscious, biological drives.

In 1934 Fromm left his Nazi dominated homeland for the United States where he established a private clinical practice, became affiliated with the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, and served on the faculty of several prominent colleges. Fromm has proved to be an extraordinarily prolific writer. We will here briefly mention only a few of the many books he has written. In perhaps his most widely read book, Escape From Freedom (1941), written shortly after his departure from Nazi Germany, Fromm examines the tendency of modern, emancipated, atomized man to take refuge in totalitarian movements such as Nazism. Some of the questions raised in Escape From Freedom are more fully examined in Man For Himself: An Inquiry Into The Psychology of Ethics (1947). Fromm here presents his first full discussion of the human situation and makes his first complete argument for the existence of a human nature rooted in man's existential condition. In The Sane Society (1955) Fromm discusses the alienation of man in a consumer oriented industrial society. He argues here that man has been estranged from his own true nature and is a prisoner of the material world he has created. To restore sanity to human



existence we need what Fromm has called a "Humanistic Communitarian Socialism." In Marx's Concept of Man (1961) Fromm contends that Karl Marx was essentially a humanist in the best tradition of the worlds great religions and philosophers. In Beyond The Chains of Illusion, My Encounter With Marx and Freud (1962) he again attempts a synthesis of the works of Marx and Freud. Fromm is currently associated with the Mexican Psychoanalytic Institute which he founded, and periodically teaches as a visiting scholar on one American campus or another. His latest book The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, published in 1975, is to be the first volume of a comprehensive work on psychoanalytic theory.

Herbert Marcuse

Perhaps the best known of our three figures, Herbert Marcuse is the only one who has been notably politically active in this country. Surprisingly, there has been very little written about his life. Herbert Marcuse was born on July 19, 1878, into a prominent and assimilated upper middle class Jewish family in Berlin. He was educated at the August Gymnasium in Berlin, at the University of Berlin and at the University of Freiburg, where he studied with Heidegger. He received a Ph.D. from Freiburg with a dissertation on Hegel's ontology and its relationship to his philosophy of history. After completing military service in World War One he was briefly involved in politics in the Soldiers Commune in Berlin. A member of the Social Democratic Party from 1917 until 1919, he quit after the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, in protest against the betrayal of the proletariat. During the following decade he did



post-graduate work in philosophy at the University of Freiburg studying with Husserl and Heidegger. Political differences separated him from Heidegger and left his prospects for a job at Freiburg dim. Marcuse with the help of a recommendation from Husserl, was offered a position with the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (later to become known as the home of the Frankfurt School) in 1933. With the Nazi assumption of power, Marcuse followed the institute first to Switzerland and then to the United States. From 1934-41 he was closely associated, together with Horkheimer, Adorno and Fromm, with this Marxist oriented research institute that had emigrated from Frankfurt to Columbia.

During World War Two Marcuse served with Franz Neumann as a European intelligence analyst with the Office of Strategic Services, a United States espionage agency. After the War when the agency's central concern shifted from Fascist Germany to Stalin's Russia, Marcuse remained for four years supervising research studies and intelligence for the State Department. In 1951 he became a research fellow with the Russian Institute at Columbia and the following year he lectured in the Russian Research Center at Harvard. In 1954, Marcuse joined the faculty of Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, where he taught politics and philosophy for eleven years. Upon reaching the mandatory age of retirement at Brandeis, he moved in 1965 to the University of California at San Diego.

In his first English book Reason and Revolution (1941) Marcuse attempted to exonerate Hegel of intellectual culpability for the rise of Nazism. As he was to later do with Freud, Marcuse attempted to reverse Hegel's conservative image. It was here that he fully developed the critical theory that was associated with the



entire Frankfurt School of Marxism. Marcuse developed perhaps the fullest radical critique of positivism and reworked the problem of the relationship between theory and praxis. In Soviet Marxism (1961), Marcuse is again concerned with the relationship between theory and praxis. This time he explores the contrast between Marxism as expounded by its founders on the one hand, and the theory and practice of Soviet Marxism on the other. In Eros and Civilization (1955), Marcuse attempts an extensive integration of Freud and Marx; and in One Dimensional Man (1964), using the language of both Freud and Marx, he develops a biting critique of post-industrial society.

Marcuse is the only one of our figures who is clearly associated with the New Left. Along with C. Wright Mills, he is the intellectual most often referred to in the literature of the New Left. Associated with radical student activities both here and abroad, he has most recently gained notoriety for his professional relationship to Angela Davis.

Comparisons and Conclusions

The parallel between the life experience, the socio-economic environment and the intellectual and political concerns of our three figures is great. Reich, Fromm and Marcuse were each in their own way marginal men. They faced a society that had moved in their life time from a traditional monarchy to an industrialized republic. Never having to share the misery of the working class these bourgeois intellectuals, perhaps because of their social marginality and their experience of historical transition, identified with the working class.



They felt themselves to be Marxists and spent a good part of their time concerned with conditions necessary to bring about social change. They were also basically libertines concerned not only with the establishment of community but also with the possibilities for human freedom. They could never be party bureaucrats and remained critical of the authoritarianism of both the left and the right.

Finding themselves in the midst of social unrest, facing the consequences of a failed war and a faltering republic, they became concerned with the dynamics of human motivation. It is not at all surprising in the face of the inadequacy of both the Communist and Socialist Parties, and the rise of working class Fascism that their belief in an unconscious, in irrational motives, in the repressiveness of society, even in the somewhat basic evilness of man should be reinforced or in the case of Marcuse (who came to his Freudianism considerably later than Reich and Fromm), established. Although they remained Marxists, it was becoming increasingly clear to them that Marxism in both theory and practice was failing to answer overwhelming important questions. Marxism simply was not explaining the continued existence of an unjust social order. Why was it that the oppressed classes repeatedly failed to make a revolution? Why was the socialist revolution in Russia moving toward Stalinism? Most importantly why was the working class moving toward Fascism and not Communism? In their own minds Freud was to remain the lesser of the two figures, but perhaps he could be used to "round out" Marx.

