

A second sort of difference between contemporary American and West German cultural structures, overlooked by an exclusively "derivative" approach, is suggested more implicitly by Hirsch's discussion. The ideological topography of political debate seems to shine through his account. Aside from the conservatives and reformists of the established parties, two significant positions appear locked in confrontation: the socialist leftists, accused of academic bourgeoisification and accusing their opponents of quietism or tacit conservatism, while these opponents — at least in Hirsch's narrative — express their position with repeated reference to Foucault. Thus, integrated Marxists, tied to the state ideologically and professionally, are counterposed to the decentered groupings where political analyses foreground the positivism of power. Clearly the West German Foucault reception is considerably more political than the American, while German academic Marxism is probably much less structuralist than here. "French theory" plays a different role in the American scholarly (especially literary critical) establishment than it does in the European social movements. Hirsch's account does not address ideological issues extensively, although the competition between Marxism and a post-structuralist tendency functions as a hidden agenda to his discussion of new political conflicts.

Russell A. Berman

Ira H. Cohen, *Ideology and Unconsciousness: Reich, Freud and Marx*. New York: New York University Press, 1982.

Wilhelm Reich needs little introduction. Many of his books remain in print; biographies and memoirs of him regularly appear. Nevertheless few serious studies of his thought have emerged. There are several reasons for this; his post-Marxist post-psychoanalytic, almost mystical, theorizing in the United States blocks access to his earlier, more salient efforts. The full study of Reich must evaluate not only his contributions to a radical psychoanalysis but to cloud-busting. The enthusiasm of outsiders wanes, and only his devoted followers maintain the flow of literature.

In addition, the very simplicity of Reich repels commentators. Reich was not only an audacious theoretician but a popularizer and propagandist. The force of his work derived from his spare formulations. But his simplicity — not simplemindedness — ill-served him. Academics need opaque and confused texts to exploit; the plainness of Reich's writings rendered a secondary literature superfluous. He presented his own ideas too clearly. This should be a lesson to future cultural heroes: be confused and opaque.

Ira Cohen should be congratulated for rescuing Reich from this inattention; Reich is familiar and unstudied. The book jacket calls this "the first work in English to deal in any depth with Reich's efforts" to merge Marxism and psychoanalysis. To be sure, an exaggeration but the field is not crowded. Cohen is concerned exclusively with the early Reich (through 1936). According to Cohen in this period Reich "uses the Freudian theory of the unconscious to develop a psychological supplement to the Marxian theory of ideology: his theory of character structure" (p. 2-3).

Cohen organized his book in accord with Reich's theory. The first part surveys Marx and Marxists on class consciousness; the second part outlines Freud's theory of the unconscious. He saves the bulk of the Reich discussion for the third part, although he introduces earlier Reich's organization "Sex-Pol." For Cohen in the approach to class

consciousness Sex-Pol offered a viable alternative to Marxism-Leninism. He concludes by extolling Reich's Sex-Pol and his theory of character structure; they are advances essential for all radical theorists and activists.

It would be nice to close the review here; and simply note that Cohen's study is a modest contribution; that he makes several interesting points; that partisans of Reich will probably respond to his occasional criticism of their teacher; and that a long overdue reconsideration of Reich's oeuvre might commence. Goodnight.

However, too much backslapping and politeness corrode thought. The deceit has lately become so thick that it is no longer clear which books are of any value. There is no doubt that Cohen deserves commendation; he is a colleague, a comrade and a compatriot in a thankless project: critical theorizing. This should not be forgotten or slighted. There is also little doubt that he has written a sloppy and pedestrian book. Neither research nor reading appear to be his forte. What he does not know, he fudges. Should this be overlooked?

Anyone with a limited familiarity with Marx, Freud or Reich will learn little from Cohen. Perhaps this is the point: many do not possess this minimal familiarity. Fine. But Cohen's book bears the unmistakable brand of the academy: it is clumsily written and organized. Cohen cannot tell us often enough what he is about to demonstrate, what he is demonstrating and what he has just demonstrated. He also manages to turn an intrinsically fascinating story of Wilhelm Reich into crunchy granola. Only monograph junkies will read this book.

