

## ON BEING A MARXIST: A HUNGARIAN VIEW

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### *Introduction\**

*The following text represents one of the first major fruits of the revival of **samizdat** activity and democratic opposition in Hungary since the late 1970s. The text originally appeared in 1978 as part of a collection entitled **Marx in the Fourth Decade**, which together with **Profile** (a collection of essays which had been rejected by official publications produced around the same time) marked the first effort at **samizdat** publication in Hungary. The editor, **András Kovács**, circulated a questionnaire on present attitudes towards Marxism among a loose circle of friends who in the 1960s had been caught up in the 'renaissance of Marxism' in Hungary, an independent current of Marxist thinking which based itself on a revival of interest in the early work of **Lukács**, and whose ideas bore certain **affinities** to those of both the Western New Left and Czechoslovak democratic socialism. The contributors were asked to consider both their personal relationship to Marxism and its wider contemporary significance. As the editor's letter began, 'The thinking of the great majority of our generation was determined in some form or other by Marxism'.*

*Those who regarded themselves as Marxists or those who took up a standpoint consciously against Marxism both felt that they knew precisely what they rejected and why. Today the situation has changed. This has led me to put to you the question: 'What in your view is Marxism and what is your attitude to it?'*

*The second main question was; 'How far is or is not Marxism appropriate in Eastern Europe today?' The recipients of the questionnaire were asked in addition whether they **believed Marxism** to be of continued relevance for the left in the West and in the Third World, even if they no longer regarded it as such for Eastern Europe.*

*The questionnaire was answered by 21 people, whose current occupations range from philosophers and social scientists to literary critics and even theologians, and their replies encompass a diversity of intellectual and political positions. So far as can be judged from the summaries of the volume and the excerpts which have appeared in English, the bulk of the*

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**\*This introduction was written by friends of the authors in Britain**

contributors (with certain conspicuous exceptions), are united in their conviction that the 1960s strategy of promoting reform from above through a revival of true Marxist thinking has proved illusory, and that this development throws into question the claims of Marxism to provide either a framework for theoretical analysis or a guide to practical political action in contemporary Eastern European societies.'

The authors of the present text, Gyorgy Bence (b. 1941) and János Kis (b. 1943) were trained as professional Marxist philosophers in Budapest. As they explain in the third section of their essay, Bence and Kis were deeply influenced in the early 1960s by the lectures of Gyorgy Markus on the history of philosophy. Given the predominant influence of Lukács in Budapest Marxist thinking, Markus and following him Bence and Kis gradually drew closer to that grouping of Lukács' former students known in the West as the 'Budapest' or 'Lukács School', and came themselves to form a third generation of Lukács' students. The Budapest School is defined in this essay as consisting of the philosophers Agnes Heller, Ferenc Feher, and Mibailly Vajda, in association with the sociologists Maria Markus and András Hegediis (pre-1956 Prime Minister of Hungary) though others might draw its boundaries more widely.<sup>2</sup> Its principal contribution to the 'renaissance of Marxism' in Hungary was its effort to develop Marxist theory in the direction of a 'philosophy of praxis'.<sup>3</sup>

Both the older and younger wings of the Budapest School were united in their open opposition to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, but came to differ in their interpretation of its significance for their own intellectual and political positions. While most of the older members of the School continued their efforts to ground a critique of existing socialism in an abstract conception of the human essence, Bence and Kis, together with Markus, embarked in the early 70s on a lengthy critique of the model of a communist economy contained in Marx's **Capital** (forthcoming from Allison and Busby). As a nervous response to the development of any type of independent Marxist thinking, the Party shut the door of public life on both generations of Lukács' students; in 1973, two years after Lukács' death, Bence and Kis were dismissed from their academic jobs and prohibited for a time from publishing in Hungary, along with both Markuses, Heller, Feher, Vajda, and Hegediis.

Between 1974 and 1976, Bence and Kis wrote a series of essays attempting to develop a novel theoretical analysis of Soviet-type societies as **sui generis** forms of class society which are neither socialist, capitalist, nor transitional between the two. These were published in English in 1977 under the pseudonym Marc Rakovski as the volume **Towards an East European Marxism** (Allison and Busby, London, 1977).<sup>4</sup> With the temporary emigration in 1976 of the older figures of the Budapest School,<sup>5</sup> (including Markus), Bence and Kis were left as the only major representatives in Hungary of this oppositional Marxism which had been

associated with Lukács, and from 1975 they began to play a central role in the emerging democratic opposition, in which they were the main figures belonging to this highly theoretical Marxist tradition. The present text itself served as a bridge between Marxists and non-Marxists involved in the emerging democratic opposition. In 1977 the two authors participated in a letter of solidarity with Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, signed by 34 Hungarian intellectuals; in autumn 1979, they, together with János Kenedi, sent a special letter of protest to Kadar about the trials of Charter 77 activists, as part of a wider campaign against the Prague trials which resulted in a petition signed by 250 people. As a consequence of their role in this protest, official harassment against them has been stepped up, and they have been deprived of the opportunities for free-lance editorial work by which they have supported themselves since 1973.



At the end of 1977, one of our friends, András Kovács, circulated a detailed questionnaire on the present state of Marxism. He planned to collect the answers into a volume, later to be published in manuscript form. This is how the collection entitled *Marx in the Fourth Decade* was produced and became, along with the volume *Profile* (edited by János Kenedi), one of the first major undertakings of the newly-emerging Hungarian *samizdat*.

The addressees of the questionnaire belonged roughly to the same generation, constituting a loose intellectual circle, of young academics, philosophers, economists etc. and literary critics, who at the end of the sixties had been caught by the wave of the 'renaissance of Marxism' as it was somewhat pretentiously called at that time. The allusion of the 'fourth decade' in the title thus stands both for the age of the contributors and the length of time a Soviet-type society had been established in Hungary. Due to the nature of the group addressed by Kovács, the individual questions themselves had a rather narrow academic focus. We therefore decided to ignore the concrete questions, to concentrate only on the most general and at the same time the most personal points of András Kovács' questionnaire: 'What is your understanding of the term Marxism and what is your own present position vis-à-vis Marxism?' Or, in our more personal interpretation of the question: 'If you were a Marxist in the past are you still a Marxist today and if you either were or are a Marxist, what does Marxism mean to you?' Of all the questions in the circular, only the last had real relevance for us: 'Can you give reasons which, in your opinion, make Marxism particularly relevant or irrelevant for contemporary Eastern Europe?' The second and third part of our contribution constitutes our answer to this question while the first part will serve as an introduction.

Despite our attempt to use an entire first section to introduce the core of our answer, on many points our reply turned out to be comprehensible only to the 'initiated'. In 1977 these groups that now form the Hungarian democratic opposition—former 'renaissance' Marxists, critical sociologists and economists, underground artists, socially-aware architects, writers who are unable to reconcile themselves to our national grievances, dissident priests and their followers—had only begun to notice each other's existence. Thus our audience was then more or less confined to those of our generation who, like us, started off from Marxism. It was they whom we tried to convince that—contrary to what we had previously **maintained**—Marxism is not a necessary precondition for participation in oppositional politics in Eastern Europe.

What we had been suggesting to our friends at home, was in fact already the situation in some other countries of Eastern Europe. The Polish ex-revisionists were the ones to travel furthest, greatly influencing our personal development as well. However, we could not simply follow them in everything they did; not only because the Hungarian democratic opposition was in a much more primitive state than the Polish one. The Polish ex-revisionists went as far as a total refusal of Marxism. Such ideas as theirs are not unknown in the West: they have much in common with the language of the so-called New Philosophers of Paris. Of course, unlike the latter who only followed the changing atmosphere of French intellectual salons, the Poles tried to face the bitter experience of the official anti-semitic campaign directed against them. They reasoned that it was by no means an accident that the persecution of Jewish (and non-Jewish) intelligentsia should take place precisely in a country whose official ideology is Marxism. For them, Marxism doesn't recognise any absolute moral values, in other words it denies that the individual has inalienable rights, which ought not to be sacrificed for any practical reason whatsoever.

We have not arrived at such conclusions. We think that the relationship of Marxism and ethics is somewhat more complex. At the same time, we are too much imbued with historical materialism to ascribe the behaviour of large groups of people, which is the *summa* of myriad factors, to such entities as the regime's declared ideology. So, we do not believe that a Marxist who wants to join the new opposition must at once deny Marxism. What we do maintain is that he no longer needs it and is quite unlikely to derive any relevant theoretical or political guidance from it.

This position is somewhat unusual in Eastern Europe, and is most likely a peculiarly Hungarian one. But it is not altogether improbable that there may be some people in Western Europe who have undergone a similar development. There are certain signs to support this, and some of our friends visiting us from the West seemed to understand our position; without their encouragement we would never have thought of reviving this

discussion. This is why we risk publishing an unchanged *samizdat* text originally addressed to a rather confined circle. Alterations have been made only in a few cases where the original wording seemed unclear. We have also omitted a few personal remarks concerning events known only to a very small number of people even in Hungary.

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### *Within the Tradition*

Ever since Marxism became Marxism, the most usual definitions of this particular *ism* have been designed to undercut other *ists*. In cases where the definition was not derived from an opposition between different sorts of Marxisms, then the tactic was to restrict the *ism* to the sole genuine Marxist one of its current interpretations. Even sophisticated historical accounts are always organised around some great historical juxtaposition.

The kind of teleological historiography which considers the historical Marxist tradition as the prehistory of the one and only true theoretical and political system, would of course not admit the existence of any such competitions. The development of Marxism is a unitary process, and oppositions can only arise between the one genuine Marxism and its falsification or abnegations. A quite absurd, but nonetheless logical implication of this sort of history is the well-known distinction even in the works of Marx himself, between Marxist and pre- or **non-Marxist** components. So perhaps it is necessary to state the simple truism that Marxism as an *ism* came into existence only with the appearance of the first independent thinkers and political figures who conceived their own activity as the continuation of a specific tradition founded by Marx.

