CONTRADICTIONS

Marxism and
Psychoanalysis

CONTRADICTIONS

A Journal for Critical Thought

2024 / 2

CONTRADICTIONS

volume 8 2024 number 2

English copyediting and proofreading Greg Evans, Scott Alexander Jones

Typesetting Jana Andrlová

Graphic design © Markéta Jelenová

Printed by Tiskárna Nakladatelství Karolinum, Pacovská 350/4, Praha 4

Published in Prague as the 631. title of Filosofia, a publishing house of the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Jilská 1, 110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic

Akademie věd České republiky STRATEGIE AV21

This volume appears with financial support from the research program Strategie AV21 "Anatomy of European Society, History, Tradition, Culture, Identity."

ISSN 2570-7485

ISBN 978-80-7007-808-2 (print book)

ISBN 978-80-7007-813-6 (e-book)

DOI 10.47376/filosofia.2025.2

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.1

The effort to connect the thought of Marx and Freud is undoubtedly one of the most distinctive lines that shaped the backbone of critical thought in the 20th century – a line whose contours remain visible and active to this day. Although a considerable number of pages have already been devoted to this topic, it is often overlooked how significant Central Europe was to the early development of this fruitful yet conflictual intermingling. Given its historical legacy, it is hardly surprising that various philosophical initiatives that aimed to bring these two currents closer together did not form a unified school or movement. Rather, it was a deeply differentiated vector of thought that, at its inception, shaped the trajectories of such diverse theoretical currents as certain radical second-generation psychoanalysts, the Surrealists, and the founding thinkers of the Frankfurt School, to name only the most prominent among them. In all these cases, psychoanalysis became part of – or at least an ally to – a broader emancipatory and critical project, and it was practiced not only as a clinical discipline but also as a radical cultural, aesthetic, social, and political theory.

It is true that Freud himself had already expanded psychoanalysis to a nearly universal extent, but his fundamentally skeptical view of human nature was alien to the Marxist idea of collective liberation.[1] Likewise, in the founding works of Marx and Engels, one would search in vain for any clear foreshadowing of the later creative encounter between Marxism and psychoanalysis. Their interrelation in the interwar period has a somewhat paradoxical character, which it has retained to this day.

Despite this unexpectedness, there are clues that help explain, at least to some extent, the surprising convergence of psychoanalysis with Marxism and revolutionary thought. Most of these clues stem from the ethos of freedom inherent in both approaches. This ideal was deepened by faith in the possibility of radical social transformation, by the hope that a different and fairer world was possible and achievable, and on the

[1] Freud, however, evidently never studied Marxist philosophy in detail; his paraphrases of Marxist ideas are closer to vulgar and reductive interpretations. See Adrian Johnston, "Communism and Ambivalence. Freud, Marxism, and Aggression", in *Critical Theory and Psychoanalysis: From the Frankfurt School to Contemporary Critique*, ed. Mills, Jon, a Daniel Burston (London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2022), p. 31.

other hand, by a certain deep and uncompromising intransigence characteristic of both psychoanalysis and Marxism. Over the past two hundred years of European intellectual development, it is difficult to find any other intellectual currents that have so provocatively subverted and undermined established social ideas. Both triggered intense reactions and aroused fear and widespread hostility, which, conversely, may have tempted radical authors of the time to bring the two closer together. Here, Marx and Engels's "spectre of communism" echoes numerous remarks by Freud on society's resistance to psychoanalysis and its exposure of the determining role of sexuality.

