Cultural Marxism: Origins, Development and Significance
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In this article, the author gives much valuable information about an intellectual movement that since World War II has had a profound effect on Western politics and culture. He observes that “Cultural Marxism” (a method of analysis having its origins in “Critical Theory”) has become mainstream, and perhaps the dominant influence in the social sciences of the Western world. By combining Marxism with Freudian analysis, a doctrine was developed that “deconstructed” Western morality not just in economic terms, as original Marxism did, but questioned whether Western traditional morality causes neuroses and readiness to conform to social norms. The result has been to open Western morality not just to question, but to ridicule. This paper examines the origins of “Cultural Marxism,” and in doing so poses an important question: whether the deconstruction of the West’s traditional morality serves a broad political/social/cultural agenda.

Key words: Critical Theory, Cultural Marxism, Frankfurt School, Freud, Hirschfeld, Kinsey, Marx, New School for Social Research, Sexual Reform, transgenderism

Introduction

In this article, we will examine a set of ideas that has a very real existence in today’s world. Although a discussion of it draws us into an intellectual world that must seem quite alien and esoteric to the average person, an understanding of “Cultural Marxism” is essential for anyone who seeks to grasp the ideological forces that are moulding contemporary societies.

In our analysis, we will see that Cultural Marxism serves a broad ideological purpose. As an intellectual movement that seeks, with considerable success, to undermine the West’s traditional values and...
cultures, it provides a rationale that buttresses the Left’s position on a surprising array of contemporary issues. These include such diverse matters as globalism; open borders; transgenderism; and formlessness in the arts, music, and architecture. The thrust is to deconstruct, in the name of “progress,” any vestiges of tradition. There is an ironic contradiction present: the Left makes much use of “identity politics” while, at the same time, its deconstruction is intended to produce a human mass that has cast aside all ethnic, land, and even gender identity. This push toward universal homogenization is promoted in the name of being “different.”

If we want to see how this applies to such a thing as globalism, which we have said is one of the issues affected, it is important to note that when detachment and rootlessness allow for the unhampered movement of labour, people become economic units as part of a global production process. When the Left attacks all restrictions on immigration as “racism,” “xenophobia” and “fascism,” its proponents are, oddly enough, falling in line with precisely what international capitalism desires. The philosopher-historian Oswald Spengler made the astute observation nearly a century ago that, regardless of appearances, Leftist movements operate in the interests of “money.” So-called “people’s revolts” have served oligarchic interests since the Gracchus revolt in Rome.2 Bolshevism was funded by oligarchs.3 It is thus no coincidence that this inverted form of “the Left” is funded by George Soros’ Open Society Foundations, National Endowment for Democracy, Rockefeller Foundation, Movements.org and hundreds of other NGOs and foundations.5

**Definition of Cultural Marxism**

Professor Jerome Jamin of the Political Science Department at the University de Liège, Belgium, gives the following definition of “Cultural Marxism”:

> From a philosophical point of view, Cultural Marxism, as Critical Theory, considers culture as something that needs to be studied within the system and the social relations through

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5 Ibid.
which it is produced, and then carried by the people. So, according to Kellner (2013, p. 10), the “analysis of culture is intimately bound up with the study of society, politics, and economics.” This theory means that the culture does not have an autonomous life next to the daily concrete lives of individuals and their social relations. It also states that, as a consequence, cultures are built to help the dominance of powerful and ruling social groups. Within the Marxist tradition, which sees dominant ideology as the ideology of the bourgeoisie to control the proletariat and the working class, Cultural Marxism considers cultures and ideologies as inextricably linked to the economic, social, and political context: they are tools in the hands of the powerful to control the people. (Emphasis added)

From this, we see that “Cultural Marxism” is the intellectual elaboration of a “will-to-destroy” as it pertains to traditional cultural and societal bastions. Karl Marx had a will-to-destruction, and *The Communist Manifesto* is a handbook for the destruction of whatever remained in this late epoch of the West of organic bonds such as family, marriage, faith and the pre-capitalist attachment to village, church, and land. Rather than decrying the destruction of these organic bonds, Marx regarded them as ‘bourgeois’ institutions that were dialectically being destroyed by capitalism and industrialism as a progressive step. Those who resisted this dialectic of destruction were vehemently denounced in *The Communist Manifesto* as “reactionists.”