For academics Cohen does provide a mini-lesson on how not to write books: he begins at scratch. Apparently nowadays it is *de rigueur* to "reconstruct" a couple of traditions before getting down to meat and potatoes. "In this chapter," he reminds us, "I have attempted to reconstruct Marx's method as an attempt to explain social patterns. Marx considers social relationships within a particular social structure," etc., etc., (p. 24). A problem dogs this reconstruction fetish; it belabors the obvious. Cohen's reconstruction of Marx relies heavily on Bertell Ollman (and Engels), to which he adds several of his own questionable propositions. His reconstruction of psychoanalysis is better but, in a short book, unnecessary.

His scholarship does not inspire confidence: indeed it is the shoddy scholarship that ultimately sinks this little boat. He cites Hegel. One checks the reference. It is not Hegel; rather it is Hegel as cited by Lenin in his *Philosophical Notebooks*; and it is not even Lenin; it is Lenin as anthologized in the *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, a venerable Communist collection. This is not an isolated occurrence. Cohen is apparently allergic to original and reliable texts. He likes things in anthologies; he gets Marx from an anthology by Robert Tucker (*Marx-Engels Reader*) and *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* from a truncated edition by Fromm (*Marx's Concept of Man*); he gets Lenin from the *Reader* and a Bantam paperback (*Essential Works*). It is amazing he found some books of Reich.

Not too many. He never uses a crucial, and easily available, text, *People in Trouble*. This would not matter if Cohen was offering a brightly written popular exposition. He is not, and it does matter. He is offering a closely argued evaluation of Reich. One wades through the reconstructions of Marx and Freud, expecting at the end the heart and soul of the book; but the incisive and original perspective on Reich never happens. It flies by. In an instant we are reading phrases about Reich such as "as I have argued" or "as I have shown," as if something had been established. Where?

In Chapter 3 we have the first, and in many ways only, sally. "In this chapter I will compare the Leninist and Sex-Pol programs for the development of class conscious-

ness" (p. 54). In Leninism "an elite group of workers and intellectuals" constituted themselves a vanguard. "The Sex-Pol strategy" adopted another approach; it located "the sources of class consciousness in the life experience of workers, rather than in a scientific theory of leadership" (p. 54). Cohen provides a conventional summary of the "Marxist-Leninist Party," and then outlines the contribution of Sex-Pol, "a movement of workers and intellectuals in Weimar Germany," led by Reich.

Cohen's discussion of Sex-Pol suffers from two deadly ailments. Cohen knows next to nothing about Sex-Pol; and the two "programs" of Marxism-Leninism and Sex-Pol were originally one. During the heroic period of Sex-Pol Reich was a member of the Communist Party, and conceived of his work as contributions to orthodox Marxism and Leninism.

It would be fine, indeed, to learn something about Sex-Pol, but there seems to be little information. Reich set up some clinics in Vienna, and then a group inside the German Communist Party in Berlin; it issued many programs, pamphlets and so on under the "Sex-Pol" name. In one of the few references to its activities, Reich noted that in a year and a half some 700 people applied for treatment in their clinics, of which 30% could be helped of their "neuroses and sexual disturbances."¹

That there is so little information about the activities of Sex-Pol does not necessarily cripple Cohen's argument; only he is not forthright. In fact his talk gets looser and looser until the end of the book the Sex-Pol "movement" is elevated into a major political formation of the same order as the Turin factory councils; in 1919-20 as Italy came close to revolution, these councils encompassed hundreds of thousands; Cohen huffs and puffs. "The Sex-Pol leaders were concerned with preparing people for the long and difficult struggle...By involving large numbers of workers, the Sex-Pol organizations, no less than the councils, helped to establish practical relationship between revolutionary leadership and the mass of unorganized workers...The Sex-Pol movement remains one of the best examples of a serious and systematic attempt to organize and coordinate worker's social struggles..." etc., etc. (p. 218).

This is 100% unadulterated hype. Cohen does not present a single shred of evidence; he has no sources, no information. He is apparently tripping. He only utilizes a brief "History of Sex-Pol" by Reich, which was translated some years ago by an English libertarian group; but this history only contains a program, and some charges and counter-charges. It seems very likely that there was no real Sex-Pol "movement," only clinics, and the many activities of Reich himself.