External events also contributed in part to the linking of the two theoretical approaches, events to which existing forms of Marxist theory in particular were unable to respond adequately. The (un)successes of the 1917 revolution and the following years, the rise of leftist artistic avant-gardes, and the decline of the revolutionary wave in the second half of the 1920s demonstrated that although Marxism possessed a well-developed theory of objective development, it conspicuously lacked a complementary conception of creative individual subjectivity. Psychoanalysis, for its part, showed how essential drives and sexuality are for human consciousness. Various forms of psychoanalytic engagement with Marxism then developed ideas pointing to the importance of desire and drives not only for the individual, but also for the economy and society. Within this framework, the socially oppressive function of repression and other defense mechanisms was exposed, frequently accompanied by exaltations of the revolutionary potential of liberating unconscious life or sexuality. Put briefly, the effort to connect Marx with Freud was driven largely by an interest in understanding the nature and significance of irrationality in human thought and action. This became particularly pronounced and critical in connection with another major "external" event of the interwar period: the rise of fascism. Various forms of "Freudo-Marxism" played a key role here in efforts to understand and define the interplay of unconscious, psychosocial, and economic causes of its mass appeal and of the power of authoritarianism.

This English issue of *Contradictions* features four original studies that examine the intersections between psychoanalysis and Marxism, as well as their shared engagement with contemporary challenges. Sára Bagdi and Gergely Csányi analyze the precarious position of psychoanalysis in interwar Hungary and its reception within leftist circles, both communist and social-democratic. These leftist attitudes toward psychoanalysis were often marked by skepticism or outright condemnation, shaped by two key factors: the ostensibly apolitical stance of the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis and the perceived emphasis on unrestrained individualism and irrationalism within psychoanalytic theory. Instead, leftist thinkers tended to favor Adlerian individual psychology, which, in a paradoxical twist, appeared more conducive to advancing communitarian or broadly social values. However, as fascism gained traction and the broader sociopolitical atmosphere became increasingly reactionary in the early 1930s, the left found itself compelled to explain the appeal of such irrational movements. This shift created a space for a more favorable reception of psychoanalytic perspectives, particularly

those advanced by Wilhelm Reich. A different but not unrelated perspective on psychoanalysis is offered by Inxhi Brisku, who examines the stance toward psychoanalysis in Stalinist Albania, particularly after 1961, when the regime sharply distanced itself both politically and ideologically from the post-Stalinist course of the Soviet Union. Brisku not only reveals the ideological and instrumental nature of the regime's denunciation of psychoanalysis as a bourgeois and ultimately unscientific endeavor but also uncovers the underlying motives behind these attacks. Thus, the study provides invaluable insights into the broader ideological climate of Hoxha's Albania.

In Czechoslovakia, before the Second World War, Freudo-Marxist ideas developed within three distinct theoretical milieus: the surrealist group, the Historical Group, and the Prague Marxist-Psychoanalytical working group, composed mainly of emigrant German-speaking psychoanalysts. The distinctively Czech surrealist approach is exemplified in the present volume of *Contradictions* by two translated texts from the period: Záviš Kalandra's review essay on Breton's *Communicating Vessels* and Karel Teige's lecture "Introduction to Modern Painting." Kalandra's interpretation of *Communicating Vessels* – an interpretation of exceptional significance for the later development of Czech surrealist theory – defends Breton against contemporary criticism and elaborates, in a dialectical-materialist manner, his psychoanalytically informed concept of the "general essence of subjectivity." In Teige's more extensive text, the reader is offered an outline of his Marxist theory of the historical development of art, as well as his psychoanalytically grounded theory of the creation, reception, and social function of surrealist artworks. Both authors think within a Marxist-revolutionary framework, as emphasized in the introductory text by Jana Ndiaye Beránková. The other two Freudo-Marxist intellectual collectives – the Historical Group and the psychoanalytic group surrounding the German immigrants – are the focus of a study by Florian Ruttner. Ruttner describes their main activities and theoretical orientation, and also provides a brief critique of some of their concepts.

In contemporary intellectual discourse, perhaps the most recognized philosophical effort to connect psychoanalysis with Marxism is associated with the so-called Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis, whose most well-known representative is Slavoj Žižek. It is Žižek's Marxism that Nico Graack critically examines in his essay "Where are These (Neo-) Marxists?" In doing so, Graack clarifies the philosophical and Lacanian foundations of Žižek's theory of ideology, while also drawing attention to the often-overlooked historical link between Žižek's thought and the philosophical debates of former Yugoslavia.

