

The History of Political Correctness (Complete)

For the first time, Americans today are not free to say what they think. If they say something deemed offensive or insensitive, or worst of all, hate speech, they may be in serious trouble, and they may be punished for violating the unholy commandments of the 90s, commonly known as “political correctness”. But is this political correctness a new phenomenon? We’ll show you tonight that political correctness has been in the making for more than 8 decades. And it seems that a deteriorating society is exactly what political correctness strives for.

But just what is political correctness? As you’re about to see, political correctness is nothing less than a Marxist ideology. Marxism translated from economic into cultural terms and not going back to the 1960s, but to WWI. Marxist theory ... if war came to Europe the working class in every European country would rise in revolt, but that theory proved wrong.

When the 1st World War began in 1914, the workers loyal to their country proved stronger than their so-called class consciousness. They were willing to put on their uniforms, French, or German, Austrian, Russian or British, and marched off by the millions to fight each other. In 1917 a Marxist revolution did occur in Russia, but it failed to spread to Western Europe, again contradicting orthodox Marxist theory. At the war’s end, Marxist theorists had to confront the question, what had gone wrong?

[Antonio Gramsci](#) Italy, and [György Lukács](#) in Hungary, believed that they had the answer. Gramsci and Lukács argued the western culture had blinded the working class to its true Marxist class interests. Before a Marxist revolution could take place, western culture had to be destroyed. In 1919 Lukács, who was considered the most brilliant Marxist theorist since Marx himself, asked, “Who will save us from western civilization?” That same year, 1919, Lukács became Deputy Commissar for Culture in the Bolshevics Béla Kohn in Hungary where he launched a program, “Cultural Terrorism”. As part of that program, Lukács introduced a radical sex education program into the Hungarian schools. Political correctness, as we know it, was already beginning to take form.

He tried to actually undermine the unity of the family, and that was one of the reasons that he tried to introduce sex education. László Pasztor, a leader in the Hungarian resistance against the communist takeover of Hungary after World War II, explains why children were targeted. It’s always much tougher to convert an adult to do something what (that – bad grammar) he was taught not to do. The program left great residual effects on Hungary. The only thing what (that) we were permitted to accept as far as culture is concerned, what they were teaching, that was it! Free thinking was a very big sin.

The Béla Kun government lasted only a few months, in part, because the Hungarian working class was outraged by György Lukács’ assault on traditional western culture; but meanwhile, in Germany a new attempt to create a Marxist critique of western culture was taking shape. There, the wealthy young son of a grain trader, [Felix Weil](#), wanted to establish a public policy institute, a think tank to serve as a home for advanced Marxist thought. Modeled on the Marx-Engels Institute, Moscow, Weil’s think tank was originally to be named The Institute for Marxism. Martin Jay, Chairman of the History Department at Berkeley, and author of *The History of the Frankfurt School*, explains why the name was changed to the Institut für Sozialforschung (the Institute for Social Research).

Well, I think they were very interested in trying to avoid being overly labeled. So, it's a fairly bland name, the Institute for Social Research. The institute was affiliated with Frankfurt University in Frankfurt Germany, and in time was simply known as the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School formally opened its doors on June 22nd, 1924, but it had already held its first seminar and theory in the spring of 1923. There, almost two dozen Marxist scholars gathered for what Weil, the sponsor, called a Marxist study week. One of the participants was [Richard Sorge](#), later, a famous Soviet spy. Another was George Lukács. Lukács' writings on culture were the basis for much of the program. Almost half of the participants in this Marxist study week would later be affiliated with the Frankfurt School.

Following Lukács' lead, the Frankfurt school would be the vehicle that translated Marxism from economic into cultural terms, giving us what we now know as political correctness. The Frankfurt's school first director was an Austrian Marxist economist, [Karl Gruenberg](#). Gruenberg's principle effort was to firmly establish the institute's Marxist nature. In his inaugural address, which opened the new building in Frankfurt, Gruenberg said, "It has been our intention here from the outset to maintain uniformity in the way we look at problems and go about solving them. I too am one of the opponents of one of the economic, social, and legal order, which has been handed down to us from history, and I too am one of the supporters of Marxism. In the new research institute, Marxism will from now on have a home."

