

The Frankfurt School

Critical Theory, Cultural Marxism,
and “Political Correctness”

Cultural Marxism

- According to Marxist Theory, the “*oppressed*” workers of the world would revolt and place themselves atop the power structure.
- When opportunities for revolution presented themselves and workers did not follow Marx’s prediction, Marxists did not question the theory itself. The workers had been seduced by the ruling class Capitalists conferring *rights* upon them...they had been bought off.
- One faction of Marxists decided to focus on creating a new “Communist man” rather than merely on the narrow economic goals of Marx. They formed what came to known as “**The Frankfurt School.**”

Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukacs

- **Gramsci** believed that a “new” person must be culturally created before a Marxist socialist state could succeed. His focus was on the fields of education and media.
- **Lukacs** thought that existing cultural norms had to be destroyed in order to replace them with the new, revolutionary Marxist principles. He said, “I saw the revolutionary destruction of society as the one and only solution to the cultural contradictions of the epoch.... Such a worldwide overturning of values cannot take place without the annihilation of the old values and the creation of new ones by the revolutionaries.”
- Together, they founded **The Frankfurt School**

The Frankfurt School

- In 1923, Lukacs and other Marxist intellectuals associated with the Communist Party of Germany founded the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt University in Frankfurt, Germany

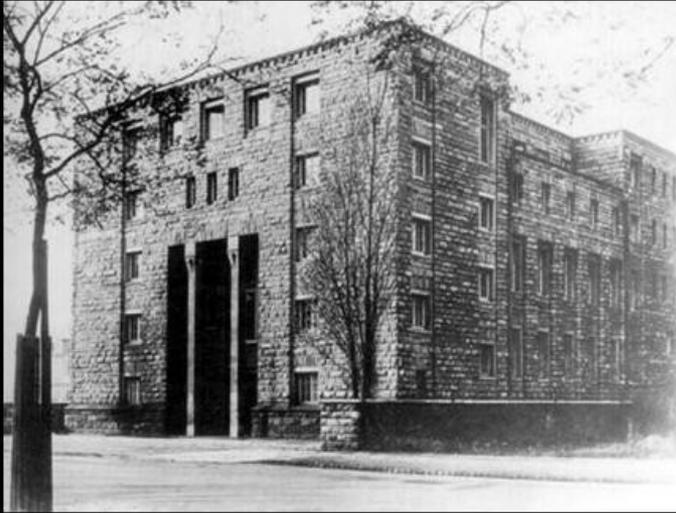


Georg
Lukacs



Antonio
Gramsci

Critical Theory



The Frankfurt School

- The Frankfurt School's studies combined Marxist analysis with Freudian psychoanalysis to form the basis of what became known as "Critical Theory."

The Frankfurt School Moved to America

- In 1933, when Nazis came to power in Germany, the members of the Frankfurt School fled. Most came to the United States and many became influential in American universities, headquartered at Columbia.
- “Critical Theory” also became known as **Cultural Marxism.**



The Coat of Arms for
Columbia University

Critical Theory was essentially destructive criticism of the main elements of Western culture, including Christianity, capitalism, civil authority, the family, patriarchy, hierarchy, morality, tradition, sexual restraint, loyalty, patriotism, nationalism, heredity, ethnocentrism, convention, and conservatism.

Critical Theorists recognized that **traditional beliefs and the existing social structure would have to be destroyed and then replaced with a “new thinking”** that would become as much a part of elementary consciousness as the old one had been. Their theories took hold in the tumultuous 1960s.

The American “New Left” of the 1960s

- Student radicals of the era were strongly influenced by revolutionary ideas, among them those of **Herbert Marcuse**, a member of the Frankfurt School who preach the “**Great Refusal**,” a rejection of all basic Western concepts.
- **Historical Revisionism**, attacking the nation’s founders, was a key element
- Criticism of foundational principles, like Constitutional Democracy, rule of law, natural rights, majority rule, and limited government was crucial. Annihilation of such values would pave the way for wide acceptance of Marxist ideology.