This year, unfortunately, we also had to cope with the loss of an esteemed member of our international editorial board, Peter Steiner, an outstanding expert on Russian formalism and Central European structuralism, an exceptional teacher, and a passionate commentator on contemporary events. In tribute to him, Steiner's son Emil has graciously shared his father's final unpublished essay, a poignant reflection on the notion of fearless speech, illustrated through the literary work of another prominent figure in the Czech intellectual landscape, Václav Černý. Reading the essay, it is not hard to imagine

that Peter Steiner wanted to situate himself in this (Foucaultian) discursive but also truly political space. In this sense, the text can be seen as his intellectual testament.

The review section focuses on two books that explore the complex and complicated relationship between Marx-inspired emancipatory movements and nationalism. Jakub S. Beneš offers a critical engagement with Pavel Barša's *Mezi Davidovou a rudou hvězdou: Židovské odpovědi na krizi liberální emancipace* [Between the Star of David and the Red Star: Jewish Responses to the Crisis of Liberal Emancipation]. While Beneš commends Barša's nuanced portrayal of nationalism as both an emancipatory and a conservative force, and appreciates his emphasis on the realization of freedom within history – as opposed to its transcendence – he also points to some shortcomings in Barša's analysis. These include the (partial) neglect of the kibbutz movement and various inconsistencies and lacunae within the overall argument. Krzysztof Katkowski, by contrast, reviews a comprehensive anthology of Catalan Marxist texts that address the question of Catalan nationalism and independence, particularly in relation to class dynamics and the semi-peripheral status of the Iberian Peninsula. Against this backdrop, he also raises broader questions about the Marxist interpretation of the principle of national self-determination and, consequently, the compatibility between nationalism and Marxism.

Jiří Růžička and Šimon Wikstrøm Svěrák

STUDIES

ALL AGAINST ALL

Freudo-Marxists, Adlerian-Marxists, Social Democrats, and Communists on Depth Psychology in Hungary Between the Two World Wars[1]

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine the reception of two schools of depth psychology in Hungary between the two world wars – psychoanalysis and individual psychology – among intellectuals associated with the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (Magyar Szociáldemokrata Párt – MSZDP) and the Communist Party of Hungary (Kommunisták Magyarországi Pártja – KMP). We argue that, in reaction to Sándor Ferenczi's role in the Hungarian Soviet Republic and the growing anti-Semitic public mood, members of the so-called Budapest School stayed away from public politics. As a result, depth psychology was

[1] Sára Bagdi worked on this paper as part of the project "Digital Critical Edition of the Correspondence of Lajos Kassák and Jolán Simon Between 1909 and 1928 and New Perspectives for Modernity Research" (OTKA FK-139325).

integrated into the leftist public independently of the Budapest School. In Hungary, the socialist reception of depth psychology in the period between the two world wars differed from the later Western Freudo-Marxist tradition in three key ways. First, between the two world wars, the revolution of the proletariat not only did not seem impossible, but it appeared imminent for many Marxists. Secondly, because of the impending possibility of revolution, the emphasis, compared with the later Freudo-Marxist tradition, was therefore much more on the immediate political tasks of judging depth psychology than on abstract theoretical questions. Thirdly, in Hungary, the brief communist experiment was followed by an anti-Marxist right-wing regime, distinguishing the Hungarian reception from the Western European reception of the time. Depth psychology was received by social democratic and communist intellectuals in a situation of resource and information scarcity, with various foreign connections, often in semi-illegality and often in rivalry, which led to a complex, frequently discordant debate around depth psychology.