What the original Marxists sought with the destruction of the organic bonds of traditional society, the “Cultural Marxists” seek by broadening their subversion beyond economic critiques, and working class mobilizations, which the Left came to see as mainly unsuccessful.

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Freudian-Marxian Synthesis

It was when combined with Freudian psychoanalysis that Marxism went beyond a solely economic, reductionist offensive against Western, so-called “bourgeois” traditions and struck at the foundations of Western culture as a manifestation of not only the economic oppression of the “masses,” but also their psychological – and according to Freudianism, in particular, “sexual” oppression, leading supposedly to mass neuroses, if not psychoses.

Marx defined Western man as an economic animal; to Sigmund Freud, Western man is a sexual animal. In their reductionism, both sought to bestialize what is human. Marx saw the Gothic Cathedral (the epitome of a Western religiosity described by Spengler as the “Faustian” imperative towards infinity) as a symbol of exploitation, Freud saw it as redirected sexuality. (We might note that Carl Jung parted company from the Freudians on such matters.)

The combination of Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism in an assault on tradition made sense. It also made sense that this synthesis arose during the Weimar epoch of Germany in the aftermath of defeat, humiliation and demoralization, where everything about the old Wilhelmian Germany was fair game to be targeted. Post-World War I Germany became the centre for social experimentation. This became ‘Cultural Marxism’ and was soon extended beyond Germany. “Sexual science” was purveyed as a scholarly field by the Institute for Sexual Science (where the first sex-change operation was performed in 1931), founded in 1919, and the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (founded in 1897), both headed by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, who edited *The Year-Book for Sexual Intermediate Stages*. Hirschfeld organized the First Congress of Sexual Reform in 1921, from which emerged the World League for Sexual Reform.

The purpose of this ‘sexual science’ theorizing and experimentation was the destruction of marriage and the family, the prime targets of Marxism. Hirschfeld’s books have familiar themes: *The Homosexual Question as Judged by our Contemporaries; What Ought the Public Know About the Third Sex; Sexual Transitions; The Erotic Impulse to Wear Other Dress; The Homosexuality of Man and Woman; Sexology; A History of*


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the Morals of the World War. It was here that the concepts of ‘transvestism’ and transgenderism were promulgated as “natural.” It was at the Hirschfeld institute that the first transgender operations were performed. In the USA the operations and promotions of transgenderism were continued by Dr. Henry Benjamin, who had studied at the Hirschfeld institute.\textsuperscript{12}

With the rise of Hitler in 1933, Hirschfeld and a host of other “Cultural Marxists” found ready fame outside Germany, and Hirschfeld’s books were published in the USA, France, and England in 1935. Hirschfeld has had a lasting legacy on so-called ‘progressive’ and “modern” sexual attitudes, and especially on “gay rights.” He is honored by the “LGBTQ” lobbies throughout the world. In 1982, for example a Magnus Hirschfeld Society was established in Germany as a research centre.\textsuperscript{13}

In the 1940s, a Freudian Communist, Dr. Wilhelm Reich, founded ‘sex pol’, political sexology as a revolutionary movement. Reich described his doctrine:

Suppression of the natural sexuality in the child, particularly of its genital sexuality, makes the child apprehensive, shy, obedient, afraid of authority, good and adjusted in the authoritarian sense; it paralyzes the rebellious forces because any rebellion is laden with anxiety; it produces, by inhibiting sexual curiosity and sexual thinking in the child, a general inhibition of thinking and of critical faculties. \textit{In brief, the goal of sexual suppression is that of producing an individual who is adjusted to the authoritarian order} and who will submit to it in spite of all misery and degradation. At first the child has to submit to the structure of the authoritarian miniature state, the family; this makes it capable of later subordination to the general authoritarian system. The formation of the authoritarian structure takes place through the anchoring of sexual inhibition and anxiety."\textsuperscript{14} (Emphasis added)

This doctrine became mainstreamed by other emigres from Germany. Reich was employed by the Institute for Social Research in New York.