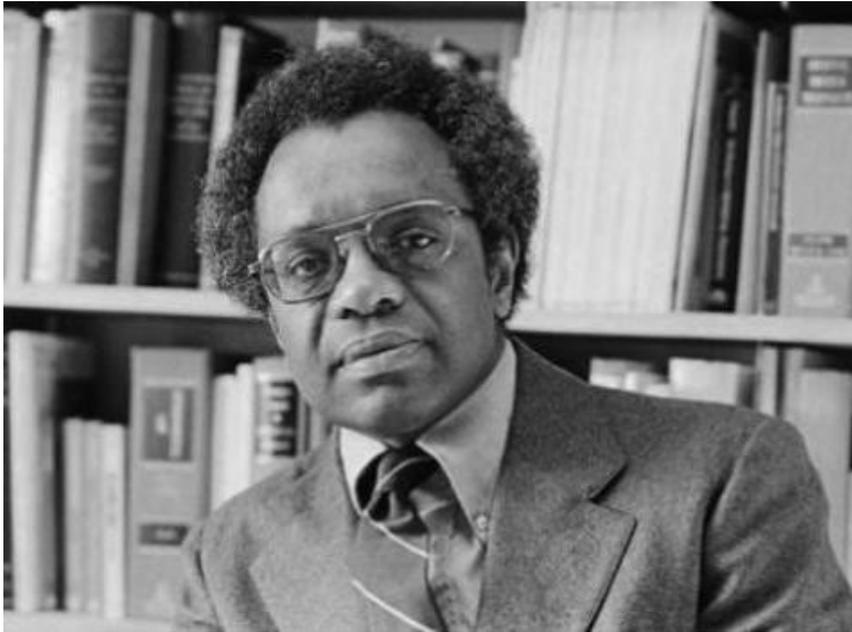


Herbert Marcuse

Political Correctness

Critical Theory has fostered a system of beliefs, attitudes and values that we have come to know as “**Political Correctness.**” For many it is an annoyance and a self parodying joke. But Political Correctness is deadly serious in its aims, seeking to impose a **uniformity of thought and behavior on all Americans. It is therefore totalitarian in nature.** The intent is to intimidate dissenters into compliance with accepted dogma. Its roots lie in **a version of Marxism which sees culture, rather than the economy, as the site of class struggle.**

Critical Race Theory



Prof. Derrick Bell, the originator of American *Critical Race Theory* and Intellectual mentor to U.S. President Barack Obama

- *The Marxist criticism of the system was called critical theory; the racial criticism of the system was therefore called Critical Race Theory.*
- *Racism cannot be ended within the current system; the current system is actually both a byproduct of and a continuing excuse for racism. Minority opinions on the system are more relevant than white opinions, since whites have long enjoyed control of the system, and have an interest in maintaining it.*

Critical Race Theory (cont.)

- *These Principles suggest that legal rules that stand for equal treatment under law – i.e. the 14th Amendment – can remedy “only the most blatant forms of discrimination.” The system is too corrupted, too based on the notion of white supremacy, for equal protection of the laws to ever be a reality. **The system must be made unequal in order to compensate for the innate racism of the white majority.***

Critical Legal Studies



Prof. Louis Michael Seidman, Georgetown Law School, is a major proponent of Critical Legal Studies. Judge his ideas in the next slide.

- The “Critical Legal Studies “ movement is a subordinate branch of Critical Theory or Cultural Marxism.
- Knowing the genesis of the movement helps to explain Seidman’s call to “Give Up on the Constitution.”
- His aim is to destroy public faith in constitutional government.

Seidman's Rejection of the U.S. Constitution

“Let's Give Up on the Constitution”

–NY Times Editorial Op-Ed, December 30th, 2012

“*As the nation teeters at the edge of fiscal chaos*, observers are reaching the conclusion that the American system of government is broken. But almost no one blames the culprit: our insistence on obedience to the Constitution, with all its archaic, idiosyncratic and downright evil provisions.”

Notice how Seidman uses a *supposed* “crisis” to attack and reject the fundamental bedrock of the American democratic republic. His proposed “solution” is a radical remedy that will result in subjecting the civil society to the intended upheaval. *Crisis by Design* enables revolutionary change.

See: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/31/opinion/lets-give-up-on-the-constitution.html?pagewanted=all>

The Cloward-Piven Strategy

First proposed in 1966 and named after [Columbia University](#)



sociologists [Richard Cloward](#) and [Frances Fox Piven](#), the **Cloward-Piven Strategy** seeks to hasten the fall of capitalism by overloading the government bureaucracy with a flood of impossible demands, thus pushing society into crisis and economic collapse.