Keywords

Hungary, Horthy era, Freudo-Marxism, psychoanalysis, individual psychology

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.2

Introduction

The crisis tendencies of capitalism in the early 20th century led not only to revolutionary movements in the "West" but also to a rightward shift in the working class and the emergence of fascist states, prompting many "Western" Marxist authors to reinterpret Marxism. After World War II and the globalization of Fordism, Marxists explored how the potential for revolution was lost in consumer societies. In these rethinking efforts, integrating concepts from depth psychology,[2] mainly psychoanalysis, played a significant role. Freudo-Marxist authors coined terms to describe relationships among broader social relations, narrower social interactions, ideology, and psychosexual development, partly to explain why the crisis tendencies of capitalism did not lead to revolution – how the non-revolutionary subject was reproduced. Such concepts include social character, repressive desublimation,[3] phobic objectification,[4] and fetishistic ideology.[5]

[2] Depth psychology is the umbrella term for those schools of thought that emphasize the role of the unconscious in development and behavior. In the first half of the 20th century, the three institutionalized schools of thought in depth psychology were: psychoanalysis, founded by Sigmund Freud; individual psychology, founded by Alfred Adler; and analytical psychology, founded by Carl Gustav Jung.

[3] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, [1955] 1974).

[4] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, [1952] 2008).

[5] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2009).

In contrast, the period between the two world wars was much more optimistic for Marxism due to the success of the Russian Revolution, the Red Vienna project, and the relative strength of the social democratic and communist parties in Western Europe. Even in Hungary, where the short period of the Hungarian Soviet Republic had been replaced by a conservative right-wing regime, in the 1920s, the social democratic party was the strongest parliamentary opposition party, and after 1925, the illegal communist party also had a significant base among young intellectuals. The possibility of an impending victory for the labor movement affected their understanding of depth psychology. This has led to depth psychology being evaluated and used in the context of short-term political goals. In Hungary, as in Germany, for example, it is only in the 1930s that the psychology of fascism began to be addressed, after the trade union movement, which had given the Social Democratic Party its mass base, was eroded by the global crisis. At the same time, the lack of information, the different foreign contacts of left-wing intellectuals, the different positions and political strategies, the rivalry between communists and social democrats and between individual psychologists and psychoanalysts all led to a complex and multifaceted debate around the relation between the political goals and depth psychology. In sum, the paper argues that the Hungarian discourse between the two world wars in many ways foreshadowed the post-WWII Freud-Marx synthesis, but it was internally differentiated, characterized by several (at times overlapping) oppositions. These oppositions included 1) emphasizing either building an institutional system within capitalism or overthrowing capitalism by revolutionary means, 2) adhering either to psychoanalysis or to individual psychology, and 3) considering depth psychology as either a "complementary science" of Marxism or a "reactionary ideology".

So, in this paper, we present the different positions on depth psychology among communist and social democratic intellectuals in Hungary between the two world wars. First, we show how members of the so-called Budapest School abstained from formal politics after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Second, we present the reception of Adlerian individual psychology in the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (MSZDP), for which Adlerian depth psychology was primarily a tool for hegemony building. Third, we present the position and arguments of anti-depth-psychological communist intellectuals, for whom depth psychology, especially psychoanalysis, was a dangerous bourgeois ideology that threatened the possibility of revolution. Fourth, we discuss the arguments of communists in favor of psychoanalysis – those for whom psychoanalysis was a revolutionary "complementary science" and Adlerian communists, who, in the 1930s, were more concerned with broader theoretical and political problems such as the rise of fascism. Finally, we present the fading out of this discourse and summarize the lessons learned.

Psychoanalysis and the Rise and Fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic

The most prominent figure of the so-called "Budapest School" of psychoanalysis was Sándor Ferenczi. In the 1910s, Ferenczi was a patron member of the Galilei Circle.[6] The Circle brought together radical students, mainly bourgeois radicals,[7] but also had many left-wing members; for example, one of its founders was György Lukács, later Deputy People's Commissar for Public Education for the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and its secretary was at one time Mátyás Rákosi, the chief leader in state-socialist Hungary between 1949–1956. Ferenczi, however, was not a socialist as generally understood by most socialists. Like many of his psychoanalytic contemporaries, Ferenczi's conception of society was characterized by extreme psychologism. For example, in a 1908 study – progressive for its time in terms of sexual psychology – he argued that to solve their problems, women should have fought for the right to sexual choice rather than the right to vote – as if the two issues were unrelated.[8] A few years later, in 1913, he explicitly opposed the idea of communism – or rather, what he understood as communism from a psychoanalytic point of view – positioning himself between communism and anarchism.[9] However, he likely had little idea of the socialist or anarchist literature of the period. Nevertheless, we know from Ferenczi's early writings that he was characterized by great social sensitivity and solidarity with the poor. Furthermore, in the fields of education,[10] homosexuality,[11] and criminology,[12] for example, he formulated progressive ideas sympathetic to many socialists of his time. Overall, Ferenczi was a progressive intellectual, and psychoanalysis, along with Ferenczi himself, was popular in the Galilei Circle. In a 1909 letter to Freud, Ferenczi wrote: "The young people are

[6] Tom Keve, "Ferenczi's Budapest", in *Ferenczi's Influence on Contemporary Psychoanalytic Traditions*, eds. Aleksandar Dimitrijević, Gabriele Cassullo, and Jay Frankel (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 14–16.

[7] Péter Csunderlik, *Radikálisok, szabadgondolkodók, ateisták: A Galilei Kör története (1908–1919)* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2020).

[8] Sándor Ferenczi, "A korai magömlés jelentőségéről", in *Lélek gyógyászat. Válogatott írások*, Sándor Ferenczi (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, [1908] 1991), pp. 47–52. In English: Sándor Ferenczi, "The Effect on Women of Premature Ejaculation in Men", in *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis*, Sándor Ferenczi (London: Maresfield, [1908] 1955), pp. 291–294.

[9] Sándor Ferenczi, "A pszichoanalízisről és annak jogi és társadalmi jelentőségéről", in *Ferenczi Sándor összes művei 3. Háború, forradalmak, pszichoanalízis*, eds. Anna Borgos and Katalin Pető (Budapest: Oriold és Társai, [1914] 2023), pp. 35–47, here 43.

[10] Sándor Ferenczi, "Pszichoanalízis és pedagógia", in *Ferenczi Sándor*, ed. Ferenc Erős (Budapest: Új Mandátum, [1908] 2000). pp. 61–67. In German: Ferenczi Sándor, "Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik", in *Zur Erkenntnis des Unbewussten. Schriften zur Psychoanalyse*, ed. Helmut Dahmer (Frankfurt am Mainban: Fischer Taschenbuch, [1908] 2015), pp. 63–73.

[11] Sándor Ferenczi, "Homosexualitas feminine", *Gyógyászat* 42, no. 11 (1902), pp. 167–168.

[12] Sándor Ferenczi, "Bűntények lélekelemzése", *Szabadgondolat*, no. 1 (1914), pp. 13–15.

beginning to take an interest in you. Today, a medical student came to see me under the auspices of the student section of the Galileo Society (Freethinkers Club), and I once again allowed a lecture to be extorted from me."[13]

After the First World War and the end of the monarchy, Ferenczi was elected president of the International Psychoanalytical Association at the Fifth International Psychoanalytical Congress in September 1918. At the same time, the struggle for introducing formal university education in psychoanalysis in Hungary began to gain momentum in 1918. The students of the Hungarian University of Science in Budapest presented a petition to the rector, asking for Ferenczi to be invited to lecture. Although the petition was unsuccessful, the College Psychoanalytical Association was founded in 1919, and the students invited Ferenczi to give informative lectures on psychoanalysis. In 1919, the students wrote a letter to the Minister of Public Education, asking for psychoanalysis to be integrated into the medical school curriculum and Ferenczi's invitation.