Under Karl Gruenberg, the Frankfurt school worked mostly on economic questions and the labor movement—conventional Marxist subjects; but in 1930, Gruenberg was replaced as Director by a young Marxist intellectual with very different ideas, [Max Horkheimer](#). Horkheimer quickly began to use the institute to develop a new Marxism—very different from the Marxism of the Soviet Union. First, recognizing the economic successes of capitalism, Horkheimer announced that revolution was unlikely to come from the working class; the Frankfurt School would have to find a substitute.

Well, this was the great question; the great question is, is there a surrogate for the working class? The Frankfurt school would not find an answer to this question until the 1960s, but meanwhile, Horkheimer moved to revive Lukács' work by making the culture, not the economy, the central focus of the Frankfurt School's work. As Martin Jay writes in his history of the Frankfurt School *The Dialectical Imagination*, "If it can be said that in the early years of its history, the institute concerned itself primarily with an analysis of [bourgeois](#) society's [social economic substructure](#). In the years after 1930, its prime interest lay in its [cultural superstructure](#). Indeed, the traditional cultural Marxist formula regarding the relationship between the two was called into question. The key to the Frankfurt's school's work on culture was the crossing of Marx with Freud.

Just as classical economic Marxism argued, "under capitalism the working class was oppressed", so the Frankfurt School used Freud to argue that under western culture everyone lived in a constant state of psychological repression. So that there were radical Freudians in hopes to bring psychoanalysis to end what (Wilhelm) [Reich had called sexual alienation](#), which they saw as significant as economic alienation. The solution, according to the Frankfurt School, was not just a political revolution to overthrow capitalism, but a social and cultural revolution as well. To further the institute's work on cultural issues, Horkheimer brought in some new blood.



[Dialectical Marxism](#)

The new members included a sometimes music critic [Theodore Adorno](#). Martin Jay sees this addition as critical. Well, Adorno was perhaps the most effective, and I think brilliant out of all the members of the Frankfurt School. Another new member was [Eric Fromm](#). Fromm, a practicing psychoanalyst, was noted for his radical Marxist social psychology. He pioneered the concept of sexual liberation, and gender politics. According to Martin Jay, in Fromm's view, masculinity and femininity were not reflections of the central sexual differences. They were derived, instead, from differences in life's functions, which were, in part, socially determined.

Another piece of political correctness was falling into place. In 1932, [Herbert Marcuse](#) became a member for the Institute for Social Research. Marcuse would ultimately become the most important member of the Frankfurt School for the development of political correctness. In the 1950s and '60s, Marcuse would complete the translation of Marxism into cultural terms and inject it into the new left. Martin Jay sums it up: Marcuse, in the United States, represented the most radical inclinations of the school, in a sense continuing the work they'd done in the 1920s and into the '30s, a work that was inspired by Marxist-Engels philosophy. (They) were interested in the crisis both for capitalism and liberal democracy, trying to find alternatives to the working class.

As we've seen the Frankfurt School, Marxist in origin, wanted to create a cultural revolution against western society, and in the 1930s they took their important first step. In the 1930s, the work of Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm and Marcuse issued in its first tangible product, [\(The Genesis of\) Critical Theory](#). The term "critical theory" is something of a play on words. One is tempted to ask, "What is the theory?" The answer is, the theory is to criticize--an unremitting destructive criticism of every institution

of western society. They hope to bring that society down. Critical theory is the basis for gay studies, black studies, women studies, and various other studies departments found on American university campuses today. These departments are the home base of political correctness.

[David Horowitz](#) was present at the birth of campus political correctness. Well, I was a radical in the '60s. I was a Marxist. My buddies were people that taught me. I edited the largest magazine of the left at the time, I ran parts. But the Frankfurt School was important in Marxism because they no longer believed really in the future, and they only believed in destroying capitalism, and destroying bourgeois democracies is what we would have called it. And if you look at today's campuses, that kind of [nihilism](#) is the dominant theme. That is, (to) attack America.