What is for us perhaps even more interesting than the parallels between our figures is the strong parallels between the



issues that concerned them and the issues that were of concern to a generation of young radicals from a completely different environment, post World War Two America. The American New Left, always more articulate about what they rejected than what they wished to establish, was anti-elitist, anti-bureaucratic, anti-authoritarian, anti-communist (at least as it was practiced in the Soviet Union) and anti-capitalist. Rejecting the sterility of their "irrelevant" education that was meaninglessly divided into disciplines, they were primarily interested in freedom, expressivity, authenticity and community. Reich, Fromm and Marcuse distrusted party politics and were strongly anti-authoritarian and anti-totalitarian. All three were strongly critical of both German Fascism and Soviet Communism. Like the New Left they rejected Lenin's concept of a vanguard party and a centralized revolution from above as elitist, unnecessarily bureaucratic and undemocratic. Like the New Left they were each in their own different ways, concerned with the relationship between theory and praxis. All three were critical of the sterility of positivism and of the idea of value-free research unrelated to political action; and they were each, by example, interdisciplinary. Again, like the New Left, they were often reacting against modernity; more often than not, failing to distinguish the horrors of industrialization from the horror of capitalism. While claiming to be anti-capitalist they were more often concerned with mass society than class society; more interested in an analysis of the cultural superstructure than the economic substructure. Finally, and again like the New Left, they were interested in the establishment of community while simultaneously maintaining a perspective that was



highly sensitive to individual freedom and psychological dynamics;
they were interested in combining the promise of Marx with the
promise of Freud.

Let us now turn to an examination of the ways in which
Reich, Fromm and Marcuse attempted to combine the promise of Marx
with the promise of Freud. We will examine the extent to which their
respective synthesis were successful; and the reasons why these
syntheses of liberation were to appeal to the student radical of the
New Left.



CHAPTER I

WILHELM REICH

Anthropological Assumptions

Reich, like Marx, was interested in man's true nature, man, unalienated from himself. Like Freud, he saw that true nature in man's biological constitution. The original biological nature of man is altered in the social process of action and interacted with other men; and what Reich called character structure is formed. For the most part man's character structure is a social "arming" of self, necessitated by enforced sexual repression. Put more simply, the conflict between the natural sexual needs of man and "mechanistic", "capitalistic" society results in a predominantly neurotic character structure for the vast majority of people. Much of what passes for individual differences between men is rather this neurotic character structure built to protect the individual from the painful conflict between biological needs and social requirements.

In the process of repression impulses are transferred and the result is a rigid and overcomplicated character structure. Neurotic character is the result of the imprisonment of impulses. People become confined within their character structure. They become stiff and immobile and develop elaborate patterns of behavior that are forms of compensation. "What makes people individually different is, as things are today, essentially their individual neurotic superstructures" (Reich, 1969:5).



Reich tells us that Freud's monumental finding of the anti-social unconscious was correct. However, this anti-social unconscious does not represent the basic nature of man. Man is not basically anti-social. There is no natural aggression or death instinct in man. The anti-social nature of the unconscious — aggression, perversion and neurosis — are all the result of a lack of instinctual gratification; that is, they are the result of sexual repression. These are substitutes for genital gratification and arise only if genital gratification is disturbed. What Freud called man's biological nature was not biological at all but socially created. "Repression masquerading as the very instinct they are repressing" (Rieff, 1966: 141-188). Thus according to Reich, what Freud calls the unconscious is socially determined. It is society's moral regulations that strive to enforce sexual repression and thus create an anti-social unconscious. The "daming up" of instinctual needs lead to what Reich called sexual stasis. The healthy individual, a rare if not extinct phenomena in capitalist society, simply follows the pleasure principle and sexual gratification is equal to sexual need. In Character Analysis Reich discusses the healthy individual or as he calls it the individual with a genital character structure. In discussion of the genital character, Reich uses classical Freudian categories, for example, the genital character has resolved the oedipus complex. The genital character, admittedly an ideal type, does not have a sexually repressive super-ego, it has the capacity for independent thought and action, and the ability to become completely absorbed in sex and work. Because of the adequate releasing



of sexual tension, successful sublimation in work is possible.* "Not until man acknowledges that he is fundamentally an animal," Reich tells us, "will he be able to create a genital culture" (Reich, 1972:168-193).

Classical Freudian therapists must deal with the apparent contradiction that on the one hand the child must suppress instinct in order to become capable of cultural adjustment, and on the other hand the process often leads to neurosis, that in turn leads to an incapacity to be culturally productive. Theoretically, the therapist tries to make the patient aware of the conflict between unconscious desires and social norms, between the id and the super-ego, so that the patient himself can be more capable of resolving conflict. Undoubtedly there is some validity to Reich's claim that the Freudian therapist tended, consciously or unconsciously, to guide their patient toward adaption to social norms.** To Reich, adaptation to the norms of contemporary society meant further sexual repression and neurosis. Reich wanted to end all sexual repression. Reich came to believe that this could not be done on an individual level, that one must be socialized in a sexually non-repressive environment. Here Marx became an important addition to Reich's psychoanalysis; for Reich, like Marx, believed that under favorable social conditions man could realize his true nature. Marx provided the Freudian Reich with a more developed sociology, with a socio-economic theory, and

* Reich is aware that he is using sublimation differently from Freud who tied sublimation to repression (Reich, 1972:186-7).

** One need only examine contemporary ego psychology to see how accurate Reich was.



with a political praxis. What Freudian theory lacked in revolutionary politics, Marxian theory lacked in social-psychology. Thus, according to Reich, they rounded each other out.

Why does society suppress sexuality? To answer this question Reich went back to an examination of primitive society. Here he not only rejected Freud's story of the primal horde as presented in Totem & Taboo; he thoroughly criticized the theory, outlining Freud's assumptions. Reich claimed that Freud's theory of the primal horde implies the following unsupported assumptions: 1) a powerful adult male at the head of the family; 2) an original incest taboo; 3) the natural and violent jealousies of man; 4) biological ambiguity of emotions. Relying on the writings of Johan Bachofen, Lewis Morgan, Fredrich Engels and Bronislow Malinowski, Reich presents evidence that the neuroticism of Western Europe was absent in pre-capitalist societies and that its absence was associated with a non-repressive and affirmative approach to childhood and adolescent sexuality. From Malinowski's The Sexual Life of the Savage, Reich developed a complete ethnographic theory in which he accounted for the development of the patriarchal form of society from the original matriarchy. In the transfer from matriarchy to patriarchy, sexual repression was instituted in the interest of economic gain. Reich used as an illustrative example the case of the Trobriand Islanders' custom of the marriage gift. Because of their intricate kinship system there resulted an economic gain in the event of a cross-cousin marriage. This led to an effort to introduce early sexual repression among appropriate cousins to insure their eventual marriage. When



economic interests came in conflict with sexual interest, it was the economic interests that won. "Thus," Reich explains, "the advance of technology was paralleled by a decline in sexual culture" (Reich, 1972:227). Sexual repression was economically motivated and ideologically maintained.