\textsuperscript{13} Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellscha, http://me.in-berlin.de/~magnus/

York, which had been established by Reich’s colleagues of the Frankfurt School for Critical Theory. Despite the support he had among elements of the German Communist Party, the Party’s leadership considered Reich ‘counter-revolutionary’, regarded his studies as reducing the revolutionary struggle to gutter level, and he was expelled from the Party. In the USA he became an admirer of President Franklin Roosevelt, but unlike the other ‘Cultural Marxists’ who had been sponsored to settle in the USA, Reich remained on the outside and was imprisoned. He had been investigated by the Food and Drug Administration for his “cosmic orgone engineering” and “orgone accumulators,” which supposedly harnessed sexual energy (orgone), which he believed was the energy source of UFOs. He was jailed in 1956 for breaching a federal injunction.\(^15\)

**Sponsorship of Cultural Marxists**

Despite his rejection by the German Communist Party leadership and his problems with American bureaucracy, Reich’s Freudo-Marxism was triumphantly asserted by the coterie of refugees from the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. This coterie became dominant in the U.S. social sciences, their path cleared by their anti-Nazi credentials.

Reich’s critique struck in particular at the traditional family as the incubator of authoritarianism, and hence of “fascism.” Where Marxism attacks the family on economic grounds as a ‘bourgeois institution’, Reich condemned the traditional “patriarchal marriage and patriarchal family”\(^16\) as the home of bourgeois sexual repression, and *ipso facto* of authoritarianism, leading to fascism.\(^17\) Hence, in this thinking the exploitive system of capitalism rests upon sexual repression in the patriarchal family, with Reich substituting sexual reductionism for Marx’s economic reductionism. From the revolutionary viewpoint, “sexual inhibition alters the structure of the economically suppressed individual in such a manner that he thinks, feels and acts against his own material interests.”\(^18\) The family is the “central reactionary germ cell” of the authoritarian state: “Since authoritarian society reproduces itself in the structure of the mass individual by means of the authoritarian family, it follows that political reaction must defend the authoritarian

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\(^{15}\) See the biography of Reich by one of his patients and assistants, Myron Sharaf, *Fury on Earth* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983).


\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 26.

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family as the basis of the state, of culture and of civilization.”¹⁹ As Reich’s biographer Myron Sharaf wrote, “Reich also anticipated many recent social developments.”²⁰

The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory was founded as the Institute for Social Research in 1923 by members of the German Communist Party at Frankfurt University.²¹ They concluded that a Communist state must be preceded by a radical subversion of the cultural mores and institutions of a society.²² The founding endowment for the Frankfurt School was provided by the international grain speculator, Herman Weil, father of one of the Institute’s moving spirits, Felix Weil.²³

Max Horkheimer, who became the institute’s director in 1930,²⁴ advocated that a subtle revolution must be made through the penetration and transformation of the cultural traditions and institutions of Western Civilization.²⁵ At this time, music critic Theodor Adorno and psychologists Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich joined the Frankfurt School.²⁶ However, in 1933 this largely Jewish group left en masse for the USA. Included was the future guru of the New Left, Herbert Marcuse, a graduate student. This so-called ‘University of Exile’ was initially employed by the New School for Social Research (NSSR) in New York.

