

The Social Theory Workshop presents:

— **ADORNO IN 1969** —

**Adorno's Marxism and the problem and legacy of the 1960s Left  
in theory and practice**

**Chris Cutrone**

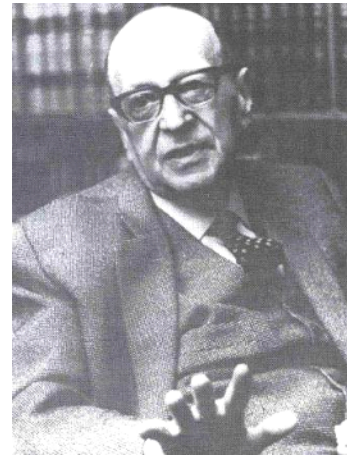
Committee on the History of Culture, University of Chicago



Rudi Dutschke



Theodor W. Adorno



Max Horkheimer

A certain legend of the 1960s New Left has it that the Marxist critical theorist Theodor W. Adorno had been hostile to student radicalism. This placed Adorno's legacy for progressive politics in doubt for at least two decades after 1968. Adorno had defended his junior colleague Jürgen Habermas's warning of "left fascism" among 1960s student radicals, and challenged Herbert Marcuse's support for student radicalism, questioning its emancipatory character. Adorno's collaborator Max Horkheimer commented about the '60s radicalism, "But is it really so desirable, this revolution?" Infamously, Adorno called the police to clear demonstrators from the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research in 1969. Students protested that "Adorno as an institution is dead." Some months later, while hiking on vacation, Adorno suffered a heart attack and died.

Eulogizing Adorno in 1969, Habermas raised two issues for the post-1960s reception of Adorno's work: 1.) Adorno's work was both inspiring and frustrating for the critique of modern society; and 2.) Adorno left little to suggest directions to take beyond a "meager reprise of Marxism." Fredric Jameson and others revisited Adorno's legacy around 1990, the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, to challenge the politics of postmodernism.

Controversy over Adorno is over the nature and character of Adorno's Marxism, formulated in the 1920s-30s, and yet to be given a proper account.

**Monday, October 23, 2006, 8:00PM, Wilder House, 5811 S. Kenwood Ave.**

Limited number of hard copies are available outside SS 225; to request a file attachment, e-mail Robin Bates at [rdbates@uchicago.edu](mailto:rdbates@uchicago.edu)