Theoretical Synthesis: Marx - Freud

In a brilliant essay entitled "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis" (Reich, 1972), Reich argues, to an audience of communists, for the logical possibility and theoretical and political necessity of a synthesis between Marx and Freud. According to Reich, Freud was both materialist and dialectical in his approach. Like Marx, Freud focused on real human needs. Freud began with man's material need for sex and food and followed man's biologically given material reality as it comes up against the material reality of nature and society. Reich based his psychoanalytic theory on Freud's early theory of instincts and theory of the libido. By the libido, Reich tells us, Freud meant the energy of the sexual instinct. According to Reich, Freud had every hope of placing his psychoanalytic theories on organic foundation. When developing his psycho-sexual stage Freud was careful to relate each stage, "to the actual life of the child; for example, the oral stage is formed in connection to taking in nourishment and the anal stage in connection to toilet training" (Reich, 1972:16). Although Reich accepts Freud's early proposal of a sexual and a self-preservation instinct and a libido, as having a clear physical basis, he criticized Freud's later proposal of a death instinct as having no material basis. Reich



suggested that the popularity of this "idealist deviation" among psychoanalysts is perhaps not an accident. In accepting the death instinct, Reich argues one must accept the inevitable conflict between biology and culture. If man is naturally-basically aggressive, the culture, in order to perpetuate itself, will have to harness and/or channel man's basic nature. Acceptance of the death instinct has, according to Reich, resulted in Ego Psychology aimed at adaptation of the individual to a repressive social order. Reich points to the conservative tendencies among "idealist deviations in psychoanalysis" to equate adaptation to reality with adaptation to capitalist society. Both the pleasure principle and the reality principle, Reich tells us must be viewed historically, that is, they are historically determined. There is no inevitable contradiction between man and society. The contradiction exists only within certain historical periods, i.e., when society is oppressive to man, as in Capitalism.

Reich goes on to explain the material nature of the id, the ego, and the super-ego. The id is the biological sector of the individual while the ego is the effect of the outside world on the biological sector. The ego develops through an interactive process with the social-material environment in the interest of the self-preservation instinct. Reich denies that morals have a metaphysical reality. Reich deals with morals as socially constructed reality; that is not as transcendental truths but as internalized norms given to children by already socialized adults. Children accept adult norms because their extended biological dependency leads to a fear of the loss of parental love. The super-ego develops



from these internalized norms. The conflict between internal instinct and the outside world becomes a conflict between the id, the ego and the super-ego. Thus explained the self is very much developed in a social and dialectical process with material environment. Ego is not free but dependent on environment, on id and super-ego, on biological and social forces. "Thus psychoanalysis fully confirms the Marxist dictum that social being determines 'consciousness,' that is to say ideas, aspirations, and wishes, moral ideologies, etc. rather than vice versa" (Reich, 1972:39). Reich interprets the Freudian Oedipus complex as confirmation of that dictum. In Reich's own words:

Translated into the language of sociology, Freud's central thesis concerning the importance of the Oedipus complex in the development of the individual means precisely that social being determines that development. The child's instincts and disposition -- empty molds ready to receive their social contents -- go through the (social) processes of relationships with father, mother and teacher, and only then acquire their final form and content (Reich, 1972:40-41).

Reich, interprets the Oedipus complex as a response to a socially conditioned environment and predicts that the Oedipus complex will disappear under Socialism -- because its material base, the patriarchal family, will disappear. Reich has used Marx to change the Oedipus complex which is now, "not so much the cause as the result of the sexual inhibitions of infantile sexuality" (Reich, 1949:48). Thus, the Oedipus complex becomes a symptom of an authoritarian social order which the revolution can bring to an end. Patriarchy, a microcosm of Capitalist relations, will not exist under Socialism, hence neither will the Oedipus complex.



Reich argues that neither Marx nor Freud saw development in evolutionary terms. They both developed a dialectical science. While Marx saw conflict on the level of society, i.e., class conflict; Freud saw conflict on the level of the individual, i.e., psychic conflict. Reich's best example of dialectics in Freud is the development of neurotic symptoms. In Reich's reading of Freud, neurotic symptoms emerge when the individual first resists and eventually represses instinctual urges. First there is the demand of the instinct, thesis, then there is the reality which prohibits gratification, antithesis, finally there is the solution or synthesis, repression. The dialectical process continues because of the contradiction between the repression on one hand and the increased strength of damned up instinct on the other; this leads to a new synthesis, the neurotic symptom. The symptom contains elements of the old, the instinct and at the same time, elements of its opposite, the resistance of the Ego. Considerably more briefly Reich traces the dialectical nature of tension and release, of self love and love of object, of perversion and neurosis (Reich, 1972:35-40).

Finally, Reich himself raises the question of how one can reconcile Marxism with the psychoanalytic conception that work, socially productive labor, is merely sublimated libidinal instinct. He is here on most shaky ground. He explains that economic conditions affect the instinct for nourishment or for self preservation, which in turn limits and changes the sexual instinct — it being more malleable. "In limiting the aims of sexual needs, this constantly creates new production forces within the social work process by means of the sublimated libido" (Reich, 1972:44). Thus economic



conditions affect the self preservation instinct which in turn limits sexual instinct creating a sublimated libido and thereby making socially productive labor possible. Here we can see Reich's semantic tight rope: "The libido process is secondary to social development and dependent upon it, but it intervenes decisively in it insofar as the sublimated libido is turned into working capacity and hence, into a productive force" (Reich, 1972:46). His reasoning is here somewhat circular. Further, although it appears to contradict his position that it is only capitalism or an oppressive social order that blocks sexual freedom, it in fact does not; for according to Reich, although sublimation is necessary for production, it need not be repressive. We will return later to re-examine, in greater detail, Reich's circular reasoning and apparent contradictions.

Having established the possible theoretical compatibility of psychoanalysis and Marxism, Reich went on to point out the Marxist need for a theory of psychology. Reich felt that Marxism had never adequately explained the existence of an unjust social order or the repeated failure of the oppressed class to make a revolution. Of course, Marxists were aware that there was no necessary relationship between objective social position and consciousness, but nonetheless they seemed to operate under the illusion that eventually the objective contradiction of capitalism would end false consciousness. Reich wanted to know how and when. More specifically, he was looking for an explanation of why ideology seemed to be an autonomous force. Reich's answer, most explicitly developed in The Mass Psychology of Fascism, was that ideology became internalized or "anchored" in the character structure of the individual. It was of course true



that ideas reflected social, economic and technological conditions; that is the ideological superstructure was dependent on the economic substructure. However a great number of Marxists had failed to adequately acknowledge the dialectical nature of this relationship. In the process of socialization ideologies became embedded into the personality structure of the individual. Reich's conception of how ideology became anchored in the personality structure of the individual made it possible to understand how individual consciousness and thus political action might fail to reflect economic realities. When one talks of the "force of tradition" what one really means is that ideology is built into man's character structure in childhood. Thus man is fully capable of maintaining a social order that is at odds with present economic development or human needs.