The “University of Exile,” funded by “enlightened philanthropists like Hiram Halle²⁷ and the Rockefeller Foundation,”²⁸ formed the faculty of the New School’s Graduate Faculty on Political and Social Science. The NSSR implemented the Rockefeller Foundation’s Emergency Program for European Scholars, “selected by the [Rockefeller] Foundation.” The U.S. State Department was consulted and indicated its complete satisfaction with the project.²⁹ “While some of these refugees remained at the

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 88.
²⁰ Ibid., p. 4.
²² Ibid., p. 77.
²⁴ Buchanan, op. cit., p. 78.
²⁵ Ibid., pp. 78-79.
²⁶ Ibid., p. 79.
²⁷ Hiram Halle was an owner of Gulf Oil, one of the “Seven Sisters” world oil companies, which merged with David Rockefeller’s Standard Oil (Chevron) in 1984.
New School for many years, many others moved on to make an impact on other institutions in the United States.” Some became government advisors. “Others helped transform the social sciences and philosophy of this country.” The Rockefeller Foundation explains about these Cultural Marxists that upon their arrival each was provided with a teaching post.

In the case of a scholar received by the New School, it was not expected that he would remain there permanently; the New School aimed merely to be the springboard for his American adventure. Every effort was made to expose scholars to other opportunities; a scholar was transferred immediately upon receipt of an invitation from another institution offering a position with some assurance of permanency. …. Fifty-two scholars actually reached America and assumed teaching…. The total cost of the Emergency Program was, therefore, $437,659.

The Rockefeller Foundation remains a primary patron. In 1980 George Soros was awarded an honorary doctorate by the New School. The NSSR’s social research conferences initiated in 1988 are funded by Open Society, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Financial Services, etc., with institutional collaboration from the Open Society Institute, Asia Society (Rockefeller), et al. The New School’s economic research department was founded and is chaired by Bernard Schwartz, a senior fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations and Brookings Institute, and former chief executive of Loral, the defence industry contractor.

Among the departments at the NSSR is “Gender and Sexuality Studies,” where a familiar theme is taught: sexuality as a social construct, and “social justice in a gendered (or post-gendered) world.” Featured guest lectures include “Queer theory and penis envy,” by “internationally recognized critical theorist” Mari Ruti, with emphasis on “resistance as...
an ethical act.”37 “Queer Theory” has in recent years become the basis for academic departments in several prominent American universities.38

In the aftermath of World War II, Reich’s and Hirschfeld’s doctrines were given credibility with a detailed study by the Frankfurt coterie. The Authoritarian Personality sought to characterize traditional institutions and attitudes as latently “F” for “Fascist,” based on surveys that rated individual mental health according to a scale. “F” designated the “Fascist” tendencies of individuals according to how they scored on attitudes such as respect for parents, and a strong sense of morality.39 Hence, if question 23 on the “F scale” (“He is, indeed, contemptible who does not feel an undying love, gratitude, and respect for his parents”) elicits a positive response, this is a symptom of “authoritarian submission,” and “authoritarian aggression.”40 The Frankfurt School theory towards the family is summarized by Jay Martin in a semi-official history of the institution: “Even a partial breakdown of parental authority in the family might tend to increase the readiness of a coming generation to accept social change.”41

Frankfurtian Erich Fromm’s Escape From Freedom is the founding document of “political psychology.” The concept of “freedom,” according to Fromm, is that “individualized man” would be freed from his “primary ties” of identity such as family, yet in achieving individuality he would find his belonging as part of mass humanity. “There is only one possible, productive solution for the relationship of individualized man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual....”42

Herbert Marcuse, in Eros and Civilization, argued that instinct should not be repressed, and that such repression is inherent in

37 “On Queer Theory, Penis Envy And The Subject of Defiance”: A Day with Mari Ruti, 16 December 2017, https://events.newschool.edu/event/ferenczi_center_pres-ents_on_queer_theory_penis_envy_and_the_subject_of_defiance_a_day_with_mari_ ruti#.Win49PmWaM8
40 Ibid., pp. 231,232.
Western Civilization  Another synthesizer of Marx and Freud, Marcuse became the guru of the New Left. Like Reich, Marcuse stated that capitalism represses the libido of the proletariat.43 Professor Martin Duberman, a leading Left-wing academic theorist and activist for the “gay” movement, states: “The philosopher Herbert Marcuse predicted that the new ‘sexual liberation movements’ would become a powerful force, THE agency for producing significant social transformation.”44 Marcuse biographer Douglas Kellner writes:

