



Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics

Juergen Habermas

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Knowledge, communication, action – These are the concepts central to all of Habermas's thought. As a philosopher, he is concerned with the rational connections of these concepts. As a sociologist, he is prepared to analyze with care the distortions of human interactions caused by existing social and political institutions. In a series of connected essays, the author assesses the function of the contemporary university, and sharply analyzes contemporary students and their political efforts.

He then brilliantly analyzes as a communications model the relationships between research institutes and the political agencies which employ them. The book concludes with a complex discussion of technology and science as an "ideology," dedicated to Herbert Marcuse.

Critical parts of Marcuse's thought, Habermas dissects contemporary democratic dialogue and offers an important preliminary sketch of a general theory of social evolution.

He analyzes the difference between the technological sphere of control and the practical sphere of communication and interaction as the basic feature of human social life, and explains how and why the predominance of the technological sphere is the distinguishing and alienating characteristic of advanced industrial society. The concepts of depoliticization and the freeing of communication emerge as the crux of today's political situation.

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