Reich was not content to assert that ideology was anchored in personality structure; he wanted to explain when, where and how this process took place. Borrowing from Freud, Reich placed great importance on the family. It was the family that was the principal ideological agent of the society. The nature of the family reflected social and economic conditions, that is, the family was historically determined. However, as a primary agent of socialization it in turn could have a tremendous effect on the course of history. In Reich's examination of the historical development of society, he paid particular attention to the historical development of the family. Thus we have Reich's particular brand of Freudian-Marxism. For Reich there is a conflict between man and society and society represses man, but that conflict is not necessary or inevitable, it is not due to the basically anti-social nature of man. Man is naturally sexual but



sexuality is a positive life force. There are periods of history (and capitalism is one) when society through its agent, the family, represses man's natural sexuality and the vast majority of mankind becomes neurotic. During these periods normality becomes a theoretical ideal. Neurosis is the underlying psychological cause for false consciousness. That is, sexual repression causes neurotic personalities, and neurotic personalities, following the model of domination they learned in their patriarchal families, support an oppressive social structure.

Sociological Theory, Methods & Implications for Political Praxis

I. Uses of psychoanalytical theory in sociological investigation

Having demonstrated that psychoanalysis like Marxism was materialist and dialectical, Reich set out to compare psychoanalysis and Marxism in its sociological development and function, and to outline the use of psychoanalysis in historical research. He claimed that while Marxism arose out of man's growing awareness of the contradictions in capitalism and thus represented a critique of bourgeois economy, psychoanalysis arose out of man becoming aware of the social repression of sexuality and thus represented a critique of bourgeois morality (Reich, 1972:56). Psychoanalytic theory represented, Reich tells us, a dangerous critique of bourgeois morality. Bourgeois society was therefore doing everything in their power to destroy or neutralize its critical impact. Reich admitted that it had, to a great extent, been successful. The distortions that come out of the bourgeois attempt to neutralize psychoanalysis, have not however erased the revolutionary potential of the theory.



Attempting to outline the uses of psychoanalysis in historical research, Reich discussed Erich Fromm's critical review of his essay "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis" (Reich, 1972:1-75). Fromm strongly questioned Reich's reluctance to use psychoanalysis to explain "background causes of social behavior". It was Fromm's contention that if psychoanalysis could be used to understand individuals, it could be used to understand society. After all, he said, society consists of nothing more than separate individuals.

Society, Reich explained, is not the same thing as an individual; it has no psyche and no super-ego. Reich underscored the reactionary effect of using psychoanalytic explanations for sociological phenomena. "Capitalism cannot be explained by the anal-sadistic structure of man, but . . . this structure (capitalism) can be explained by the sexual order of the patriarchal system." Society, he continues, is not only separate individuals but a multiplicity of individuals whose life and thoughts are determined by productive relations (Reich, 1972:67). Radical psychoanalysis can use psychoanalytic theory in an essentially different way from bourgeois psychoanalysis. Mainstream psychoanalysis, while denying it is taking a political stand, explains rebellion in psychoanalytic terms because it assumes that obedience is a healthy adaptation to the reality principle. Radical analysis on the other hand, overtly taking a political stand, can use psychoanalysis to explain the irrational behavior of man. For example psychoanalytic theory can be used to explain why the oppressed classes often accept and even support



exploitation. Pinpointing both the inadequacy of Marxist sociology and the usefulness of psychoanalytic theory, Reich explained:

That a man steals because he is hungry, or that workers strike because they are being exploited, needs no further psychological clarification. In both cases ideology and action are commensurate with economic pressure. Economic situation and ideology coincide with one another. Reactionary psychology is wont to explain the theft and the strike in terms of supposed irrational motives; reactionary psychology sees the problem in an entirely different light: what has to be explained is not the fact that the man who is hungry steals or the fact that the man who is exploited strikes, but why the majority of those who are hungry don't steal and why the majority of those who are exploited don't strike. Thus, social economy can give a complete explanation of a social fact that serves a rational end, i.e., when it satisfies an immediate need and reflects and magnifies the economic situation. The social economic explanation does not hold up, on the other hand, when a man's thoughts and actions are inconsistent with the economic situation The vulgar Marxists and the narrow minded economists, who do not acknowledge psychology are helpless in the face of such a contradiction (1970: 19-20).

II. Sex Economic Sociology

Acutely aware of the reactionary effect of psychoanalytic sociology, and wanting to separate himself from it, Reich invented the term "sex-economic sociology" which he identified as the field of research that grew out of the sociology of human sexual life* (Reich, 1970:25). Reich's primary concern was to discover the sociological reasons behind the suppression of human sexuality by society. Why did society deny young people sexuality? What purpose did general sexual repression serve? From his study of Freud and

* By sex-economy, Reich meant the relationship between sexual instinct and sexual satisfaction.



from his experience as a therapist, Reich had concluded that lack of sexual satisfaction provoked neurosis, yet society, he believed, did everything to prevent people from leading a healthy sexual life. From the age of 13 young people are ready to make love but the state, the Church and the family do everything in their power to assure adolescence a long and painful sexual agony. Why? Certainly, Reich reasoned it was not because the suppression of juvenile sexuality increased work capacity, for it is well known that adolescents masturbate. The sexual liberty of children and adolescents Reich proposed, would mean an end to marriage as we know it today, that is life-long monogamous marriage. The shackles that prevent young people from realizing their sexuality leads them to look upon marriage as desirable. In Reich's own words:

If, further there is statistical evidence for the fact that the "early sexual intercourse makes people incapable of marriage" (in the sense of conservative marriage morality, "one partner for life"), then the purpose of the demand for sexual abstinence is clear. It serves the purpose of "creating a sexual structure which makes people incapable of any sex life except that of a strictly monogamous compulsive marriage" and makes them submit weakly to the demands of society (1972:102).