During the 1960s, Marcuse achieved world renown as “the guru of the New Left”... his work was often discussed in the mass media. A charismatic teacher, Marcuse's students began to gain influential academic positions and to promote his ideas, making him a major force in US intellectual life. After working for the US Government for almost ten years Marcuse returned to university life. He received a Rockefeller Foundation grant to study Soviet Marxism, lecturing on the topic at Columbia University during 1952-53, and Harvard from 1954-55.45

Serving in the Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the CIA during World War II, and working in the U.S. State Department until 1951,46 Marcuse became part of the “cultural Cold War” against the USSR, as did many Trotskyites and other Marxists.47 In 1964 Marcuse published his One-Dimensional Man, of which Kellner states: “In contrast to orthodox Marxism, Marcuse championed non-integrated forces like minorities, outsiders and radical intelligentsia, attempting to nourish oppositional thought through promoting radical thinking and opposition...”48 This is the “identity politics” that has since become mainstream, where society is fractured on the ruins of traditional bonds; the “primary ties” referred to by Fromm. The tactic is infiltration, Marcuse counseling, “working against the established institutions while working in

43 Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilisation (Boston: Beacon, 1955).
46 Ibid.
48 Kellner, op. cit.
them.” Marcuse’s *Eros & Civilization*, which became the manifesto of the New Left, and *One Dimensional Man*, both received Rockefeller Foundation funding.

When the New Left mobilized on the streets throughout the world in 1968, the mantra was “Marx, Mao, Marcuse.” The New Left was spawned in the Cold War as an alternative Left that could be manipulated for anti-Soviet purposes. Feminism, chiefly through Gloria Steinem, a CIA asset (recruited by the CIA’s Cord Meyer) came from there also. The other purpose of the New Left was to serve the “military-industrial complex” dialectically: the extreme of the likes of the Students for a Democratic Society, Weathermen, et al, made the Leftist programs being promoted and funded by Rockefeller et al, seem moderate, and hence the USA was pushed imperceptibly Leftward, while the public focus was on the ultra-Left.

**Why do “Philanthropists” Fund “Cultural Marxism”?**

In 1937 Paul Lazarsfeld and Theodor Adorno established the Radio Project at Princeton University with Rockefeller funding. According to Elizabeth Whitcombe in the *Occidental Observer*, this was an experiment in mass mind manipulation through music. At first, atonal music was promoted, but afterward it was found that repetition of the type that became the basis for ‘pop’ music and sundry other mass-marketed junk-culture was more effective in its impact upon the mass unconscious.

During the 1950s, while the U.S. Establishment was inveighing against Senator Joe McCarthy’s investigations into Communism, the barely noticed Reece Congressional Committee was investigating subversion of a far more profound type: that of Cultural Marxism and its patronage by the tax-exempt foundations. Like McCarthy, Reece was stymied by powerful forces, specifically when it came to investigating the Rockefeller-funded Kinsey Institute, founded in 1947 as a purveyor of “sexology.” Like Adorno’s *Authoritarian Personality*, Kinsey’s studies, *Sexual Behavior in the Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Female*,

52 Ibid., pp. 144-200.
funded by the Rockefeller Foundation,\footnote{Rockefeller Foundation, https://rockfound.rockarch.org/kinsey-reports} have had enduring influence on attitudes and laws regarding homosexuality and abortion, and have opened the possibilities of legalised paedophilia. As with Hirschfeld’s Institute, Reich’s “sex pol,” and Adorno’s “F” scale survey, Dr. John Bancroft, when director of the Kinsey Institute, championed “sexual nonconformity” as a “vehicle for dissent.”\footnote{Bolton, \textit{Revolution from Above}, op. cit., p. 114. (The Kinsey website is no longer as forthcoming as previously). See also: http://stopthekinseyinstitute.org/kinsey-brief/}

