Preface to the New Edition (1969)

Dialectic of Enlightenment was published in 1947 by Querido in Amsterdam. The book, which found readers only gradually, has been out of print for some time. We have been induced to reissue it after more than twenty years not only by requests from many sides but by the notion that not a few of the ideas in it are timely now and have largely determined our later theoretical writings. No one who was not involved in the writing could easily understand to what extent we both feel responsible for every sentence. We dictated long stretches together; the Dialectic derives its vital energy from the tension between the two intellectual temperaments which came together in writing it.

We do not stand by everything we said in the book in its original form. That would be incompatible with a theory which attributes a temporal core to truth instead of contrasting truth as something invariable to the movement of history. The book was written at a time when the end of the National Socialist terror was in sight. In not a few places, however, the formulation is no longer adequate to the reality of today. All the same, even at that time we did not underestimate the implications of the transition to the administered world.

In a period of political division into immense blocs driven by an objective tendency to collide, horror has been prolonged. The conflicts in the third world and the renewed growth of totalitarianism are not mere historical interludes any more than, according to the *Dialectic*, fascism was at that time. Critical thought, which does not call a halt before progress itself, requires us to take up the cause of the remnants of freedom, of tendencies toward real humanity, even though they seem powerless in face of the great historical trend.

The development toward total integration identified in the book has

been interrupted but not terminated; it threatens to be consummated by means of dictators and wars. Our prognosis regarding the associated lapse from enlightenment into positivism, into the myth of that which is the case, and finally of the identity of intelligence and hostility to mind, has been overwhelmingly confirmed. Our concept of history does not believe itself elevated above history, but it does not merely chase after information in the positivist manner. As a critique of philosophy it does not seek to abandon philosophy itself.

From America, where the book was written, we returned to Germany with the conviction that, theoretically and practically, we would be able to achieve more there than elsewhere. Together with Friedrich Pollock, to whom the book is dedicated on his seventy-fifth birthday as it was then on his fiftieth, we built up the Institut für Sozialforschung once again, with the idea of taking further the concepts formulated in *Dialectic*. In continuing to develop our theory, and in the common experiences connected with it, Gretel Adorno has given us the most valuable assistance, as she did with the first version.

We have made changes far more sparingly than is usual with re-editions of books dating back several decades. We did not want to retouch what we had written, not even the obviously inadequate passages. To bring the text fully up to date with the current situation would have amounted to nothing less than writing a new book. That what matters today is to preserve and disseminate freedom, rather than to accelerate, however indirectly, the advance toward the administered world, we have also argued in our later writings. We have confined ourselves here to correcting misprints and suchlike matters. This restraint has made the book a piece of documentation; we hope that it is also more.

Max Horkheimer Theodor W. Adorno

Frankfurt am Main, April 1969