The sexual crisis of youth is thus intricately bound up with the nuclear family which in turn is an essential part of an authoritarian social order. Neurosis cannot be successfully cured on an individual level. Its existence is too wide spread. Its cause is rooted in the structural arrangement of society, that is society's insistence on the patriarchal family. Why does an authoritarian social structure insist on life-long monogamous marriage and a patriarchal family structure?



In a class society, the ruling class secures its position with the aid of education and the institution of the family, by making its ideologies the ruling ideologies of all members of the society. However, it is not merely a matter of imposing ideologies, attitudes, and concepts on the members of society. Rather, it is a matter of a deep-reaching process in each new generation of the formation of a psychic structure which corresponds to the existing social order

Because this order forms the psychic structure of all members of society, it "reproduces itself" in people The first and most important place of reproduction of the social order is the patriarchal family which creates in children a character structure which makes them amenable to the later influences of an authoritarian order (Reich, 1969:xi-xxiii).

The primary function of the patriarchal family is to serve as a "factory for authoritarian ideologies" (Reich, 1969:72). It is during the first four or five years, Reich tells us, that the "structural reproduction of society takes place" (1970:30). Through sexual repression the patriarchal family produces in man an authoritarian character structure. "The moral inhibition of the child's natural sexuality, the last stage of which is the severe impairment of the child's genital sexuality, makes the child afraid, shy, fearful of authority, obedient, 'good', and 'docile' in the authoritarian sense of the word" (Reich, 1970:30). When sexuality is prevented from achieving natural expression, it becomes perverted. Thus, it is man's authoritarian character structure that accounts for the "irrational" choice of Fascism by the masses. Man's authoritarian character structure is not inherent, but socially reproduced. In fact, the patriarchal family exists for the purpose of producing people with authoritarian character structure who will be subservient to the State. The father, Reich tells us, is the



. . . Exponent and representative of the authority of the State in the family. Because of the contradiction between his position in the production process (subordinate) and his family function (boss) he is a top-sergeant type; he kowtows to those above, absorbs the prevailing attitudes (hence his tendency to imitation) and dominates those below; he transmits the governmental and social concepts and enforces them (1963:73).

While the women and children become resigned to his complete authority, the sons develop both a subordinate attitude toward authority and a strong identification with the father "which forms the basis of the emotional identification with every kind of authority" (Reich, 1970:54). The ideological glorification of the family is an attempt to obscure "the conflict between the dulling (temporary or final) of sensual desires on the one hand, and the increasing tender attachment to the partner on the other hand" (Reich, 1969:122).

It is the very prerequisites of marriage, such as sexual repression particularly of women, that eventually undermines marriage. Because of the women's severe sexual repression prior to marriage, it is often the case that "as soon as the charm of novelty has worn off, she can neither excite nor satisfy her husband" (Reich, 1969:143). Moreover, it is through the severe sexual repression that "good" wives, those "adjusted to reality" are created. Well adjusted housewives, Reich tells us, are both sexually inhibited and neurotic (1969:141). Beautifully summarizing the contradiction in marriage and distinguishing between marriage and what he calls a life-long permanent relationship, Reich tells us:

Marriages could be good, at least for a certain period of time, if there were sexual harmony and gratification. This would, however, presuppose a sex-affirmative education, premarital sexual experience, and emancipation from conventional morality. But the very thing that might



make for a good marriage means at the same time its doom. For once sexuality is affirmed, once moralism is overcome, there is no longer any inner argument against intercourse with other partners except for a period of time, during which faithfulness based on gratification exists (but not for a lifetime). The ideology of marriage collapses and with it the marriage. It is no longer marriage, but a permanent sexual relationship. Such a relationship, because of the absence of suppression of genital desires, is more apt to prove happy than strictly monogamous marriage. In many cases, the cure for an unhappy marriage — moralists and authoritarian law notwithstanding — is marital infidelity (1969:144).

In pointing to the contradiction in marriage and the connection between the family and the State, Reich presents us with both a sociological theory and a guide for political praxis. For Reich, the political revolution and the sexual revolution had to go hand in hand. While the political revolution would overthrow the power of the state, the sexual revolution would overthrow the power of the family. While traditional Marxists used social class as a primary analytical tool, Reich insisted that one had to look also at sexual training. Sexual training often cut across class lines, thus explaining both bourgeois revolutionaries and false consciousness among the working class. One must concentrate one's effort both on the abolition of class and the abolition of sexual repression. Both divided man against himself. A failure to deal with both class and repression will lead eventually to the failure of the revolution. Reich documented this failure in the second half of the Sexual Revolution in which he presented a history of the sexual reforms and the subsequent reaction in the Soviet Union. Reich's message is clear. A revolution on the ideological level, a cultural revolution, cannot survive unless it proceeds on the psychological level. If the cultural revolution does not succeed, the economic revolution



is doomed to failure. The motive behind Reich's theoretical synthesis has now become perfectly clear. Marxist theory helps us to alter the social structure. Freudian theory helps us to alter the character structure. With the success of Marxism we will have a withering away of the state, for the state represents bourgeois interests which will no longer be present. With the success of Reich's brand of Freudianism the "moral regulation of social life will become unnecessary" (Reich, 1945:174), for social morality is merely a reflection of a bourgeois ideology aimed at sexual repression (Reich, 1970:267-9).

Departures from Freud

The most fundamental disagreement between Reich and Freud is in their respective conception of the nature of man. This disagreement was so fundamental that, in spite of the fact that Reich continued throughout his Marxist period, to use psychoanalytic categories, the two men parted ways on almost all essential issues. They strongly disagreed on their theory of instinct, the nature of sublimation, the nature of the unconscious, theory of neurosis, therapeutic techniques and, finally, on the nature and origin of society.

Although most explicitly stated in Civilization and Its Discontents, it is clear that Freud had a rather gloomy view of human nature.

Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the last can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their



neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. 'Homo homini iupus.' Who, in the face of all his experiences of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion? (1961:58).

According to Freud, Man's a-social behavior reflect man's inherently or biologically given, instinctual nature.

In reality, there is no such thing as "eradicating" evil. Psychological, or strictly speaking psycho-analytic investigation proves, on the contrary, that the deepest character of man consists of impulses of an elemental kind which are similar in all human beings, the aim of which is the gratification of certain primitive needs (1918:18).