The key to sparking this rebellion would be to expose the inadequacy of the *welfare state*. Cloward-Piven's early promoters cited radical organizer **Saul Alinsky** as their inspiration.

They proposed a "massive drive to recruit the poor *onto* the welfare rolls." Cloward and Piven calculated that persuading even a fraction of potential welfare recipients to demand their entitlements would bankrupt the system.

Saul Alinsky and *Rules for Radicals*



1. "Power is not only what you have, but what the enemy thinks you have."
2. "Never go outside the expertise of your people."
3. "Whenever possible, go outside the expertise of the enemy."
4. "Make the enemy live up to its own book of rules."
5. "Ridicule is man's most potent weapon."
6. "A good tactic is one your people enjoy."
7. "A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag."
8. "Keep the pressure on. Never let up."
9. "The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself."
10. "The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition."
11. "If you push a negative hard enough, it will push through and become a positive."
12. "The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative."
13. "Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it."

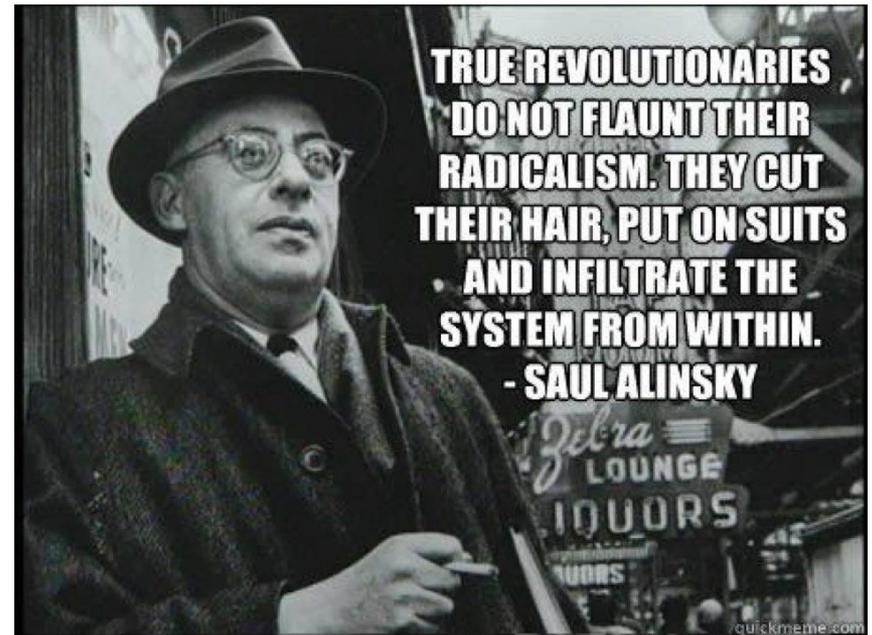
Alinsky, a nihilist, dedicated his
book to Lucifer:

“Lest we forget at least an over-the-shoulder acknowledgment to the very first radical: from all our legends, mythology, and history... the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom — **Lucifer.**”

Like **Hobbes**, **Machiavelli**, **Rousseau**, **Robespierre**, and **Lenin** before him, Alinsky would deify the brutish, wicked and primitive members of society while impugning the virtuous, remarkable and law-abiding.

As a graduate student in sociology at the University of Chicago, he socialized with the infamous gangster, **Al Capone**, and was influenced by the mob's brutal enforcer, **Frank Nitti**, calling Nitti his "professor."

He held "society," America and capitalism solely responsible for existential class inequities.



In Alinsky's view, **criminality** was not a character flaw, but **a consequence of social inequity**, particularly the distribution of wealth. He was thus, determined to **change the status quo of individual rights and private property by any means necessary**.

Linking Gramsci, Lukacs and Alinsky

- Alinsky viewed revolution as a slow, patient process. The trick was to **penetrate existing institutions** such as churches, unions and political parties.” He advised organizers and their disciples to quietly, subtly gain influence within the decision-making ranks of these institutions, and to **introduce changes** from that platform. Like his gangster mentors taught him, “The ends justify the means.”

Remember, Gramsci and Kuckacs believed:

- a “new”, Marxist person must be culturally created
- existing cultural norms had to be destroyed
- **an overturning of values cannot take place without the annihilation of the old values**
- Alinsky’s “Rules” would allow compromised societal institutions to be bent to this task.