The post–First World War labor unrests, like in other parts of the region, were followed by a short period of socialist governance. The Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed on 21 March 1919 by a new party born out of a coalition between the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (Magyar Szociáldemokrata Párt – MSZDP) and the Communist Party of Hungary (Kommunisták Magyarországi Pártja – KMP). After the communist party suspended the autonomy of the university, the conservative professors could no longer prevent Ferenczi's appointment, and his appointment as a full professor in the new Department of Psychoanalysis was signed by György Lukács as Deputy People's Commissar.[14]

During the Soviet Republic, the Galilei Circle practically ceased to exist, mainly because the members began to assume functions in the Commune. On 26 March 1919, the Free Organization of the Old Galileists – who had been members of the Circle since before the First World War – wrote a letter to the Revolutionary Governing Council offering the services of fifty young intellectuals. Among them were several psychoanalysts who undertook to bring about psychiatric and academic reforms.[15] A year after the fall of the Commune, the liberal politician Oszkár Jászi wrote – probably exaggerating – that, during the days of the Commune, "Freudism" was "the idol of communist youth".[16]

[13] Eva Brabant, Ernst Falzeder, and Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch (eds.), *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sandor Ferenczi Volume 1, 1908–1914* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 88.

[14] Ferenc Erős, "Sándor Ferenczi, Géza Róheim and the University of Budapest, 1918–19", *Psychoanalysis and History* 21, no. 1 (2019), pp. 5–22. Judit Mészáros, "Progress and Persecution in the Psychoanalytic Heartland: Antisemitism, Communism, and the Fate of Hungarian Psychoanalysis", *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 20, no. 5 (2010), pp. 600–622. Judit Mészáros, "Sándor Ferenczi and the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis", *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 69–89. Ferenc Erős, *Analitikus Szociálpszichológia* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2001), pp. 62–65.

[15] Csunderlik Péter, "A Galilei Kör és a Tanácsköztársaság – A régi galileisták felajánlkozása a proletárdiktatúra szolgálatára", *ArchívNet* 22, no. 2 (2022).

[16] Oszkár Jászi, *Magyar kálvária – magyar feltámadás* (Bécs: Bécsi Magyar Kiadó, 1920), p. 127.

The National Assembly of Councils discussed potential public education reforms. Officially, György Lukács, the Deputy People's Commissar for Public Education, proposed a sex education program whereby all students over 14 had to attend a weekly sex education class – probably to reduce the Church's influence in this area. Presumably, psychoanalysis was to play a part in this, although the sex education material, even if it was produced, has not survived in the archives. What has survived, however, is the documentation of how the Experimental Criminology Department, set up during the Soviet Republic, tried to reintegrate sexual "criminals" – homosexuals and prostitutes[17] – into society as "good communists" by learning about their life histories and using psychology, sociology, and psychoanalysis, rather than punishing them.[18]

Ferenczi did not enjoy popularity and the position for long: after 133 days, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was overturned and replaced by Horthy's conservative regime. After the fall of the Commune, Ferenczi was expelled from the Royal Medical Association for his position during the Soviet Republic. The reputation of psychoanalysis, and Ferenczi personally, was not helped by his role during the Soviet period, nor by the growing anti-Semitism in the country.[19] In the two decades following the Soviet Republic, the position of psychoanalysis – and more generally, depth psychology – was ambivalent. In a sense, it was popular, but it also had many critics and had barely penetrated the system of institutions with paid positions. This dichotomy is illustrated by the liberal and left-wing press presenting psychoanalysts as experts and the conservative press, with few exceptions, presenting them as charlatans. *Nyugat* (*West*),[20] the literary journal of the urban liberal intelligentsia, played a major role in promoting psychoanalysis, specifically Ferenczi, to the broader liberal public.[21] Almost all of Freud's books were published in Hungarian in the 1920s, and psychoanalysis was fashionable primarily among Jews and liberal intelligentsia in the 1920s and 1930s – after all, the dominant

[17] An approach that was also in line with Ferenczi's position. See: Sándor Ferenczi, "Homosexualitas feminine", *Gyógyászat* 42, no. 11 (1902), pp. 167–168.

[18] Anita Kurimay, *Queer Budapest 1873–1961* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2020), pp. 91–118.