Freud is here clearly relating evil to man's primitive needs. As early as 1920, Freud had hypothesized the death instinct and gradually this "idealist revision" as Reich was fond of calling it, came to be placed on equal footing with the sexual instinct. According to Reich, the biologically given id, now, for the first time, became evil while the super-ego sat "with a long beard" in moral judgement (1961:100-1). The death instinct clearly implied that human suffering was inevitable. Now man was both sexual and aggressive. He had an instinct for love, sex, creation, eros -- that moved him toward other men as well as an instinct for aggression, death, destruction, thanatos -- that moved him away from other men. Civilization demanded the repression and, sublimation of both these instincts. Freud proposed that the human infant's extended dependency developed into a need for love that enabled each individual child to make the needed transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle, that is, the transition from total and immediate gratification of



instincts to the sublimation and repression of instincts necessitated by the reality of life in society. Thus, his conception of the nature of man ends with the inherent and unavoidable contradiction between the nature of man and the nature of society.

We believe that civilization has been created under the pressure of the exigencies of life at the cost of satisfaction of the instincts; and we believe that civilization is to a large extent being constantly created anew, since each individual who makes a fresh entry into human society repeats this sacrifice of instinctual satisfaction for the benefit of the whole community. Among the instinctual forces which are put to this use the sexual impulses play an important part; in this process they are sublimated — that is to say, they are diverted from their sexual aims and directed to others that are socially higher and no longer sexual. But this arrangement is unstable; the sexual instincts are imperfectly tamed, and, in the case of every individual, who is supposed to join in the work of civilization, there is a risk that his sexual instincts may refuse to be put to that use (Reich, 1966:22-3).

It was, of course, Freud who had first indicated that repression of instinct was the cause of neurosis. Freud had clearly stated that no neurosis arose without sexual conflict but he had meant sexual in its widest sense — that is, including all his psycho-sexual stages of development. Freud had distinguished two main categories of neurosis: psychoneurosis and actual neurosis. The origins of psychoneurosis were repressed longings and traumas of children most often around a conflict between sexual needs and internalized inhibitions. Actual neurosis grew out of contemporary disturbances in genitalia, that is, lack of sexual satisfaction. Freud devoted his career to a study of psychoneurosis. Both his psychological concepts and his therapeutic techniques were geared to the historical concept of neurotic disorders. Reich, on the other hand, concentrated on actual neurosis making an important shift in emphasis.



Reich's conception of sexuality was considerably more narrow than Freud's. He concentrated primarily on genital sexuality and on contemporary sexual conflict. He was, of course, aware that these conflicts were rooted in both the biography of the individual and the historical development of the society. For Reich, however, the course of neurosis was a "lack of total and repeated sexual satisfaction." To the objection that many neurotics had a completely healthy sex life, Reich responded that not every sexual encounter ending in climax was a complete orgasm. The encounter had to be heterosexual, without irrelevant fantasies, lasting a specific amount of time. It had to be a complete involvement, a complete loss of consciousness, a complete release of dammed up libido. With this definition of orgasm, he estimated that 90 percent of the women and 70 percent of the men could not achieve orgasm. If one accepts his definition, there is probably a good chance that his estimate was in fact correct.

It was the goal of Reich's therapy to help the person achieve complete orgasm. This involved breaking down the character structure that the individual had built up through socialization into a sexually repressive society. Put more complexly, the object of Reich's analysis was to discover the precise nature of the character armor that the patient had developed to control his libidinal energy. Freud had basically accepted the classic notion that restraining instinct built character. Character here clearly has positive connotations. In the Freudian concept character is the way in which man defended himself against his deeper, biologically



evil self. The neurotic had an inadequate defense. The cure was to help build more adequate defenses against his true self. For Reich however character clearly had a negative connotation. The cure was the destruction of character neurosis through the liberation of man's true self. Thus, for Reich, man had an instinctual-biological nature but that instinctual-biological nature is not evil, but good. In trying to discover the exact nature of the patient's character structure, Reich developed his own therapeutic techniques. He supplemented Freud's discovery of dreams, slips and jokes with a careful examination of "the patient's manner of speech, the way in which he looks at the analyst and greets him, the way he lies on the couch, the inflection of his voice, the measure of his conventional politeness" (Reich, 1972:25). One now concentrated not only on what the person said but how he said it, bodily motion, facial expression, voice tone, etc. This was somewhat a movement away from traditional analysis total emphasis on verbal exchange. While traditional analysis concentrated on bringing to consciousness a repressed infantile memory, Reichian analysis concentrated on bringing to consciousness the patient's present character structure. To achieve this objective, Reich emphasized the active role of the therapist who confronted the patient with a particular character trait. This active role of the therapist often led to effective reactions in the patient. "Character analysis,"



Reich tells us, "gives rise to violent emotional outburst" (1972:122). Successful treatment for Reich meant loosening the patient's character armor and heightening his capacity for genital pleasure. Successful treatment for Freud meant a reconciliation between the patient's unconscious desires and the demands of social reality.

Following the Freudian tendency to see the normal as an ideal, Reich developed his conception of the non-neurotic individual, one having what Reich calls a genital character structure. The person with a genital character is, Reich admitted, an ideal. He is an individual who had both the capacity to work and love. This capacity is derived from both genital orgasmic gratification of the libido and the ability to sublimate. According to Freud, sublimation is the shifting of libidinal energy from its original goal and rechanneling it to more socially acceptable "higher" goals. The drive which receives a sublimated gratification must relinquish its original object and goal. Reich tells us that this "formulation of sublimation" by Freud eventually led to misunderstanding that sublimation and instinct gratification were altogether anti-theoretical" (1945:185). Denying that libidinal energy is necessarily used either for sexual gratification or for sublimation into the building of civilization, Reich explains:

The observation of the genital character's sublimations shows that they are continually reinforced by the orgasmic gratification of the libido. Releasing the sexual tensions liberates energy for higher achievements because, for a certain time, sexual fantasies do not draw any libidinal cathexis to themselves (1945:187).

Thus according to Reich sublimation is not necessarily repressive.



While Reich had an uncompromising hostility toward the ego, Freud gave it his utmost compassion. For Freud the ego was the part of self that had to struggle with the demonic sensuality of the id as well as the guilt instilling capacity of the super-ego. The ego was constantly trying to mediate between the instinctual necessities of the biological self and the social control of the social self. Freud tended to view man's biologically given nature with distrust for it was the anti-social part of man. Reich, on the other hand, viewed the ego as part of the neurotic character structure created through a sexually repressive socialization, while he had great sympathy for the id, representing man's natural productive and loving nature. Man's anti-social nature was, according to Reich, socially created by instinctual renunciation. Anti-social impulses were the result of the social repression of normal sexuality. It was society's moral codes that created these secondary impulses.