The activity of **Engels** after 1883 is a borderline case. The difficulty is not to decide whether Marx and **Engels** had exactly the same *Weltanschauung* or not. This is a problem for those studying the Sacred History of Marxism, as is the question 'when did Marx become a Marxist?' Sticking to historical common sense we must categorically reject such approaches. The examination of the actual divergences and similarities is a task for the textual critic and the biographer. But whatever conclusions unbiased research may come to in the future, the fact still remains that they were too close to each other for us to say that **Engels** was simply following some tradition set out in the works of Marx. He was continuing their common project. Even when his own later contributions lacked textual precedents in the works of Marx, **Engels** still believed that he had merely expanded, applied and systematised their common method and theory. Whenever he did in fact contradict something Marx had said, this always concerned some specific historical or political case, without leading him even to raise the question of a possible discontinuity within the tradition. He did not visualise this problem even in the polemical battles waged to win over the emerging social democratic workers' movement. He saw

himself as merely explaining Marxism and nothing else. **Marx's** first disciples and adversaries were not even acquainted with the most essential texts. Whenever someone came into personal contact with the 'master', his impressions were always determined by the specific character of the occasion. **Engels** was, therefore, continually drawn into polemics. His argument usually developed into a positive explanation of a kind which may be called, in the original sense of the word, 'vulgarisation'. This is how he arrived at those philosophical reflections which later played such an important role in the disputes on the nature of what constituted orthodox Marxism.

It must be kept in mind that philosophising for **Engels** meant something quite different from what later Marxism understood as 'philosophy'. For it was not so much the foundation of socio-economic thought but its extension and elaboration. **Engels** was forced to deal with it because his antagonists pushed the debate onto the terrain of philosophy and he was obliged to follow them there. For him, **Marx's** work was principally a socio-economic theory and its political application and nothing more. Marxist theory was still seen as a coherent unity, or at least so it appeared to **Engels**. It was only later that different interpretations of the main socio-economic and political theses emerged, necessitating the selection of the genuine orthodoxy which was only possible by raising the level of discussion to a higher plane of abstraction. **Engels** could only see that certain adherents to Marxism misunderstood or oversimplified his and **Marx's** work: that is, he could not see different traditions, differences in kind. The differences for him were merely nuances. He himself used the term 'Marxism' in theoretical contexts only ironically, citing **Marx's** famous dictum: 'All I know is that I am certainly not a Marxist!'—to rebuke over-zealous disciples.

Of course, the issue is not about terminological conventions. While in the 1860s and 70s only individual **Marxian** and **Engelsian** propositions exerted an influence on a few representatives of the various socialist movements, by the 80s some socialists had self-consciously rejected their own former theoretical and political positions and replaced them with a wholesale acceptance of the teachings of **Marx** and **Engels** as a comprehensive general system. This was the real birth of the Marxist tradition. However, the relationship of these first Marxists to the tradition was hardly any clearer than that of **Engels** himself. For **Kautsky**, the young **Bernstein** or **Plekhanov**, Marxism was something fixed, an inheritable tradition, but in such a way that the continuity of the tradition also appeared as given. When they modified or applied Marxist principles to a new problem they never asked themselves whether the relationship between their new results and the general theoretical basis of Marxism could be in some sense problematic.

The turning point in this respect came only in the late 90s, precipitated

by Bernstein's revisionism. But it was not simply due to the fact that Bernstein openly criticised certain propositions of Marx, or that he even dismissed some of them. Others had done this before him. Even his criticism of the most important political predictions could not constitute real change. That was certainly new, but it could only be considered a decisive change in the tradition if orthodoxy wished to define the tradition by the very propositions Bernstein had attacked. Let us bear in mind that these propositions were similarly criticised by non-Marxists too, but neither their nor Bernstein's criticism really managed to alter the conviction of significant numbers of socialists. There were hardly any who had agreed with Bernstein on everything. The real novelty lay in Bernstein's self-conscious attempt to define the alternatives open for the development and improvement of Marxist theory. If a *Marxian* proposition was to be rejected, then either there was something wrong with the foundations of the theory or with the way it was used. If the problem was the foundations then one had to discard the whole edifice of Marxism. If on the other hand there were implicit inconsistencies which could be eliminated, the theory as a whole would remain valid, even if extensive modifications were made. Or, to quote Bernstein, the proposition to be modified 'could fall without shaking the foundations in the least'. The essence of Marxism is its general view of history, its method of historical analysis, which was not applied consistently even by Marx himself. We may, therefore, reject propositions regarded by Marx himself as fundamental and still remain Marxists as long as we stick to the general interpretation of the world.

But the abstract general propositions to which Bernstein tried to tie the continuity of the tradition were not accepted with approval by contemporary Marxists. They did, however, have to face the contradictions that Bernstein had revealed. Even for orthodox Marxists the system could not remain the organically developing and unproblematic whole as before. They, too, had to accept the distinction between the essential and the non-essential elements of the tradition; and for them, too, what was really essential was the method, and the general interpretation of history. However, what was, at first, only a conceptual distinction soon became a real divide. It turned out that an ever-growing number of things had to be rejected in the name of a common unifying method, and likewise more and more unprecedented propositions crept into the system, sheltering behind the appeal to method. Eventually, it was Lukács who seriously concluded that one could remain a pure orthodox Marxist even if every single proposition of Marx was proved to be false. ('What is Orthodox Marxism' in *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin, London, 1971.) The seriousness—or frivolity rather—is quite clear if we care to think about it and realise that none of the orthodox Marxists ever really accepted this view. Orthodoxies came to include various lists of systematic propositions, some of which were no longer reconcilable. What was orthodox to one was

revisionist to another, what was Marxist for one was no longer so for the other.

In the light of all this what use is it to speak of a Marxist tradition? By the early 1920s numerous irreconcilable Marxisms had developed and, on the basis of some abstract philosophical-methodological construction, each set itself up as the sole legitimate heir to **Marx's** legacy. We can hardly avoid the feeling that somehow they still belong to a common tradition. It is, however, very likely that this is an illusion. Perhaps we imagine this unity because they and others all make a point of their being Marxists. However, after reading Wittgenstein, we cannot let ourselves be so easily carried away by the logic, 'there must be something in common, or they wouldn't be called. . .' Wittgenstein writes in the *Investigations*, 'look *and see* whether there is anything common to all. . .' And we don't have to strain our eyes very much. What, if anything, could be common to the Marxist philosophy of nature, which concentrates on attacking the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics and the historical theory organised around the thesis of a class struggle between rich and poor countries. Both proclaim themselves, quite aggressively, as Marxist. If we compare these two theories with the texts of Marx and **Engels** separately, we might find chains of resemblance that have some links in common; but we would soon come across some links in the respective chains which have nothing whatsoever in common. In such cases Wittgenstein speaks about 'a family resemblance'. Now, if all the different Marxisms are related to one another only by a mere family resemblance, then we can only talk about a Marxist tradition in the most trivial, that is in a purely genealogical sense.

Perhaps we could find more continuity if we defined the terms 'theory', 'proposition', 'philosophy' etc. more precisely. Recent research into the history of science uses an elaborate conceptual scheme to describe ramified theoretical traditions in a common, single, significant scientific initiative; and by applying this scheme one can describe such traditions as genuine historical processes, as opposed to teleological constructions, recurrent histories which are always written from the point of view of the current, accepted theories. Transcending the one-sidedness of all modern Marxism, it would be possible to construct a 'paradigm', a core of the **Marxian** 'research programme', and then the further development of the tradition could be characterised as 'puzzle-solving' within the paradigm, or as a series of 'problem-shifts' designed to cope with anomalies. The conceptual schemes elaborated by Kuhn and Lakatos have proved quite productive in various areas of the history of science and become so popular that it will surely not take long before they are applied to the history of Marxism too. Yet we did not believe that we should look in this direction for a solution to our problem. The historical picture that could be drawn with the help of such a methodological device would still describe only a segment of the tradition (taken now in the broadest possible sense of the

word); it would be restricted, just as the prehistories constructed by the different orthodoxies themselves, to defining one 'main line' of 'genuine' Marxism. The only difference would be its more historical character, because according to the new method this main line would be defined genetically starting from the origins rather than from a contemporary version of Marxism. However productive the conceptual scheme of the new history of science may be, there is still something in the Marxist tradition which would elude the conceptual net of these methodologies. The problem is neither simply that the **Marxian** 'paradigm' is associated with a *Weltanschauung*, nor that the **Marxian** 'programme' involves tasks of social praxis. The methodologies mentioned could cope with this. What they cannot possibly grasp is that the *Weltanschauung* of Marxism and its socio-political programme are of a particularly political character, that is that it is defined in relation to a framework of rival social classes; the debate between the theories is intimately linked to the struggle for power. And perhaps this is what one should regard as the common link which holds the whole tradition together.

Can this be true? Don't we see even greater **contradictions** within the tradition when we take political struggles into account? We must remember, however, that there are not only various 'Marxisms' fighting each other, but there is also a conflict between Marxist and non-Marxist theories, ideologies and political forces. C. Wright Mills' observation in *The Marxists* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1963) may be of some help here. He explains that the successive theories within the Marxist tradition are linked neither by too much similarity of content, nor by methodological structure, but by their specific function of co-ordinating the political aims of **Marxian** socialism with the proletariat, the assumed agent of their realisation. The tradition is continuous as long as this co-ordination can be verified. But, according to Mills, this verification became doubtful in modern industrial societies. This doesn't mean that some parts of the theories that evolved within the tradition cannot be further developed, but the outcome of such a development will no longer be Marxism. For us, the significance of Mills' characterisation is where he contrasts Marxism with another tradition, that of liberalism, which, according to him, has also disintegrated like Marxism. Less of the original aims and pure theoretical framework of liberalism survived, but at the outset, this tradition too was organised around specific political aims and had elaborated a distinctive philosophy and system of values to match them. It entailed its own economics and sociology, and the whole tradition also addressed itself to a specific social class, Mills calls both liberalism and Marxism 'the great traditions'. Perhaps he thought that there were no other traditions so well articulated, so thoroughly developed in all respects, or perhaps only these two were relevant for him in the context of his book. Anyhow, other such traditions can easily be listed although there are some in which certain

elements of the structure are indeed not so well elaborated, e.g. the romantic-conservative tradition, the romantic-anarchist tradition and the bureaucratic-technocratic tradition which only evolved later on.