This does not deprive either Sex-Pol or Reich himself of theoretical importance, but on this score also Cohen flubs it; his sloppiness here is less excusable since much of the information is readily available; Cohen is uninterested. Reich originally presented his own work within the terms of conventional Marxism; he did view Sex-Pol as an alternative to Leninism, but a formation inside it.

Reich was disabused of this idea. Within a two year period, 1932-34, the Communist Party's hostility and Reich's disenchantment fed each other, resulting in Reich's exclusion from the Party. This was not only a personal and political drama, but a theoretical clash that Cohen does not even mention: the evolution of Reich's thought out of and finally against orthodoxy. An account of Sex-Pol as an alternative to conventional Marxism and Leninism which does not discuss its roots in the orthodoxy is fundamentally misleading.

Although the spine of this book, an incisive discussion of Reich and Sex-Pol, turns

1. W. Reich, "The Sexual Misery of the Working Masses," *New German Critique*, 1 (Winter, 1973), p. 103.

out to be a wet noodle, Cohen's work still retains value. In his most original insight Cohen separates the Reich, theoretician of libido, from the Reich, theoretician of character structure. In the former Reich tends towards a dubious sexual reductionism; in the latter he is irreplaceable for a left strategy. However, Cohen undermines his own argument by trying to score points against Herbert Marcuse; he does not fare too well. One chapter defends Reich from Marcuse's charge of a sexual primitivism. Marcuse "distorts Reich's meaning. By 'sexual liberation' Reich meant something quite different than Marcuse's interpretation...for Reich progress in freedom was the development of the capacity for self-regulation in work and pleasure" (pp. 166-167).

Unfortunately by the next chapter Cohen has completely forgotten his argument, and reverses it. Now Reich is guilty of sexual reductionism, and Cohen cites Marcuse for support. "In contrast to Reich, who spoke of sexual liberation as the ability to satisfy genital instincts, Marcuse spoke of it as the transformation of libido. Marcuse stressed a qualitative distinction in sexual activity which Reich neglected...Marcuse went beyond Reich in arguing that real instinctual liberation is not the mere release of libidinal strivings" (pp. 191, 194). Well said, but someone should have reminded Cohen to reread his previous chapter.

Ira Cohen is a colleague and comrade; let us not forget that. His book, however, is sadly defective. Its research is deplorable; the book almost drowns in "reconstructions." His argument, where it is not contradictory, happily misses critical issues. Earlier books that deal with Reich — Reimut Reiche, *Sexuality and Class Struggle*, Michael Schneider, *Neurosis and Civilization*, Gad Horowitz, *Repression* — are more substantial and provocative. We still await a fundamental encounter with the contribution of Wilhelm Reich.

Russell Jacoby

Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left (The Great Refusal)*, J.F. Bergin, South Hadley, Mass. (Praeger, New York, 1982).

The problem with most writings about the New Left is their failure to integrate the actual lived experience of that movement. Mostly, there has been a long parade of denunciations, rejections, and reaction-formations which amount to little more than claiming that the New Left did not fit nearly into this or that Marxist or liberal model of what a political movement should be. Breines has finally written a book which takes seriously the New Left's attempt to change the meaning of politics and refutes orthodox Marxists' and liberals' efforts to see it through their particular theoretical biases.

"Prefigurative politics" is the category Breines uses to describe New Left politics: "The crux of prefigurative politics imposed substantial tasks, the central one being to create and sustain within the living practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that 'prefigured' and embodied the desired society." Against critics, both liberal and Leninist, whose "instrumental, or, paraphrasing Lipset, instrumental political biases" make it impossible for them to grasp the real political nature of the New Left, she argues "that the utopian and 'anti-organizational' characteristics of the New Left were among its most vital aspects." Democracy and community, the political and the personal, were central to the New Left's visionary practice. Citing the destruction by developing capitalism of those institutions, relationships, and experiences which constitute communities as the backdrop for the communitarian needs and