[19] Ferenc Erős, "Sándor Ferenczi, Géza Róheim, and the University of Budapest, 1918–19", *Psychoanalysis and History* 21, no. 1 (2019), pp. 5–22. Judit Mészáros, "Progress and Persecution in the Psychoanalytic Heartland: Antisemitism, Communism, and the Fate of Hungarian Psychoanalysis", *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 20, no. 5 (2010), pp. 600–622. Judit Mészáros, "Sándor Ferenczi and the Budapest School of Psychoanalysis", *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 69–89. Erős, *Analitikus Szociálpszichológia*, pp. 62–65.

[20] *Nyugat* was a crucial journal for Hungarian modernism. It did not have a unified ideological image but was rather created against conservatism; however, the editors kept their distance from the avant-garde popular among left-wing intellectuals.

[21] Melinda Friedrich, "Psychoanalysis in Representative Organs of the Hungarian Press between 1913 and 1939", in *Psychology and Politics*, eds. Anna Borgos, Erős Ferenc, and Gyimesi Júlia (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2019).

political atmosphere was at once anti-communist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Freudian. According to the recollection of István Kulcsár,[22] a communist specialist in individual psychology, Christian psychiatrists were typically professionals paid by institutions and experts in psychiatry. But depth psychology was the talk of Jewish circles, and "the concept of 'inhibition' or 'slip' was known to every Jewish seamstress".[23] Criticism of psychoanalysis often combined motivations of sexual conservatism, religiosity, and anti-Semitism. The most important works of Ferenczi, Mihály and Alice Bálint, Géza Róheim, and Imre Hermann were written in this hostile anti-Semitic political environment, but these authors kept psychoanalysis at a distance from politics.[24] Ferenczi, moreover, explicitly tried to distance psychoanalysis from left-wing political tendencies in a 1922 article[25] in *Nyugat*.[26]

Individual Psychology and the Hungarian Social Democratic Party

Although psychoanalysis was by far the most popular depth psychology movement of the period, the Hungarian social democratic intelligentsia was interested primarily in individual psychology, following the example of Vienna. While depth psychologists stayed well away from the state institutional system in Hungary, the situation was completely different in Vienna during this period. Between the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and 1934, the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria managed to seize power in Vienna and, for a short time, in Austria. The SDAP had to overcome some difficulties, primarily due to the disintegration of the monarchy, the world war, and opposition from reactionary forces. The take-over of cultural institutions and the reorganization of education were two critical elements in the SDAP's hegemony-building. In Vienna, these social democratic reform pedagogies were introduced in combination with research on children's psychology and psychological counseling services.[27] In the Viennese institutional system, Alfred Adler's individual psychology was more important than classical psychoanalysis from the very beginning. Adler was initially a follower of Freud, and in 1910, he became president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Due to differences in theoretical and therapeutic methodology, Adler and several others resigned permanently from the International Psychoanalytic Asso-

[22] Balázs Körmendi (István Kulcsár), *Zsidó gyónás* (Budapest: Interart Stúdió, 1990).

[23] Körmendi (Kulcsár), p. 140.

[24] Harmat, *Freud, Ferenczi és a magyarországi pszichoanalízis*, pp. 102–120.

[25] Sándor Ferenczi, "Pszichoanalízis és társadalompolitika", in *Ferenczi Sándor*, ed. Ferenc Erős (Budapest: Új Mandátum, [1922] 2000), p. 72.

[26] Erős, *Analitikus szociálpszichológia*, p. 66.