We can grasp the first phase in the history of the Marxist tradition by relating it to other relevant traditions. In his study, *La diffusione del marxismo*, (Studi Storici, vol. xv, no 2, 1974) E.J. Hobsbawm demonstrates that between 1890 and 1905 the real demarcation line was not between revisionism and the various orthodox Marxisms, but rather between the romantic-anarchist tradition and the Marxist tradition as a whole. Up until 1905, the boundaries of Marxism were open towards the liberal tradition, and if one were attempting to draw a sharp line between the liberal tradition and Marxism, precious little 'would remain of what is specifically Marxist, apart from the particular individual theories of a few early orthodox Marxists. The lopsidedness of the first historical phase in the development of Marxism has had lasting effects ever since. Even half a century was not enough for the great bulk of the tradition to absorb such ideas as industrial democracy and self-management. Apart from the constraints of sheer practical considerations, this doctrinal onesidedness itself also played a part in the developing convergence between the Marxist and bureaucratic-technocratic traditions. However, after 1905, the stress was increasingly placed on the opposition to the bourgeois pole of the ideological spectrum. The demarcation line between the most significant Marxist factions was increasingly drawn according to their attitudes towards the liberal tradition and the way they theorised this attitude. So from then on, the boundaries of Marxism became finely drawn on both sides and even if one doesn't seek a definition on more than purely theoretical grounds, there is already a danger of being drawn into similar restricted vistas as if one sought to define the boundaries simply on the basis of established orthodoxy.

But what if we considered the *content* of the tradition more or less as a changing variable? Couldn't the sole principle of circumscription be that each of the significant, genealogically descended factions claims to establish a great tradition, independent of the other great traditions, and challenging at least one of them? This would certainly widen the scope. The romantic-conservative tradition is irrelevant here, provided that there were no new appearances of 'feudal socialism' as described in the *Communist Manifesto*; however, opposition to conservatism has no significance even in that case, since Marxism has no specific message in this respect. On the other hand, we can easily imagine a type of Marxism which is closed towards the romantic-anarchist and the bureaucratic-technocratic tradition but open towards the liberal tradition; or a Marxism which is closed towards the liberal and the bureaucratic-technocratic tradition but open to the **romantic-anarchist** tradition.

But even so, what do we do with those factions that are far from

claiming the role of a great theoretical-political tradition? Ever since the emergence of the Marxist mass parties that have an independent educational and research apparatus, theoretical work has been mostly confined to specialists. This has been even more the case since Marxism became the official ideology of states. Moreover, since at least the 1920s, the number of those factions that represent some minority or directly oppositional point of view, but which, however, intend to stay within party limits or within the scientific and cultural institutions of the state, has been on the increase. These factions are characterised by the way that they conceal or only indirectly articulate the political consequences of their theories, with the centre of their activities being shifted to topics removed from politics. We only refer to one example not well known in our country, namely that the extremely abstract orthodoxy of the Althusserian school represents an oppositional political attitude; for a general description of such phenomena see Perry Anderson's *Considerations on Western Marxism* (NLB, London, 1976). This difficulty with those factions which try to conceal some relevant political distinctions, however, can be overcome if we define their relationship to the great tradition more loosely.

If one's conviction is that the only possible method for political mediation between theory and the class is to influence the ideology of the Communist Party or that of the state, then it is correct to conclude that abandoning politics will be useful to reconnect politics and theory in the long run. And if our definition is loosened even further, we can trade a nostalgia for the role of a great tradition even among such Marxist groupings which operate independently of any Marxist organisations. Let us take some of the most recent cases. A significant portion of the student generation participating in the New Left movements of the sixties while withdrawing into academic life has not wholly abandoned its radicalism. By the seventies their efforts had considerably altered the relationship of the academic sciences to Marxism. Whereas before, Marxism could exert a considerable influence only in the French and Italian scientific communities, we now see strong Marxist minorities developing in all fields of social science in West Germany and even in Britain and the USA, where there has been an absence of any major Marxist traditions. And if we distinguish between those scholars who utilise elements of the Marxist tradition without however proclaiming themselves Marxists and those who in fact consider themselves Marxists, then we'll see that it is exactly political engagement that the latter group stresses with the emphasis on the continuation of the tradition. The political character of such a gesture is all the more conspicuous in the case of those scholars who, although claiming to be Marxists, borrow no more from the tradition than their non-Marxist colleagues. The English and American historians claiming to be Marxists are no closer to historical materialism than, say, the adherents of the *Annales* school; most of the English and American Marxist economists are just as far from accepting

the main propositions of Capital as those left-wing Keynesians or Sraffa-followers who are socialists but do not consider themselves Marxists. It is also quite revealing that the most aggressive representatives of the two rival tendencies of Anglo-Saxon anthropology, namely, cultural materialism and structural anthropology, both turn to Marx for 'ammunition'.

Thus, we can see that if we interpret the intention to develop a great tradition widely enough, we may eventually find some unity in the Marxist tradition taken in a broader sense. But is there any practical significance to such unity? Hasn't the connection as construed above become so loose that it no longer plays a role in any of the theoretical debates and political clashes? True, the different Marxisms, particularly the committed followers of this or that orthodoxy, do not seem to care that the theory their opponents are trying to elaborate is quite similar to their own, both in form and function. Nor is it probable that such a loose conception of the tradition would be sufficient to define the topic of relatively impartial historical research which transcends the limits of the current orthodoxies. Historical scholarship using new source material should necessarily concentrate on narrow segments of the tradition. On the other hand, syntheses based mainly on the analysis of select 'classics' and secondary literature usually require a more precisely defined similarity of content than this conception permits. The unity, represented by this thin thread interweaving the whole tradition, becomes visible only at such crucial moments when even the slightest continuity of a greater branch of the tradition is interrupted. And this is what happened with the Marxisms of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 60s and the early 70s.

Great Marxist schools have often suffered defeat at the same time as crises in the socialist and communist movements. Many large groups of Marxists have broken with the tradition at such turning points. Theory was often deprived of its orientative function within organisations proclaiming Marxist ideology; theory in such cases became restricted to demonstrating some political continuity. But the defeats of social-democratic orthodoxy have, in turn, strengthened the positions of revisionism and communist orthodoxies; the defeat of communist orthodoxy brought about the emergence of New Left Marxism and a characteristically Third World Marxism. Let us think of the situation in Germany at the turn of the century: Marxism then became rather a burden to the social-democratic leadership and keeping up the continuity became a matter of pragmatic considerations. But in the meanwhile, Marxism still represented a whole tradition in its continuity for Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. A similar opposition was reproduced between Stalinists and Trotskyists—though, for one side, on a lower level of consciousness. Marxism for **Marchais** probably means no more than an alibi, while for Althusser the defence of orthodoxy is a question of principle. (Let us remember that it was because **Marchais** rejected the objectives of the proletarian dictatorship that

Althusser stepped openly into opposition.) But up till the late 60s and early 70s, the defeat of one tendency within Marxism always strengthened the position of others in turn, and the theory could never completely lose its political significance, even within organisations whose concern for the continuity of the tradition was a mere formality, because for the specialists of Marxism within those organisations it was more than a formality. But in the Soviet Union and in the Soviet-type societies of Eastern Europe things took a different turn.

The defeat of the reformist or dissident tendencies, claiming to represent 'genuine' Marxism, 'genuine' Leninism or the 'renaissance' of Marxism, promoted the partial or total suppression of those ideologists within official Marxism, who tried to exert a conservative influence on the political leadership in the name of some orthodoxy. Official Marxism retreated into education and became almost neutral in politics; the ideological decoration of political decisions became all the more formal. From time to time the big stick of orthodoxy strikes against certain political, economic or cultural phenomena considered harmful. However, even in these cases it is not the ideologists who take the initiative. The same is also true of the polemics between the political leaders of different countries or between the power groupings in individual countries.

Reformist or dissident Marxism has suffered a political defeat while official Marxism has abandoned its claim to the great tradition. But this in itself would not preclude the possibility that at least some representatives of the defeated tendencies might keep up the continuity by their individual efforts. What we intend to show in the next part of our paper is why this did not come about. (We wrote this paper before Bahro's book appeared. It is difficult to judge what direction East-German Marxist opposition has taken. But it is quite certain that they have no influence on other countries in Eastern Europe. (1980)). But before discussing this, we should like to complete the above characterisation of official Marxism, because it may seem to the reader that we have overestimated the practical-political significance of Marxism in the earlier phases of development of Soviet-type societies and attributed too great an importance to the independence and initiative of its specialists, while we run to the other extreme when talking about contemporary Marxism.

It would be a great mistake to think that Marxist theory had ever played a crucial role in the making of important political decisions. But in an age when all political decisions were articulated in terms of Marxist theory, it was extremely difficult to keep apart from the ideology. The evolution of reformist and dissident Marxisms demonstrates how deep the conviction was—especially among the intelligentsia—that the elimination of mass terror and the democratisation of the system would become possible precisely by the criticism of Stalinist ideology and by getting the ideas of 'genuine' Marxism recognised as the official ideology. The defeat of these

tendencies was not only the result of the radicalism of their demands. It was also due to the recognition by more and more of the intelligentsia that the system can make concessions more easily if it chooses de-ideologisation, and that official Marxism has to retain its political functions as long as there exists a dissident Marxism too.