The support given by Soros’s Open Society Foundations to feminism, abortion liberalization, marijuana liberalization, and the world-wide push for transgenderism is vast.\footnote{Open Society Foundations, https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/search?key=gay%20lesbian%20transgender} The other oligarchical foundations continue on the same course — Rockefeller, Ford, and a myriad of others.\footnote{Bolton, \textit{Revolution from Above}, passim.}

Why do some of the wealthiest of businessmen support the Left with what is widely termed “philanthropy”? Caroline Glick, a U.S. and Israeli strategist of wide experience,\footnote{Jerusalem Post, http://www.jpost.com/Author/Caroline-B-Glick} writing of George Soros, explains:

The first thing that we see is the megalomaniacal nature of Soros’s philanthropic project. No corner of the globe is unaffected by his efforts. No policy area is left untouched. On the surface, the vast number of groups and people he supports seem unrelated. After all, what does climate change have to do with illegal African immigration to Israel? What does Occupy Wall Street have to do with Greek immigration policies? But the fact is that Soros-backed projects share basic common attributes…. They all work to weaken the ability of national and local authorities in Western democracies to uphold the laws and values of their nations and communities…. In other words, their goal is to subvert Western democracies and make it impossible for governments to maintain order or for societies to retain their unique identities and values…. The notion at the heart of the push for the legalization of unfettered immigration is that states should not be able to protect their national identities…. Parallel to these efforts are others geared toward rejecting the right of Western democracies to uphold long-held social norms. Soros-supported groups, for instance, stand behind the push not only for gay marriage but for unisex public bathrooms. … The peoples of the West need to recognize the common foundations of all Soros’s actions. They need to realize as well that

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize} \item \footnote{Rockefeller Foundation, https://rockfound.rockarch.org/kinsey-reports} \item \footnote{Bolton, \textit{Revolution from Above}, op. cit., p. 114. (The Kinsey website is no longer as forthcoming as previously). See also: http://stopthekinseyinstitute.org/kinsey-brief/} \item \footnote{Open Society Foundations, https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/search?key=gay%20lesbian%20transgender} \item \footnote{Bolton, \textit{Revolution from Above}, passim.} \item \footnote{Jerusalem Post, http://www.jpost.com/Author/Caroline-B-Glick} \end{itemize}}
the only response to these premeditated campaigns of subversion is for the people of the West to stand up for their national rights and their individual right to security. They must stand with the national institutions that guarantee that security, in accordance with the rule of the law, and uphold and defend their national values and traditions.59

Caroline Glick calls the Soros patronage of various causes “subversive.” Under the guise of humanitarianism, not only Soros, but Rockefeller and an array of other foundations, providing patronage for Cultural Marxism seem to be doing so to advance the long term interests of profit-maximization. The Rockefeller Foundation explains its support for the current worldwide campaign for transgenderism as being about global “inclusive economies.” In the U.S. the issues have “primarily centered on marriage equality and, more recently, public attention to the experiences of transgender people.” Speakers at a 2014 Rockefeller Foundation seminar “emphasized that funding and policy focus largely remains on health and human rights issues, which neglects the ways in which both areas are interrelated with economic wellbeing.”60

Conclusion

Professor Jerome Jamin aptly identifies “Cultural Marxism” with the “Critical Theory” of the Frankfurt School, which he goes on to state is the product of Marxist social scientists. We have seen that Cultural Marxism has achieved an influential status throughout the Western world, with seminal publications such as The Authoritarian Personality. Through wealthy patronage, whether it is called “Cultural Marxism” or “Critical Theory,” a doctrine that had its roots in Marxism has become dominant within the social sciences not just within academia, but also within the mass media, think tanks and NGOs. Theories that were once considered “immoral” have become mainstream, and those who object are now regarded as on the “fringes of society,” and purveyors of “right wing conspiracy theories” about Cultural Marxism itself. Nonetheless, it might be asked whether such doctrines would have become so influential had they not also converged with the aims of what is now called “globalisation,” and with the patronage of those who are termed “philanthropists”?  