The Frankfurt School was careful never to define what critical theory was for, only for what it was against. Again, Martin Jay, the Frankfurt's School's semi-official historian. The critical theory itself always felt reluctant at being put in a straight jacket of systemization and defined its reduction to a simple definition. Critical theory actually attempted to politicize logic itself. Horkheimer wrote "logic is not independent of content. ". That means (that if) an argument is logical, it would help destroy western culture, illogical, if it supports it. Such twisted thought lies at the heart of the political correctness now [inculcated](#) in American university students.

" When there's ..aaa..you know, only 1% of the campus is conservative and the other 99% of the people who care are incredibly liberal, you're going to get something approaching a social state."

But how did the work of a small group of German Marxist intellectuals come to America? In 1933 when the Nazis came to power in Germany, the Institute for Social Research fled, they fled to New York City, where it was reestablished that same year with help of the President of Columbia University. Once in America, the Frankfurt School gradually shifted the focus of its work from destroying German society and culture, to attacking the society and culture of its new place of refuge. Not only did they apply critical theory to American society, they added some new elements: one was the Institute's so-called [Studies in Prejudice](#), which culminated in 1950 in Theodore Adorno's immensely influential book *The Authoritarian Personality*. In it, Adorno argued that the American People possess many fascist traits, and that anyone who supported traditional American culture, was psychologically unbalanced. It is no accident that today that the "politically correct" are quick to label their opponents fascists, and suggest that they need psychological treatment, in the form of sensitivity training.

(Protestors shouting) "People over profits."

The Frankfurt School even integrated political correctness' most fashionable cause—environmentalism, into their cultural Marxism by way of Horkheimer's and Adorno's book [Dialectic of Enlightenment](#). Well, they were interested in what was called the "domination or nature"¹, [Dialectic of Enlightenment](#), in particular, moved the emphasis away from economic domination to the species domination of the natural world, including what's internal nature through psychoanalytical understanding of repression. So

¹ [Domination or Nature](#)

they were very keen on recognizing we needed to have a more nurturing, a more, let's say, balanced relations between human kind and the natural world.

After WWII Horkheimer and Adorno returned to Germany where the institute was reestablished at Frankfurt University, but not all the old members of the institute returned. Faithfully, [Herbert Marcuse](#) remained in America, eventually becoming a professor at [Brandies University](#), California, San Diego. Marcuse labored to finish the intellectual work begun by Horkheimer, Adorno, and Fromm in the 1930s. Marcuse, on the other hand, remained in the United States and during the 50s and 60s developed some of their earlier ideas, the emerging Freud and Marx, interest in aesthetics, interests in cultural, let's say tendencies towards, what he would call "[negation](#)", which were usable in a campaign to call (in)to question, what (??-name-??) would call [hegemony](#) of capitalistic culture, and of course Marcuse became the guru of the new left. It was Marcuse who finally answered the question posed by Horkheimer in the early 30s.

Who could substitute for the working class as an agent of revolution? So you had to find some new constituency, whether it was students, or blacks, or women, or gays, or whatever it was, and Marcuse had a fluid Marxism that fit into this. Martin Jay confirms the role of the Frankfurt School in creating the victim groups that constitute the politically correct coalition. The working class wouldn't play with the hegemony role, that the traditional Marxism had expected from it; and so students, blacks, other minority groups, women, and so forth were ... they hoped, at least, able to come together. Of critical importance for the [injunction](#) of the Frankfurt School's work into the student's rebellion of the 1960s, was Marcuse's revival of Fromm's notion of sexual liberation. Marcuse, however, was the main conduit of ideas.