But there are appearances showing that the de-ideologisation has not been completed and some indications that it is **not** even on its way. Official Marxism appears to be very much alive. The study of Marxism is imposed on ever-growing circles, the number of specialists and of scholarly publications is on the increase and, in the long run, the quality is also improving. Inertia alone cannot account for such an increase and improvement; even if we consider that the emphasis on the continuity of the tradition serves as a symbol of the inviolable unity of the power structure, we still remain in the dark. There is a genuine development in official Marxism which, however, doesn't contradict our general analysis, but is a result of special circumstances. Paradoxically, the specialists of official ideology also enjoy the benefits of the general de-ideologisation of scientific life. Since the elimination of dissident Marxism there is a greater freedom to experiment with a modernisation of official Marxism. Today's official ideology is just as far from the system of doctrines of the Stalin era, as are other **non-official** or dissident tendencies, the only difference being that this distance does not result in any kind of political opposition. What is more, in Hungary and in Poland the content of the eliminated dissident Marxisms has been partly incorporated into official Marxism but, of course, it has been deprived of its critical overtones, serving instead as an open apologetics; the anthropology and the philosophy of values based on Marx's early writings, which seemed to have compromised itself, has now been restored in teaching and publications. This development has been further promoted by the fact that in politically consolidated countries where there are no confrontations—consequently there is no need to take **sides**—and where the slogans of the Party are not to be uttered outside formal occasions, some kind of medium is needed for communication so that political loyalty transcending mere conformism may be manifested. Official Marxism, more and more vague as to its political content, but still acting as the special ideology of the system, serves as such a medium.

### *After the Break*

Trends holding 'genuine' Marxism to be on their side have mostly criticised official Marxism on issues quite distant from politics. Most of the debates centred around quite abstract doctrinal questions: are there alternatives in history; is there an Asiatic mode of production; is the concept of alienation an Hegelian remnant in the young Marx; is there a dialectics of nature; is it possible to define the concept of matter in Marxist philosophy? But when the most abstract debates had some political

significance since it was the conviction of the neo-Marxists that these confrontations would result in the emergence of a renewed, 'creative' Marxism, with a capacity to influence political decisions. That the 'renaissance' of Marxism was able to arouse a part of the scientific community and a part of the general public was mainly due to this very expectation and not to the generally not too high theoretical standards. This explains why when the authorities banned discussions, making it evident that political leaders were not interested in the advice Marxism could offer, the trends opposed to the official ideology lost not only the opportunity for public discussions, but also their very basis of existence. Having had silence imposed on it, the whole movement vanished rapidly.

Most adherents of the movement have, openly or tacitly, abandoned Marxism. A small minority has joined the official specialists of Marxist ideology. Together with the more intelligent official ideologists, they constitute the group which is trying to bring the textbooks up to date. Finally there has been another and even smaller minority which quit the official culture and took the path of marginalisation.

Since the late 60s, official culture has ceased to retain its monopoly in Eastern Europe. In some of these countries the non-official forms of communication have become customary, and in others, efforts have been made toward the same end. Works banned by the censor and works that had never been submitted to the state-controlled publishers began to circulate. This literature in some countries creates a whole system of non-official communication, a parallel culture; bulky volumes and periodicals appear, disputes flare up, different ideological tendencies become crystallised. Political ideologies, practical programmes and tactical conceptions are formulated and sometimes even political **movements**—though embryonic—are born. These movements are usually organised to achieve special and concrete aims. They do not have an exclusive ideology and they do not seek the support of any particular class. Participation in these movements fluctuates. Often the same people participate in different movements. The lifetime of such a movement is usually rather short. Doubt often arises whether such movements are able to advance their causes towards the desired ends. But one thing is certain, these movements are in fact able to create some consensus as to a certain minimum of social and political aims. It was exactly such a minimal consensus which made the civil rights movements of the recent past possible.

In short, Marxists who remained in opposition are not doomed to silence. They may participate in ideological discussions outside ~~the~~ channels of official communication. They may publicly reflect on their position; they may reconsider their relationship to official Marxism; they may determine their place among the representatives of different dissident ideologies. Then why not allow that it will be they who will succeed in recreating the Marxist tradition? Indeed, only they, if anybody, have

the chance.

But it isn't as simple as that. Marginalised Marxists can take up once more the themes of the political core of the great Marxist tradition, but it is not at all certain that an independent theoretical tradition can be developed around this. Let us consider our misgivings on this score.

The early 1960s had seen the enthusiasm of the 'renaissance' of Marxism. More and more layers of **Marx's** thought were revealed under the **rubble** of crumbling Stalinism. The influence of the Communist thinkers of the 1920s began to be felt and their predecessor, i.e. Rosa Luxemburg, was also rediscovered. The Frankfurt School was taken up as **an** heir to their ideas; it was considered as a school which developed further the perspectives opened up by the Western Marxism of the twenties. Justice was given to the French left-wing existentialists. The growth theories of early Soviet economists, Oscar Lange's model of a socialist market economy, and many other things already half-forgotten were busily studied. It seemed that the Marxist tradition was never more alive than in those years. But if we take a look as to how this enormous material was moulded, the picture becomes rather deficient. The theoretical development of the 60s was fatally one-sided. Certain parts of the tradition were taken up and further developed in their full scope, while others suffered great curtailments. Thus, when the administrative ban imposed on the trends and schools polemicising with the official ideology made problematic the continuity of the tradition, what in fact really came to be problematic was whether there was anything worthwhile to continue.

Tendencies claiming to represent 'genuine' Marxism had a clear practical programme and a quite developed philosophical conception. Though not elaborated in detail, the programme aimed at a general democratisation and said the economy should be loosened, the Party and the mass organisations ought to act as organs of social control over the bureaucracy. This programme of 'democratic socialism' was matched by a philosophical theory, that of praxis philosophy. Praxis philosophy was the most organically-developing and mature part of 'renaissance' Marxism. It formulated an anthropology, a philosophy of history, an epistemology and a philosophy of values. The system made up of all these carried a **clear**—though not always explicit—critical message.

No such theory was elaborated in the field of economics. One group of Marxist economists was preoccupied with working out formal growth theories to improve the planning of the national economy. Others attempted to criticise the institutional system of the bureaucratic planned economy, but their criticism was restricted to the aspects of **micro**-economic efficiency. The furthest any criticism went was to attempt to reveal the consequences of over centralisation in cyclical fluctuations and in the slowing down of macro-economic growth rates. These criticisms were, however, never synthesised into an explanatory theory of the **Soviet**-

type economies; non-Marxist economists, neglecting ideological questions, had already reached much further in elaborating comprehensive theories.

Marxist sociology remained even less developed. In some fields the development consisted merely of acquiring the methods of modern sociology. Some development could be observed in a few special areas, as for example in rural sociology. But aside from these, only two attempts deserve mention here. One was the effort of some Marxist scholars to elaborate a critical theory of the existing institutions, i.e. of the bureaucracy. These efforts were, however, limited to an application of the commonplaces of the sociology of organisations. Attempts to provide a description of the social structure proved somewhat more productive. It was finally demonstrated that the stratification of Soviet-type societies cannot be derived from the traditional concept of classes, which is based on property relations. Attempts were also made to define the different strata, but these were restricted to determining the appropriate categories of social statistics. No one has gone as far as to identify and to examine sociologically the real classes behind the statistical categories, to name those functional groups of society that are actually separated from each other by the frequency and pattern of interaction, that possess a distinct class consciousness and represent distinct or even **mutually-exclusive** interests in respect of macro-economic and macro-sociological changes. Furthermore, no one thought of making predictions as to the changes of class relations, owing to the lack of a theory of economic development of Soviet-type societies.

The uneven development of philosophy, economics and sociology was not the only problem. None of the tendencies belonging to the 'renaissance' of Marxism was able to synthesise the results of the different fields. And since the programme of 'democratic socialism' did indeed allow two divergent interpretations, a democratic and a technocratic one, it could thus happen that **while** the philosophy of praxis was undoubtedly committed to the democratic interpretation, the research in social statistics was openly bound to the technocratic conception. (See P. Machonin's account of the survey made in 1967 by the Sociological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy: 'Social Stratification in Contemporary Czechoslovakia', in *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. lxxv, no. 5, 1969.) The collision between the Yugoslav philosophy of praxis and the advocates of market socialism brought into the open the fact that philosophy and economics may come into conflict with one another.

But the critical weakness of the whole 'renaissance' was its inability to designate the social addressee of 'genuine' Marxism. Or, to be more precise, this was not even attempted. The majority accepted—following uncritically some lines of tradition—that the theory was still exclusively connected with the working class, and then substituted, mostly unconsciously, the party leadership or some enlightened faction of it for the

working class. Those who were looking to social groups other than the working class made similar substitutions too. When the dialogue with the political leadership was interrupted, the whole theoretical construction collapsed at once. Owing to the lack of a dynamic socio-economic theory, it was impossible to predict which social forces would back the desired reforms in the long run. Together with the programme, the philosophy connected with it also became irrelevant. It became clear that the reason why philosophy occupied the most important place in the whole 'renaissance' was not because it could explain the characteristics of Soviet-type societies better than economics or sociology. While sociologists and economists were unable to provide a description of the regularities of the system, philosophers simply skipped over it. Their philosophy of praxis derived the concept of an ideal society from the general idea of a 'human being'. The resulting criteria of evaluation were just as applicable to all societies as to none. The illusion that these criteria were especially relevant to Eastern-European societies was created by the tacit, and sometimes not so tacit, assumption that the historical mission of these societies, as socialist ones, is the realisation of the 'human being'. The moment this metaphysical thread was broken, it became clear that the praxis philosophy has no special relevance to Eastern-European societies.