Addressing himself to what he felt to be a central contradiction in Freud, Reich tells us:

On one hand, the child has to suppress its instincts in order to become capable of cultural adjustment. On the other hand, it acquires, in the very process, a neurosis which in turn makes it incapable of cultural development and adjustment and in the end makes it anti-social (1969:12).

If the argument Freud presents in Civilization and Its Discontents is correct, if the building of culture requires the renunciation of instinct, one cannot completely prevent neurosis because total sexual liberation would mean the end of art, industry and communal life. It would mean, the destruction of civilization. Reich, like Marx, was a child of the Enlightenment. His conception of the nature of



man and the future possibility of man in society were essentially optimistic. Clear about what it was that society had lost in fostering a sexually repressive socialization, Reich set out to discover what it was society gained, that is, what was the function of sexual repression. As we have seen he concluded that sexual repression was not necessary for the maintenance of civilization but was however necessary for the maintenance of an authoritarian society. The sexual repression administered by the patriarchal nuclear family created the authoritarian personality necessary for the perpetuation of a coercive social structure. While Freud's "anthropological fantasy" depicted a primal family that was patriarchal in the extreme, causing the Oedipus complex -- "the universal childhood experience," Reich saw the Oedipus complex as the socially-created result of the patriarchal nuclear family. Reich used his "anthropological fantasy" of an original non-repressive matriarchy as proof that historical necessity could in its turn cause the end of patriarchy and with it the Oedipus complex.

Freud had explained the dynamics of actual neurosis in terms of what he called the "economic" perspective on mental life. He had used the metaphor of psychic energy. The actual neurotic symptom was "nourished" by undischarged libido. Today, there is still much debate as to how literally Freud intended this analogy to be taken. Clearly with Reich there is less ambiguity on this issue. Reich's desire for a materialistic perspective often led him closer to a 19th century positivism. In his literal acceptance of the concept of libidinal energy he seemed to view the body as if it were a



mechanical system that produced a certain amount of sexual energy. This energy had to be discharged or the circuits would foul up.

Reich was at once more biological and more sociological in his theories than Freud. His push for a materialistic perspective often led him to ground this theoretical concepts in biological assumptions. On the other hand, his knowledge of the dialectical relationship between the individual and the society led him to emphasize the historically and socially created nature of the individual and society. While Freud assumed the inevitability of patriarchy and the resulting Oedipus complex, Reich saw them both as socially produced. While Freud explained the status of women by their biological nature, Reich felt that the conditions of women were socially created. Reich became an ardent and extremely articulate feminist, believing that the extreme sexual repression of women was necessary for the perpetuation of an authoritarian, patriarchal social structure.

Departure From Marx

In Marx's theoretical system the concept of the nature of man exists on two levels. Although Marx assumes the existence of a human nature (what he calls in his early writings man's essence or Species Being) and defines that nature by distinguishing man from other animals, he was careful to distinguish it from any one of its particular historical manifestations. In fact, it was so important to maintain an historical, or what we would today call a sociological conception of the nature of man that in his later writings, he was much more reluctant to discuss man's basic nature in terms of an



"essence." Although there is today still much debate on the issue, it seems clear to me that Marx maintained, throughout his writings, a conception of human nature, and that he in fact based his theories on this conception.*

To explain the "essence" of man, Marx borrowed the Feuerbachian concept of "Species Being" and expanded upon it. Man, according to Marx, is at once I and thou; that is, man is part of a species of men and the individual can only develop himself as part of that species. Man as a species precedes the individual and makes possible the nature and quality of the individual's life. Human consciousness develops only as man comes to see himself as a race of men. Self-consciousness and language are essentially related to the consciousness of others. Labor, or productive life, is for Marx, man's life activity or as he calls it his "species life." Man distinguishes himself from other animals in that his life activity, labor, is purposeful, conscious, and thus freely creative. Animals produce, "but the animal produces only what is immediately necessary for itself or its young." While "Man produces free of physical need and only genuinely so, in freedom from such need" (Easton, 1967:294). The bee is a fine architect, but only the human architect realizes a structure in his imagination before he builds it. Man contemplates his act beforehand, and in this sense he acts freely. Men in producing beyond instinctual physical needs produce and reproduce "the whole of nature." "The

*My interpretation of Marx is in agreement with that of the Frankfurt School, that there is a strong connection between the early and late Marx. For opposing view see the work of Louis Althusser (1969) or Ernest Mandel (1971).



object of labor is thus the objectification of man's species life; he produces himself not only intellectually, as in consciousness, but also actively in a real sense and sees himself in a world he made" (Easton, 1967:294). Man through the labor of his species, that is, man together with other men, create the nature and quality of their lives; and thus change their own nature as they change the nature of life. According to Marx, consciousness and activity are dialectically related. Man gets his identity from interaction with nature and other men. "We must bear in mind," wrote Marx, ". . . that man's relation to himself only becomes objective and real for him through his relation to the other man" (Easton, 1967:295). For Marx man's labor is the process by which he perfects himself. Man transforms nature and by transforming nature he transforms himself. Labor, as man's conscious life activity, is man's essence.

For our purposes there are two essential facets of Marx's conception of the nature of man. First, man is a social product. Man's consciousness, man's identity is developed in a dialectical process with the environment and other men. Man's identity emerges as man, together with other men, liberate themselves from nature and build society. Second, man's liberation from instinctual necessity, i.e., man's capacity for free, creative, purposeful labor gives him the ability to transform his environment with his labor, and thus to transform his own socially produced identity. In Marx's conception of human nature, his dialectical materialist method becomes increasingly clear. What emerges is the similarity between dialectical materialism and many basic contemporary sociological assumptions.



Identity is not biologically determined. Identity and environment, identity and nature, identity and society are dialectically related. Man is not tied to instinctual necessity. Man's consciousness, his ideas come from material reality, and in turn act back on that material environment and transform his identity.

For Marx, man is alienated when he is no longer controlling his environment or himself, i.e., when he is not engaged in free, creative, purposeful labor. "Alienated labor reverses the relationship in that man since he is a conscious being, makes his life activity, his essence, only a means for his existence" (Easton, 1967:294). Marx developed the argument that with the exception of primitive communism man has been alienated throughout history. Man's own activity is to him unfree activity when he is treating it as activity performed in the service, under the dominion, the coercion and the yoke of another man" (Easton, 1967:295). The very point of work or activity is that through it we realize ourselves. We create our environment and determine our own nature. Alienated labor alienates the species from man. It dulls man's consciousness. He can no longer see himself as part of a species of man, who, through their labor, transform themselves as they transform the universe; who create the nature and quality of their own lives. Man is alienated from himself and he expresses this alienation in his relation to others. Marx tells us that, "In the practical real work self-alienation can appear only in the practical real relationships to other men" (Easton, 1967:297). Man is no longer free to develop his universal nature but degenerates into egoistic possession and



acquisition; for the purpose of his life is no longer species life but physical survival. Man is no longer human.