Marcuse had written one important work of the 1950s called the [Eros and Civilization](#), a work that intended to rub Freud against the grain, and come out with a radically new utopian of psychoanalysis; and that combined with [Norman O. Brown's Life Against Death](#) had a great impact on the counter-culture, and on emphasizing a [libidinal](#) element. Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* condemned all restrictions on sexual behavior, calling instead for [polymorphous](#) perversity. Instead, it argues that in certain early developmental levels of the human [psyche](#), there was a potential for sexual expression, sexual pleasure, which had not yet been organized into restricted notions of heterosexual sexuality. And these had some sort of capacity to be reinvigorated. Polymorphous perversity helped opened the door to aspects of political correctness, such as gay liberation. This was his idea of what human society, what a good human society should be based on, was a certain kind of polymorphous perversity, a [narcissism](#), which by liberating non-[appropriated](#) "[eros](#)", was his term, we would find great enlightenment and greater happiness—this was to be the key to utopia.

David Horowitz ties eros civilization directly into the 60s rebellion he was part of. Marxism is a bankrupt creed, and was bankrupt by the 50s, or earlier. People understood that it didn't work. There was no working class that was going to make a revolution. Capitalism-people were happy with capitalism, basically because it makes sense. (IT) spread more money to more people than any other system in history. So they tried to find other sources of revolutionary energy, and one with the idea of sexual repression in the 60s. And there is a way ... people always think of complicated theories to ... you know,

do what they wanna (want to) do. People wanted to (bleep (fuck)) a lot. So Marcuse gave them the intellectual justification for having a lot of sex with a lot of people. (??) That's what [Eros and Civilization](#) that's the title of his famous book is about. Marcuse is also the source of one of political correctness' most notable characteristics. It's totally intolerant for any viewpoints but its own. Marcuse argued that our free American society was actually a deception, that its true tolerance is somehow repressive, while he argued for something called "liberating tolerance." And what he meant by that was liberating toleration or liberating tolerance meant intolerance from ideas of movement from the right, and tolerance for any ideas from the left. It's .. you know ... a recipe for repression.

Even Martin Jay, a great admirer of the Frankfurt School, admits the totalitarian aspect of Marcuse. Perhaps his most significant essay in terms of impact, one we haven't even mentioned, the [Essay on repressive tolerance](#), written in the late 60s, which argued that because the tolerance of different beliefs produced no action at all, because every belief seems to be equal to all of his racist, and neo-fascist, and ultra beliefs were given equal weight for those who were pacifists and [emancipatory](#). This led ultimately to the problems of political correctness and incorrectness in the 1980s. That is, if you had a strong notion of who was politically correct, you could then be intolerant of those who weren't, and sometimes this could be used to license by people, on the left to deny free speech to people they disagree with.

Through these works, Marcuse became the main agent of transmission of the Frankfurt School's ideas. Marcuse was a tremendously important influence on the thinking of young people in those days. He was one of the spiritual fathers of the movement. And through Marcuse, the new left found the rest of the Frankfurt School. And then in the 1960s, they were rediscovered by students who looked back at the work they'd done, and rediscovered a source of a non-traditional, non-communist Marxism, which they found as an inspiration for the student movement in the 1960s. Jay pays Marcuse an ultimate compliment as a revolutionary, "He became a kind of celebrity, I mean in Paris there were banners that said "Marx/Mao/and Marcuse." So, he was, you know, luckily because of the illiteration up there with a couple of heavy hitters.

And the consequences of the Frankfurt's School's work now engulfs us all. Martin Jay pays them due credit. Well, it's fascinating if you compare them with other figures from the so-called western Marxist tradition, they are perhaps more alive than virtually anybody else. Roger Kindell, although coming from the opposite perspective from Martin Jay, agrees. The institutions of the ideas of radical multiculturalism in the academy, and what you might call its enforcement wing, namely the ideology of political correctness, testify to the ... um ... vitality of some of the ideas, of some of those ideas of the Frankfurt School. We asked new former left leader David Horowitz, "What the members of the Frankfurt School, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, might think if they could come back and visit one of America's politically correct campuses today." Well, I am sure they'd be thrilled because they would be, you know, gods."