The 'renaissance' did not convey a tradition to be continued to dissident Marxists outside the official institutions. The most it was able to hand down were some fragments of a tradition. And in itself, this wouldn't have been fatal. The boundaries of a Marxist tradition would have become sufficiently clear, even without a thoroughly elaborated theoretical apparatus, provided that at least some of the other dissident ideologies claimed the role of a great tradition. If, for example, liberalism as a tradition were well rooted in these circles, then it would be quite easy to tell who belonged to the Marxist and who to the liberal tradition. But although liberals may be found within the Soviet and Eastern-European opposition, their liberalism hardly represents more than a political programme. Russian ideologies rooted in the romantic-conservative tradition are the only ones which possess a specific philosophy and a characteristic conception of society. Their philosophy is aggressively idealistic; the particular dignity of man is determined by the fact that man, as a citizen of the world of spiritual values, can overcome his needs rooted in the material world. This opposition appears in their criticism of the modern world order: secular mass societies—both Eastern and Western that is—have destroyed all spiritual values; they set material interests free from the tight hold of traditional morals and, in the arrangement they have thus established, material interests turn men against one another. The practical conceptions of these Russian conservatives follow consistently from their philosophical idealism: the materialistic world order cannot be defeated with the means and tools of materialism; political conflicts can

only modify the relations between different social groups, but the world can only be saved and uplifted from the state of general disorder by the moral regeneration of individuals. Philosophical idealism, social traditionalism and the rejection of political activity are all incompatible with Marxism. But they are also incompatible with the liberal and the technocratic tradition. It is not only Marxism that is opposed to the conservative tradition, but all of the modern secular ideologies.

True, Russian conservatives primarily polemicise against Marxism. But if we take a closer look, we'll see that the dividing line between conservatism and Marxism is not continuous either. There is an upper and a lower limit to this opposition. The lower limit corresponds to the general preconditions of oppositional activity. The articulation of oppositionist ideologies is necessarily connected to some minimum movement-like activity. The technical and institutional requirements of communication are not given; with the creation of public thinking, the channels to reach the public also have to be developed. This in turn presupposes the cooperation and solidarity of people—a cooperation that is very loose and a solidarity that is very abstract, but both genuine. We are not thinking of the fact that it is widely considered to be indecent to press the contradictions between the different trends to the very extremes. Manners and tactical considerations hardly influence the clashes between conservatives and their opponents. Certain accusations by Solzhenitsyn and Shafarevits oddly resemble in tone the ideological campaigns of the period between the 30s and the 50s. However, every oppositionist owes a certain amount of commitment to these principles of cooperation and solidarity as none can avoid the responsibility for defending the legal means of communication. No oppositionist ideology can exist without including the demand for freedom of expression in its political programme. Legality, the rule of law, is a common demand of all oppositionist tendencies. (It is not difficult to show that the few exceptions not only manifest an ideological anomaly, but that they are anomalous in their sociological situation too.)

The upper limit of ideological differentiation is set by the present state of the movements operating through non-official forms of communication. Even the most highly organised movements are extremely fragile. They set out their practical objectives on an *ad hoc* basis; they do not have long-range strategies which would demand exclusive engagement with a certain ideology, and which would definitely point to a certain part of the population—class or group—which is driven to their support by its specific interests. The first organisation that was formed to protect the members of a definite class is the Polish Workers Defence Committee; but although the committee was intended to protect the workers, there is no indication that it would be a committee of the workers.

It is hardly predictable whether the Soviet and Eastern European

dissident movements will reach a higher level of ideological differentiation in the near future, or whether they are going to stagnate at their present level, or even fall back into a more amorphous state. It is probable that the development will vary according to the different countries. But as long as they are unable to reach a higher level of differentiation, the ideologies whirling around these movements cannot clearly be distinguished as to their sociological addressee and programme.

All oppositionist ideologies are characterised by their possession of a minimum of common objectives on the one hand and by their lack of a proper class support on the other. The differences among them can be drawn only within these limits, considering that even in this range there is further overlapping of the programmes. The re-establishment of an independent Marxist tradition is impossible under these circumstances. Marxism doesn't offer a specific conception of Eastern-European economy and society; it doesn't point to any specific class to realise its objectives; and, moreover, it doesn't have a monopoly over any specific programme. This situation is without precedent in the history of Marxism. That is why we are forced to put the question crudely: is it at all possible to be a Marxist here? What use is there to articulate those social efforts that are exerted outside official institutions in terms of Marxism, if no specific consequences follow from the employment of the Marxist conceptual scheme? Wouldn't it be enough if there were as many ideologies as there are distinguishable types of practical programmes?

For a first approach, one might say that the multiplication of ideologies may be of advantage sociologically even if logically it seems useless. The more ideologies there are to a practical programme, the more followers it will be likely to attract. According to this reasoning then, dissident Marxism is simply addressed to those people who are more inclined to accept the objectives of the opposition if they are articulated by Marxist concepts than in terms of some other ideology. But if it is only this that gives sense to the continuation of Marxism, then—although it is not impossible to be a dissident Marxist—it is altogether not too attractive.

There is an element of truth in the above statement, but if we take a second look, we will find it a bit rash on the whole. That there is no mutual and definite correlation between oppositionist ideologies and programmes doesn't mean that every ideology plays the same role with respect to every programme. We have to examine what role Marxism might play in the individual cases.

Luckily, we do not have to take each individual case into consideration. We may neglect those programmes that are incompatible with all of the existing Marxisms, and those that have no significance to any of the Marxists. The rest can be classified into a few main types. We define these types according to two criteria. First, we differentiate between legalists and liberals according to their conception of the political structure..

Legalists are those who would like to put the existing political structure on a legal foundation, and liberals are all those who want to change the political structure itself. And, according to our second criterion, legalists and liberals belong to the same group as opposed to radical reformists. The group made up of legalists and liberals have in common that they start out from specific objectives that are deduced from normative presuppositions. Radical reformists, on the other hand, concentrate on the social and political conditions for the establishment and development of an independent oppositional movement in Soviet-type societies. Legalism has spread primarily in the Russian underground; outside the Soviet Union we only know of Marxist legalists. Liberalism has spread in all of those **Eastern-European** countries where dissident movements exist at all. Radical reformism is a Polish phenomenon; it came about as a result of the actions taken by the intelligentsia against the modification of the Constitution, and by the workers' demonstrations against the price rises, and finally by the experience of the movement for the defence of the imprisoned workers.

Not all of those who aim at the stabilisation and expansion of human and civil rights can be considered legalists. Almost every oppositionist ideology could be considered legalist in this sense of the word. We are rather using the term to designate those ideologies that restrict themselves to this common minimum on principle. Their argument is always based on the shortcomings of Western parliamentary democracy, although they don't always agree as to the nature of these shortcomings. Russian conservative nationalism is the most characteristically legalist ideology. It is based on the conviction that parliamentary systems are too democratic: they let the material interests of the masses dominate over moral values, thus leading society towards a moral and political disaster. Russia should rather be governed by a strong, authoritarian government whose authority is derived from moral support, and which is based on strict legal foundations. Another characteristically legalist ideology was elaborated by Marxists sympathetic towards legalism although, curiously enough, these are the most frequently attacked opponents of conservatism. They also reject the western system of representation, but on different grounds, namely because in their eyes this system isn't democratic enough. Parliamentarism—as in most socialist theories—means no more to them than merely formal democracy, and, opposed to parliamentarism, they uphold the idea of a genuine, all-pervading democracy. The reason for their not wanting to change the institutional structure of Soviet society is that they find the structure a suitable basis for the realisation of a higher level democracy by way of its further democratisation. Seemingly this conception is identical to the idea of 'democratic socialism' but there is a great difference. In the beginning the representatives of 'democratic socialism' were by no means legalists. Their democracy was not to be developed by the strict observation of the letter of the law, by strict

adherence to legal forms. The idea of legalism only appeared in their political thinking as they were increasingly marginalised. But from then on it was to become more and more central: the less they speak about 'the reconstruction of the Leninist norms of the Party' the more they emphasise the importance of the freedom of the press, of the independence of the judiciary and of the abolition of laws contradictory to human rights.

But the transformation of 'democratic socialism' into 'legalist socialism' presents an unexpected problem: the dividing line between dissident Marxism and dissident liberalism, which was perfectly clear before this, has now become faint. If 'democratic socialism' goes so far as to demand a formal legal system, on what grounds then, does it reject the other institutions that the dissident liberals call for?

There is an inconsistency here, one which is not only pointed out by outside criticism, but which is quite manifest in itself. If we look at Roy Medvedev's *Socialist Democracy* written in the early 70s, we will see that he is rather undecided as to the problem of the multi-party system and other related institutions. He is not at all enthusiastic about a future in which the political institutions of the Soviet state would be based on rival parties, but neither does he have any fundamental objections to it. He tries to break out of this circle by concluding that the multi-party system should indeed be allowed in socialism since by the time genuine socialist democracy comes into being, non-socialist parties will lose their influence and power anyway. . . . We don't in fact get to know what this democratic socialism will look like, as his specifications point to a kind of limited liberalism at the most. (R.A. Medvedev: *De la démocratie socialiste*, Paris 1972, p. 139.) However, a few years later, when Medvedev had already had to face Solzhenitsyn's antidemocratic legalism, he reacted to it by defending the multi-party system by all means. (R.A. Medvedev: 'Was erwartet uns?' in A.R. Dutschke and M. Wilke ed. *Die Sowjetunion, Solzhenizyn und die westliche Linke*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1975.)

'Democratic socialism' is swaying somewhere in the no man's land between legalism and liberalism. It may bend in both directions but it cannot be carried consistently to either end; it goes too far for the one, and doesn't go far enough for the other. For this reason Marxism cannot play a significant role among rival ideologies in providing a conceptual scheme either for the legalist or for the liberal political programme. But providing a conceptual apparatus is not the only possible function of Marxism in respect of legalism and liberalism. Marxism as a philosophy may function as a source of values to justify the ends either of legalism or of liberalism. The philosophy of praxis of the 60s had elaborated a system of values bound to the traditions of classical humanism; and although we do not know of any attempt to develop the political applications of praxis philosophy, there are still signs showing that this value system has

penetrated into the political thinking of the opposition. (See the open letter of the Czech writer, Vaclav Havel, addressed to the president of the Czechoslovak Republic; Encounter XLV. no. 3, 1975.)