Marx saw man as liberated from instinct and thus having a basic capacity for freedom. In the fact that man's nature is socially produced and reproduced, Marx perceived the possibility for man's liberation. It was in man's own best interest to come to true consciousness, to recognize his own capacity to control his environment and identity. Man could end the alienation and exploitation intrinsic to capitalism. Marx clearly made assumptions about the nature of man. In his underlying faith in man, Marx is a child of the Enlightenment. This faith is an essential component to radical ideology. One cannot accept as inevitable the present nature of man or society and continues to work for revolutionary change.

At its root, Reich's conception of the nature of man differed from Marx. Reich created a single, a historical (or if you will, non-sociological) model of human nature. He did not celebrate man's liberation from instincts and his resulting capacity to freely develop in society. He did not base his faith in man on the belief that human nature is produced in a social process in which man himself participates. Instead, Reich celebrates the natural, biological, instinctual nature of man. He saw the unnatural, mechanistic capitalistic society as responsible for separating or alienating man from himself. Reich's concept of alienation is however quite different from Marx. Reich's man is not separated from the community of men, from his social self. Rather he is separate from his instinctual-biological self. For Marx man is



separated from himself when he loses that which distinguishes him from the other animals — the free expression of labor. For Reich man is separated from himself when he loses that which is the biological necessity of all animals, the free expression of sexual instincts. Reich's faith in man, that is, his positive conception of human nature, seems to be based on his belief that what is natural is good.

Like Freud, Reich saw primitive man as having been able to fully satisfy his instinctual needs. The neurotic character structure of modern man stemmed from the sexually repressive socialization necessitated by an authoritarian social structure. For Reich, man's anti-social unconsciousness has been socially created by a sexually repressive society. One must then conclude that either the unconscious would disappear with the end of sexual repression — an assertion that Reich himself never made or that somehow it was only the anti-social part of the unconscious that had been socially created through sexual repression. If we accept the latter we must then ask why the other biologically given, socially acceptable part of the self is unconscious? Freud saw man's nature as essentially, biologically ambivalent; social and anti-social. He does not escape moral judgments. The implication is that man is both good and evil and society as necessarily suppressive to man's nature. Marx saw man's nature as essentially socially produced and thus viewed man as naturally part of a community of men. He had a great deal of faith in man and the possibility that he could build a society that would reflect the community implied by man's social nature. Reich saw man's nature as essentially, biologically



sexual, which he clearly defined as good. He saw society, with the exception of the Matriarchy of the past and the utopia of the future, as undermining man's biologically given positive nature.

In his conception of the nature of man and society, Reich was at once more reactionary, more radical, and more utopian; he was clearly more of a romantic and a moralist than either Freud or Marx. He looked back toward his hypothesized original matriarchy to support his vision of the free society of the future. Although his analysis of the importance of sexual liberation and the essentially destructive function of the oppression of women were, in its time, very radical, he essentially looks back rather than forward. He romanticized the natural primitive past where man lived in serene sexual fulfillment. He saw the vast majority of men as deeply psychologically disturbed. And, while he hoped for an end to moralism, for a sexual revolution to accompany a political revolution, he never tells us how or where it could take place. Further, his conception of a sexual revolution appears today to be somewhat less than revolutionary. Man should be free to engage in heterosexual activity that is genitally and orgasmically oriented. Finally, in his critique of the failure of the Soviet Revolution, he seems to clearly demonstrate the inevitability of patriarchy and with it an unequal distribution of power between the sexes.

Reich attempted to maintain a dialectical materialist perspective; however, while he criticized vulgar Marxists for economic determinism, his own theories often seem dominated by sexual determinism and 19th century positivism. Reich tells us that, "It is sexual energy which governs the structure of human feeling and thinking"



(1969:25). While in Reich there is no longer a conflict between sexuality and the building of culture, he still views socially productive labor as sublimated libido. Trying at once to maintain a dialectical materialist perspective and priority of sexual energy, Reich told us, "The libido process is secondary to social development and dependent upon it, but it intervenes decisively in it insofar as the sublimated libido is turned into working capacity and, hence, into a productive force" (1972:46). What makes up the process of development if not working capacity and productive forces? How can the libido process be "secondary to social development and dependent upon it," while at the same time, working capacity and productive forces come from sublimated libido? If working capacity and productive forces come from sublimated libido then social development is primarily dependent on sublimated libido and not vice versa. It is of course possible that Reich meant to be explicating a dialectical relationship. However, we must ask what forces are now moving the dialectic? For Reich it is sexual training and not class struggle that is the basic unit of analysis.

Reich preferred Freud's biologically given instinctual need to Marx's more complex conception of human need. Just as there are two categories of the nature of man in Marx, the human potential that man has that animals do not and the socially produced human nature that exist in different historical epochs; there are also in Marx, two levels of human need. There are those needs like "eating, drinking, shelter, clothing and many other things" (Easton, 1967:499) that are



essential to the maintenance of human life; as well as "new needs" (Easton, 1967:420) that arise once the more basic are fulfilled. In Freud and Reich, needs are biologically given; while Marx's needs are both biologically given and socially produced and reproduced. As far as Reich is from Freud, he is, in his conception of the nature of man, more of a Freudian than a Marxist. It seems that he accepts those elements of Marx that could be considered most utopian while rejecting the painfully worked out detailed sociological analysis that Marx used to support his utopian dreams. For example, although Marx makes positive assumptions about the value of man, he supports those assumptions with sociological explanations. Marx explains that human nature is produced in a social process in which man himself participates and that it is in his own best interest to become aware of that process and to begin to work with other men in a community, to control that process. Reich, on the other hand, also makes a radical assumption about the nature of man, that is, that man is basically good, but he supports that assumption with a tautology that has reactionary overtones; what is natural is good. Natural man, unspoiled by repressive civilization, is good. The same comparison can be made between Reich and Marx in their analysis of society. While Marx carefully works out the factors in capitalism that could lead to its destruction, Reich's strongest argument for the end of patriarchy seems to revolve around his belief that an original matriarchy, as the "natural society," was an "historically proven fact" (Reich, 1966:73). Patriarchy has not always existed (it is not natural) and therefore it does not necessarily have to continue to exist.