It is beyond doubt that Marxist philosophy exerts at least an indirect influence on legalist and liberal thinking. But let us not overestimate the possible influence of this kind of philosophy. The reason is easy to find: praxis philosophy derives its values from a rather optimistic anthropology. The conception that man is a free, conscious and universal being, who is only held back from the absolute realisation of these abilities by the historically developed circumstances, was very much adequate to the atmosphere of the 60s. But the isolated opposition of the 70s cannot derive too much hope from this anthropological optimism. If the opposition cherishes any hope at all, it is rather on the existentialist philosophic concept of man that it relies: man can be manipulated, moreover, he needs to be manipulated in his everyday life, but still, he is able to break off from the *Dasein* of manipulation with some kind of a last, desperate effort.

With respect to radical reformism the possibilities and limitations of Marxism are of a totally different nature. Radical reformism doesn't offer a political programme in the strict sense of the word; it merely expounds some tactical conceptions. Or, to put it more precisely, it restricts itself to tactical questions that are not derived from the need for a different system taking the place of the present one. The assumption here is that social aims, worth fighting for in Eastern Europe, are those that can be realised without resulting in a crisis of power; anything else leads to the fabrication of utopias or straight to catastrophe. The alternative of reform or revolution is not a valid one in Eastern Europe; the sensible choice is between two kinds of reformism. The reformists of the 50s and the 60s, the 'old evolutionists', wanted to promote their cause 'from the inside', by enlightening and convincing the political leadership. 'Neo-evolutionism', to use the term suggested by the Polish historian, Adam Michnik, in a lecture in September 1976 in Paris, tries to draw the lesson from the failure of this tactical conception. Michnik concludes that internal criticism is not capable of influencing the leadership effectively: it is exposed to conjunctural changes of power and, in the long run, it is bound to give up its critical content. Serious and lasting pressure on the government can only be exerted by independent social movements. From this it follows that it is not enough for political realism to make sure that its aims can be reconciled with the continuing existence of the present power system. It also has to see that each demand be supported by social forces adequate to the size of the demand. Significant reforms can only be realised with the support of significant forces. But, on the other hand, the independent social movements are not only tools in the tactics of radical reformism. The autonomous self-organisation of society is an end

in itself. The more organised society is the less the strength of the ruling power, the closer is the time ripe for the changing of the system itself too. And so, according to Michnik, the chances of neo-evolutionism lie in the hands of the working class.

Radical reformism is also supported by people known as Marxists, just as legalism and liberalism are (see Jacek Kuron's interview in *Le Monde*, 19 January 1977). However as yet we only know of personal sympathies. Marxism as a theory has, so far, failed to add anything to radical reformism. And it is certain that those parts of the theory that had been incorporated into legalism and liberalism are in no ways useful to radical reformism. This movement has nothing whatsoever to do with 'democratic socialism' or with the philosophy of praxis: it does not set final aims and thus has no need of an ideological apparatus to articulate its programme, with the help of a philosophical value system. What it may need instead, is a dynamic socio-economic theory. It may need such a theory, if it moves within a wide enough time-horizon. If radical reformism means no more than a short term tactical conception then it does not presuppose more knowledge about the conduct of social classes than it is already given in everyday experience. But if it really stands for 'evolutionism' and if the movements aiming at possible reforms can only produce significant results in the very long run, then we have to be able to predict changes in the class structure, at least to the extent that social sciences are at all able to predict such changes.

This task is not alien to Marxism. One branch of the Marxist tradition is closely related to this long range interpretation of radical reformism: the task of theoretical thinking is not to provide the world with aims and goals; theory is rather to help to predict which social classes are likely to support the different aims and goals, as well as their chances of success. Something of this kind was achieved by Marx in *Capital*, Rosa Luxemburg in the *Accumulation of Capital*, the Russian Marxists of the 90s, Struve, Lenin and Tugan-Baranovski in their polemic writings addressed to the Narodniks, Trotsky in his analysis of the economic and social conditions of the first Russian revolution. . .

Lots of analogies and heuristic principles can be deduced from this tradition. On the other hand, many things have to be wiped out in order to apply these fertile analogies and heuristic principles. Marxism has not been able to elaborate an applicable theory of Soviet-type societies; either before or during Stalinism, or after its dissolution. And this is only one obstacle, not at all the greatest. More damaging are those elements of Marxism that can in no way be reconciled with such an undertaking: the threefold typology of historical societies/traditional societies—capitalism—socialism, the opposition of capitalist market economy and socialist planned economy, the definition of classes through property relationshipetc.

Radical reformism offers important research tasks for Marxists, but if

they reconsider these tasks they will be shocked to see that practically nothing of direct utility can be drawn from the Marxist tradition. They can't even cherish the illusion that they have any advantage compared with those social scientists who start out from a different background. The position of Marxists who adhere to liberalism and legalism is somewhat better; they may continue with the political and philosophical apparatus on the fringe of the Eastern European Marxist tradition. The question in their case is whether there is any point in this continuation. To be a Marxist, it seems, is very problematic in any case.

### *For Us*

In the beginning we saw nothing of these problems, although we had called ourselves Marxists ever since we had any philosophical conception. The first phase of our Marxist career is of no interest here; luckily, it only lingers on in the memories of our childhood friends. It was quite a ridiculous nonsense and a bit shameful too. Thanks to the circumstances it did not have any serious effect, since in the sixties, the ideological fury of individuals, the ideological rages of students could no longer do serious harm as in the 1950s. Partly to bring some excuses and partly to characterise that era, let us just remind the reader of one thing. We had been adherents of Gyorgy Lukács, making no secret of our sympathies, which were by no means forbidden at that time. But neither was it forbidden to attack Lukács politically, on the basis of his conduct in 1956. Many aestheticians and critics grabbed this opportunity to legitimise those branches of modern art which had been attacked by Lukács. We considered this, quite rightly, a challenge. We tried to prove that Lukács's aesthetics is the genuine and only possible Marxist aesthetics. Our enemies acted in bad faith, making use of Lukács's bad official reputation. We, on the other hand, were narrow-minded enough not to see that in this case, by having taken Lukács's side, we took the side of Stalinist conservatism. Both parties thought themselves awfully brave. They, because they attacked Marxist dogmas, and we, because we defended something that was not absolutely official.

We had never been run of the mill little Stalinists, as the above conflict shows. The fact that Lukács exerted such an influence on us was strongly determined by the political events of 1956, by the inner emigration of Lukács. But actually it was the works of Lukács written between the 1930s and the 1950s that determined our thinking, and this did not allow a systematic criticism of Stalinism and official Marxism at that time. But in the middle of the 60s things cleared up, or at least this was what we thought. We came to read Lukács's recent political statements, the *Letter to Alberto Carocci* (1962), the paper *On the debate between China and the Soviet Union* (1963) and his first paper on Solzhenitsyn (1964). From then on, we received actual guidance from Lukács on really decisive political issues as well. We became acquainted with the *Aesthetics*, which

appeared in 1963. From it we could derive a concept of history which could be opposed to the official dogmas on almost every point—even the naturalist epistemology constituting the core of dialectical materialism appeared to us in a historical context. This enabled us to get to understand the 'young' Lukács and in no time we were already on the point of totally negating dialectical materialism. Finally it was also at this very point that a group of Lukács's students began to form what they first called the Lukács School, and which later came to be known as the Budapest School. We lined up with this group, and, with this, we seemingly found our proper place among the ideological tendencies of the evolving reform period.

But it was not through the founders, nor even through Lukács that we came into contact with the Budapest School. We had no contact with the members of this group in our first student years because they were not allowed to teach in the universities following 1956. We had been students of Gyorgy Márkus. Whatever has happened since, we still feel grateful to have had him as our first professor. Márkus had studied in Moscow, and the information we got from him, we couldn't have got from Lukács, nor even from his students. In the Soviet Union, Márkus came into contact with the future leaders of the school of the sixties. Thus it was he who recommended to us the writings of Ilyenkov, Davidov and Gajdenko.<sup>6</sup> He was also familiar with the Polish neo-Marxists who had been of much greater significance, and through him we knew not only of Kolakowski, but of Fritzhand and Baczko as well, even if this knowledge was second-hand. All this, however, we could have found out on our own sooner or later. In the long run it was much more important that Márkus provided us with information on the new Soviet and Polish efforts in the philosophy of science that were taking up traditions completely unknown to us. We could finally breathe fresh air, having digested the *Dialectics of Nature* and the *Philosophical Notebooks* after, let us admit, the stale Hegelianism of Lukács. We started to study the classics of the Vienna Circle, some recent English and American works, psychology and linguistics. We considered Márkus unique, someone above all other Hungarian philosophers. Yet, when around 1965, Márkus started to move closer to the evolving Budapest School, it did not take us by surprise. The rapprochement seemed natural to us. The path Márkus took led him to the anthropology of the young Marx, similarly to the Soviet and Polish neo-Marxists, and to Lukács's students. The fact that thus, we too were drawn closer to the students of Lukács could not have bothered us, since we considered ourselves as followers of Lukács. So with Márkus's lead, we began to feel ourselves belonging to the Lukács School.

The Budapest School represented a very specific local variant of the 'renaissance of Marxism'. Up to the point where we can trace the activity of its leaders, it was continuously determined by specifically Hungarian

circumstances, and by Lukács's person. Up to the early seventies the political conceptions of Fehér, Heller and Márkus never transcended 'democratic socialism' at least as far as their writings go. (The only one to go beyond that limit had been András Hegediis who worked out one of the most comprehensive conceptions of old evolutionism. He, however, was not a member of the school, although he often worked together with Lukács's students.) The reason for this was most probably the fact that the illusions about 'socialist democracy' were much more stubborn in Hungary than in any of the neighbouring countries. Even to the present day there has been no political or cultural tendency which would have clearly distinguished itself from the officially acknowledged and controlled system of communication; no one has ever come to expound the legalist version of 'democratic socialism'. This can partly be explained by the historical effect of Lukács's attitude towards the communist movement. He stubbornly and almost irrationally insisted on staying within the bounds of the Party.

Now, if we attempt to give a philosophical characterisation of the Budapest School, the local colours are harder to see. Common to the entire school are the praxis philosophy and its value system based on Marxist anthropology. The fact that the textual basis of such an anthropology has been elaborated most thoroughly by Márkus among all Marxists of the period, and that Heller was able to give such a concrete content to the 'generic being of man' nearly ending up in moralising, should be seen as personal achievements rather than local characteristics. What is to be seen as a local speciality is epistemological conservatism on the one hand and provincialism on the other. This is indeed a hard judgement. To mitigate it, let us make it clear that when we say conservatism we are not thinking of the pejorative denotation of the word, and when we say provincialism, we should immediately point to such exceptions as Márkus's entire oeuvre and Vajda's experiments to break through to a Marxist phenomenology.<sup>7</sup>

Anyway, our principal aim is not to mitigate, but to explain our characterisation. Let us start by recalling the well known fact that around the 1930s Lukács was converted to dialectical materialism in all great philosophical questions. He came to refine his position later on, especially in the middle fifties; several thoughts from his first Marxist period are incorporated in the *Aesthetics* and in the *Ontology*. But for him there was no way back to the pragmatist type of epistemological idealism. Consequently it was impossible for him to join in with those Western, Polish, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak neo-Marxist tendencies that started out partly from his very works written in his early period, and that were then advancing towards a special version of pragmatism. As far as we can see, Lukács's above stand determined how far his students were able to go in this respect. Their conservatism resulted in an *a priori* isolation, which might deserve our respect, had it only meant a mere acceptance of the

consequences drawn from such a philosophical background. But the fact is that the Budapest School in no way reflected the diverse development of neo-Marxism, nor did it enter into theoretical debates with the more and more diverging tendencies. This is precisely what we mean when we say it was provincial. It is by no mere chance that neither in the East nor in the West did the Budapest School really provoke serious reactions; in modern Marxist literature this period is rather marked by Polish, Yugoslav and Czech achievements.

On political questions our thinking was no clearer than was that of the older members of the school. There was only one thing that disturbed us unlike others. The party leadership strove to make of Lukács a kind of quasi-official ideologist once more. With this they succeeded through a skillful compromise à la Hongroise: neither Lukács nor his students were to withdraw anything they had said or done up till then, but, in turn the Party leadership censored their views and endorsed only those parts of their teaching which did not touch upon the more sensitive nerve-ends of Marxist state ideology. And on top of this, everybody acted as if the views held by the school had always been part of the official ideology. We were not the least happy about these developments, but neither did we raise our voice in opposition. Although to a different extent, the new situation provided advantages to us all. It would be hypocrisy on our part to deny that these advantages impressed us. But then, we had a more elevated motive for not coming out into the open. At this point, we, like the rest of the school, held that it is only through and within the official circles that one is able to achieve anything. We accepted the bonds tying old evolutionism to the Party, to academic life and to official publications and we projected this conviction on the school itself. Only after the death of Lukács were we able to break out from this double bondage. And even then, it was rather by force that we managed to break off; first we were excommunicated from the school by its founders, and soon, together with Hegedüs and four others we were plainly shown, as it were, the door of scientific life.

In theoretical questions we were, from the very outset, somewhat independent, **always** ready to play cheeky jokes on older Lukácsists. The conservatism of the Budapest School made it possible for us to follow our leanings towards scientism. Had we been among philosophers of a genuinely modern theory of praxis, we would have been diagnosed to show an extremely severe manifestation of alienation, that of seeking self-complacency in scientific objectivism. We considered ourselves to be very learned and we continued our zealous hunts into areas of ill fame for a genuine praxis philosopher, trying our hand in economic theory, economic history and in the history of technology. So even when writing on matters of **common** interest to the entire Budapest School, our products already turned out to be somewhat unusual. Our paper on 'everyday life' is a good

example of how we used to work. To start with, we gave it the title: 'Language in the Theory of Everyday Life'. Not to speak of the footnotes parading enormous erudition, in which, however, we referred only to Márkus from among our teachers. Those who were familiar with Heller's book on *Everyday Life* could clearly denote our impertinence.<sup>8</sup>

Anyway, it was not scientism that made the real difference. In Heller's concept, the 'particularity' of everyday life is opposed to universality as such, and this opposition is undoubtedly a normative one. When one of our friends, an electro-technician by profession, made an attempt to transcend his science-mindedness, and set out to read Heller's bulky book, he had to admit that, in his words: 'Having read a hundred pages of the book, I was still unable to grasp what it was about, when at once it suddenly struck me that Heller says it is not right to be selfish.' We, on the other hand, were trying to elaborate a general sociological theory of 'everyday life' that was to be not only void of any such moralising, but which lacked any political implications whatsoever. So it was not at all by accident that, apart from a few of the initiated, no one really heard about us while Heller was even read by electro-technicians, and her audience was growing parallel to her new habit of employing the terms elaborated in her book with an open socio-critical tendency. The message of her articles published in literary journals was understood by all: in Eastern European socialism, the revolution of everyday life is only to come in the future. . .

Our revulsion from mere moralising did not, of course, neutralise our passion for politics. But by our natural inclinations towards scientism, we were driven to look for appropriate political ideas in the fashionable New Left sociological theories. When we began to import Mallet and Gorz, we not only felt ourselves great scholars, but we were sure we had acted as great radicals. It did not occur to us that the most pressing of all deficiencies in the Hungary of the sixties might not be the satisfaction of 'the qualitatively superior needs of the new working class'. This was the price for not being provincial, because indeed, always reading the latest Western journals, we always knew ahead of everybody else what the *dernier cri* had been in the left-wing journals of Paris, Berkeley and Frankfurt.

This was the state we were in when, in 1970-1972 we wrote a book together with Márkus: *How is a Critical Economy Possible?* (We usually refer to the book as 'Überhaupt', which is a reduction of its 'transcendental main question', because, of course, we were going to have one: *Wie ist eine kritische Okonomie überhaupt möglich?*) Our theoretical aim was to liberate Marxian economics or the 'critique of political economy', i.e. critical economics, from the model of a socialist system based on the labour theory of value. We wanted to keep up the continuity of the Marxist tradition by means of something similar to a methodological

construction dealt with in the first part of this paper: it is not only through a labour theory of value that **Marx's** intention can be realised, moreover, in **Marx's** work itself, the realisation is actually controversial to the intention. Our argument was the following: Marx criticised capitalism by means of contrasting it with the communist planned economy based on the direct calculation of labour values. But such an economic **system** is possible only if a society is ready to restrict the free development of needs and thus the sovereignty of its individual members. . .

The theoretical argument in fact had a definite political tendency. *Capital* belonged to the ideological arsenal of the conservative opposition to economic reforms. What we intended to do was to win over the arsenal of critical economy to the side of the reformers, openly giving voice to our hopes that we might thus attract those reformist economists back to Marxism, who, at that **time**, were increasingly abandoning it. Yet, although we were becoming engaged in a definitely local debate, we carefully avoided connecting our criticism of the **Marxian** model of a socialist economic system to Soviet and Eastern European experiences. We thought it wiser to keep the argument on a strictly theoretical level, and if necessary, bring it into connection with the economic history of capitalism, but that only. Throughout the entire book there is not one hint that there is human life to the East of **Elbe**, and that something significant had happened in Saint Petersburg in **1917**. And this was not simply prudence on our part; we rather considered our deliberate oversight as a kind of daring allusion. We intended to suggest that the **Marxian** concept of socialism is something totally different from what the term socialism normally means in Eastern Europe. But why then, did we want to connect our undertaking to the efforts of the reformers? And why did we attempt a somewhat pedantic criticism of the model of a socialist economy as seen in *Capital*, rather than giving a criticism of Soviet-type economies? Evidently, because we failed to examine and carry our standpoint to either logical end.

The arguments in our book were quite traditional, only they were directed against a Marx turned upside down. This inversion was not at all unjustified, and as an interpretation of Marx it contained a few original thoughts. The opposition of capitalist and socialist economy is in fact there in *Capital*, though latently, and perhaps it is not unnecessary to show that this opposition is based on a very specific conception of socialist economy. The question of the direction in which one should look to find out about **Marx's** basic intentions is less relevant to us today, because we are no longer interested in keeping up the continuity of the tradition with some similar construction. What is more important now is to see that while we were searching for the remaining element of critical economy, we failed to notice the one which is inherent in it, and which, perhaps, is worth developing. We failed to notice that Marx has also provided a dynamic theory, and connected the development of the

economic system to the developments in the class structure. . .

The mistake we made was not only a theoretical blunder, it followed directly from our political narrow-mindedness. We were naive in thinking that the reformist economists were in desperate need of our critical weapons. On the contrary, they would instead have been quite embarrassed by our unwanted help, out of fear that we would provoke the official specialists of political economy into defensive action. And it was an even greater naivety to think that we—being pronouncedly Marxists as it **were**—should line up with the protagonists of the reform in any case. The greatest naivety of all was to think that people would be so interested in our demonstration that the Soviet-type economic system differed from the ideal of a communist economy, and that this difference might in any way be significant in a criticism of these societies. Our deliberately neglecting to analyse our society, intended as a covert allusion to our conviction that these societies do not live up to the socialist ideal, eventually almost turned our work into an apology of the system we meant to criticise. Our silence might have been read as if we accepted that our society was in fact the realisation of the socialist ideal, (at least to a limited degree), and that the task for its socialist critics is to show what is still missing from the full realisation of the ideal.

We thus have to consider it as our special personal luck that the appropriate committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party dealing with 'the prevention of creative ideological thinking' found our book worthy of official condemnation. And we felt it an honour to have been condemned, along with other members of the school, in the very same party decision as **András Hegedüs**, who went much further politically than we did at that time. The party resolution was followed by administrative steps. Scholars named in the resolution no longer had a place in the official scholarly life. As for us two, we no longer had our place in the Budapest School either. Following the death of **Lukács** in 1971, we had to face the ambiguity of our situation. Politicians in charge of cultural life had a real interest in **Lukács** as his prestige supported their legitimacy, they did not however, tolerate his pupils. Yet we were aware of the fact that their intention to keep up the appearance of due reverence could secure our position for a limited period. Realising all this, we had to ask ourselves: what had the compromise provided us with? We decided to make up a questionnaire similar to the one we are answering at the moment, the subject of which had been our attitude to 'Lukácsism'. It was on that occasion that we first formulated those problems with which we have been preoccupied ever since. However, the older members of the school still hoped that the status quo could be kept. They were embarrassed by our initiative, not lacking a certain amount of aggressiveness. They probably ~~view~~ our effort to dwell on hitherto concealed problems as a betrayal of political solidarity. Their embarrassment grew to an extent where our

break became unavoidable. Except for Hegedus, we had broken with all those named in the party resolution which expelled us all from our jobs. And although we remained in contact with Hegedus, we came to realise the significance of his ideas only later when we had already formed our own conception, different from his as well.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of the burdens of the semi-intellectual wage labour we have been driven to do since 1973,<sup>10</sup> we have constantly been feeling the liberating effect of our new situation. We became free of the restrictions of academic life, of the censorship of official publications and we are no longer compelled to watch over the unity of the school. But in the beginning, our newly-gained independence seemed somewhat empty.

We knew what we wanted: first of all to understand our situation. And as true-born Marxists injected with the concept of totality from our early childhood, this meant to understand the social system we had been living in. We knew that the conceptual framework of Marxism used for characterising whole societies would not take us very far. We abandoned questions like the number of possible social formations, whether there were five or more, and whether there were some that developed only in Asia, Africa or the Antarctic. In Paris or in London it might seem crucial to decide whether Soviet-type societies constitute a particular social 'formation', or they are no more than particular 'systems', or only 'transitions' between different systems. For if viewed from the inside, they very much look distinct systems. And on a human scale they seem to be lasting, which means they should have mechanisms for self-reproduction. We thus tried to look for these mechanisms, and, as Marxists, we first tried to reconstruct the model of the economic system so as to be able to proceed to the definition of classes and the description of their dynamism. . .

We have no space here to describe our findings in this area. (We are referring to a collection of papers, *Towards an East European Marxism* (Allison and 'Busby, London, 1977), published under the pseudonym, Marc Rakovski. Our authorship was not yet disclosed at the time of writing the above text and that is why our allusions here are rather vague—1980.) What we want to emphasise is that while looking for the answers it became less and less clear what it means for us to be Marxists. We were looking for classes whose dynamism would lead to socialism, and we were unable to locate them. The fact that socialist movements did not exist, not even in embryonic form, would not have discouraged us. For Marxism has an old—even if only vaguely tested—recipe for such situations. If we could have supposed that the existing tendencies or movements would, in the near future, undergo such a differentiation that the evolution of socialist movements would follow, we could have turned to the old Marxist recipe. But there seemed to have been no ground for such a hypothesis. We had to content ourselves with stating rather empty

formulas such as: the observable decentralisation of the economic system, the changes in the consumer habits of the working class or the evolution of an intellectual counter-culture might create more favourable conditions if, at a point, the cause of socialism would seem timely. But why would it become timely? We had no answer to this question.

We would have been much better off, if we could have ascribed the fact that the class which—according to the theoretical tradition—should strive for a socialist transformation does everything but this, if we could ascribe this fact to some fearful force such as indoctrination or manipulation. In that case we could have become some sort of *Marcuses* of the Balkans. Our Marxism would have been a negative, but politically meaningful, Marxism as well. But to place ourselves on such ground would have meant that we should have condemned the aspirations of the majority as fully negative. We would have played the role of a new-left tourist who feels desperate upon seeing that the workers have enough to eat and, alas, some can even afford a car. We felt no affinity with such a role. And following Gdansk and Radom, and especially after the creation of the Workers Defence Committee, we had to admit that we could not aspire to anything more or different than radical reformism does.

But at this point the political content of our Marxism and our relation to the great tradition became extremely problematic. For up till then, even if we thought that our Marxism had been politically empty, we could maintain that after a due analysis we would arrive at an appropriate political view. But now, after finding a truly substantial political stance, we realised that it does not imply anything we could see as especially belonging to Marxist thought. And we had to realise that our viewpoint can, from now on, be considered Marxist only in a genealogical sense.

But this is no reason for denying our ancestors. We reached radical reformism coming from Marxism. Our method and the results of our social investigation contain as much of the tradition as that of others who still consider themselves Marxists. In this sense we are Marxists. Yet we do not count on drawing the sympathies of others who, in some sense, are also Marxists, with this mere fact. But nor do we have to be afraid of scaring anybody off by our ancestry.

### *Postscript*

We find it necessary to mention that while writing our answer, we often had in mind E.P. Thompson's 'Open Letter to Leszek Kolakowski' in R. Miliband and J. Saville *Socialist Register* 1973.

Thompson defines four different versions of Marxism. (1) Marxism as a system of ideas—this is the generally accepted version. (2) Marxism as a method—we have dealt with this in the first part of our paper. (3) Marxism as a heritage—this is something close to what we have termed tradition in the genealogical sense. Thompson accuses those who conceive of the

tradition in this way of intellectual consumerism: As if the entire human culture were a great supermarket, where each author could choose according to his preferences; one likes this, the other likes that, you only have to pay with a footnote. . . (4) Marxism as a tradition. This differs from the previous versions in three respects: (a) The intellectual earnestness of the relation to the tradition: one has to fight one's battle with the heritage, and although one is not compelled to redefine the content of the whole tradition for oneself one must indeed set out a place in it for oneself. (b) Most Marxisms imply strong political engagements which, however, can be identical in case of theoretically different Marxisms. (c) The Marxist tradition is continuous and alive in a number of disciplines throughout generations; the tradition to which the historian Thompson belongs is such a tradition.

We have to content ourselves with something which is closest to Marxism taken in the sense of the third point. Beyond this, perhaps we might claim also to have fought a battle with the heritage. But as to the other two points, first, we have been unable to find a political stance that can be characterised as specifically Marxist, and second, there is no living Marxist tradition present in any of the disciplines we know anything of in Eastern Europe.

Leszek Kolakowski, the addressee of Thompson's letter, can in none of the above senses consider himself a Marxist. The reasons are mostly of content, and these we have no place to discuss here. There is only one point we would want to repeat from the answer to Kolakowski ('My Correct Views on Everything' in *Socialist Register 1974*), that has great weight coming from the greatest figure of one-time Eastern European revisionism: 'What was called "revisionism" in the peoples' democracies has practically died out (with the exception perhaps of Yugoslavia) and this means that neither the young nor the old think about their situation in terms of "true socialism" and "true Marxism" any more.'

Budapest, April 1977.

#### NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. A detailed summary of the contents of the volume was published in *Index on Censorship* 6/1978 by a Hungarian writing under the name Balazs Rab; *Index* 2/78 and 4/78 contain additional articles on *Profile* and the emergence of Hungarian *samizdat*. Abridged excerpts from several of the essays in this volume, including the present one, have appeared in English in F. Silnitsky, L. Silnitsky, and K. Reyman, eds., *Communism and Eastern Europe*, Harvester, Brighton, 1979, and in French in the anthology of Hungarian *samizdat* *Opposition = 1.0%* (edited by Bence and Kis and introduced by Miklós Haraszti), Paris, Seuil, 1979.
2. For a wider interpretation of the Budapest School, see Ivan Selenyi, 'Notes on the Budapest School', *Critique* 8, Summer 1977.
3. Major works by members of the Budapest School in English include: the

anthology. *The Humanisation of Socialism: Writings of the Budapest School*, Allison and Busby, London, 1976; Agnes Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*, Allison and Busby, London, ?; András Hegediis, *Socialism and Bureaucracy*, Allison and Busby, London, 1976; Mihály Vajda, *Fascism as a Mass Movement*, Allison and Busby, London, 1972; and György Markus, 'Debates and Trends in Marxist Philosophy', in Silnitsky *et al.*, *op. cit.*

4. A different version of chapter 1 of this book appeared in *Capital and Class* 1 (1977).
5. Feher and Heller now live in Sydney, and Heller teaches at La Trobe University; Markus teachers in Melbourne.

#### NOTES TO TEXT

(authors notes are included in the text)

6. Ilyenkov, Davidov and his wife Gajdenko were the major younger philosophers emerging from the short-lived post-20th Congress Soviet theoretical revival. Ilyenkov's important book on the dialectic in Marx's *Capital* was only published in Russian. Yuri Davidov's influential book on alienation, *Work and Liberty* and Gajdenko's study of Heidegger were published in Hungarian translation by the publishing house of the Hungarian Party. Fritzhand and Baczko are Polish philosophers; the former published a book in 1961 entitled *Man, Humanism, and Moralism*, and the latter a study of Rousseau.
7. Before writing *Fascism as a Mass Movement*, Vajda did his doctoral work on Husserl's phenomenology and published two works in Hungarian, *Science in Brackets* (Budapest, 1968) and *On the Borderline between Myth and Reason* (Budapest, 1969). On the problem of the provincialism of the Budapest School, see Agnes Heller's own account of the same developments in her interview in *Telos* (1979), 'Moral Philosophy in Eastern Europe'.
8. Agnes Heller, *The Every-day Life* (Budapest, 1970). The acknowledgements listed Bence and Kis as ones who helped the author with advice and criticism. Bence and Kis' own study was published in a highly prestigious and esoteric Hungarian academic publication, *Studies in General Linguistics*, vol. 7 (1970).
9. There was a famous open clash between Hegediis and Bence-Kis on the question of the desirability of a multi-party system in Hungary in 1977 (in which Bence-Kis defended a pluralist position) which was turned into a samizdat publication. Hegediis' contribution was published in Ken Coates and F. Singleton, eds., *The Just Society*, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1977. Bence and Kis' critical answer exists only in Hungarian.
10. For an autobiographically inspired description of this situation see Rakovski, *Towards an East European Marxism*, ch. 3 on the 'sub-intelligentsia'.