[27] Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture 1919–1934* (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Marie-Noëlle Yazdanpanah, "Education for Everyone", in *Red Vienna Sourcebook*, eds. R. B. McFarland, Georg Spitaler and Ingo Zechner (New York: Candemn House, 2020), pp. 313–332.

ciation on 11 October 1911.[28] In 1914, after his break-up with the association and with Freud, Adler founded the first journal of individual psychology in Vienna. Individual psychology thus became a rival branch of depth psychology. From the 1890s, Adler was in close contact with Marxist intellectuals. In 1897, he married Raissa Epstein, through whom he later maintained good relations with the Russian émigrés in Vienna, and met Trotsky several times during his Vienna emigration. (Raissa would later become a member of the Austrian Communist Party.) The same year, Adler wrote an article under the pseudonym Aladin for the socialist newspaper *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (*Workers' Newspaper*), founded by Austro-Marxist Max Adler.[29,30] At the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society meeting on 10 March 1909,[31] Adler gave the keynote lecture on "The Psychology of Marxism" and argued for the compatibility of Marxism and psychoanalysis. Perhaps not independently from Adler's political commitment, individual psychology placed greater emphasis on counseling and the pedagogical use of depth psychology alongside therapeutic practice from the beginning than most classical psychoanalysis authors.

During the 1920s, the SDAP provided institutional support for both social research and psychology. Scholars of the Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna, including Adler himself, collaborated closely with the SDAP. Adler's "Individual Psychology directly penetrated the day-to-day operations of the Vienna schools"[32] through establishing education guidance clinics (*Erziehungsberatungsstellen*), where Viennese teachers could bring their problematic students along with the parents for counseling. (Many psychoanalysts, such as Siegfried Bernfeld and Wilhelm Reich, were also involved in the Red Vienna project.[33]) Between 1931 and 1934, an experimental school of individual psychology operated in Vienna, drawing heavily on Adler's experience in individual psychological counseling. [34] His fundamental view was that no child should be considered hopeless. As Adler put it, "Even in the worst of circumstances, there is always a particular approach – but this, of course, needs to be found."[35]

[28] Erős, "Analitikus szociálpszichológia", p. 76–78.

[29] The identical surnames of Alfred Adler and Max Adler are only a coincidence, they were not related.

[30] Giuseppe Ferrigno, "Alfred Adler, Aka Aladin, And His Social Commitment", *Dialoghi Adleriani* 2, no. 4 (2015), pp. 13–19.

[31] Gordana Jovanović, "Psychoanalysis, Marxism: Once and Again", *Psychotherapy and Politics International* 13, no. 2 (2015), pp. 129–140.

[32] P. E. Stepansky, *In Freud's Shadow: Adler in Context* (London and New York: Routledge, 1983), p. 216.

[33] Elizabeth Ann Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics: Psychoanalysis & Social Justice, 1918–1938* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[34] Paul A. Clark, "Individual Education: Application of Adler's Personality Theory", *The Clearing House* 59, no. 1 (1985), pp. 35–38.

[35] Alfred Adler, *The Education of Children* (Chicago: A Gateway Edition, 1930), p. 179.

In Hungary, after the fall of the Commune, many of those who were in some way involved in the Soviet Republic were executed or imprisoned, KMP (the Communist Party of Hungary) was banned, and its leaders were forced into emigration. MSZDP (the Hungarian Social Democratic Party) bore less severe consequences due to its institutional hinterland's still significant associational power. MSZDP arose from non-parliamentary labor movements in the late 19th century. It built a national trade union network relying on the existing local workers' associations, providing the party with a mass base of unionized workers. Despite the regime change, the MSZDP managed to maintain these networks, and in 1922, it became the main opposition party in the National Assembly.[36] Afterward, it pursued moderate electoral politics to distance itself further from the illegal communist party, thus securing its parliamentary seats. Its campaigns eliminated any concepts that even slightly reminded the public of the revolutionary politics of the Soviet Union, attempting to appeal to voters with the promise of catching up with the living standards of the SDAP-led "Red Vienna".

As part of the wave of international institutionalization in the 1920s, the Hungarian Association for Individual Psychology was founded in 1927. However, Hungarian individual psychology had already been active, especially from the mid-1920s. The reception of Adlerian individual psychology among the social democratic intelligentsia was always dominated by the institutional system of "Red Vienna", which was seen as a model. In Hungary, however, the lack of institutional background support meant that reformist (depth) psychologists did not form strong alliances with the MSZDP, and established professionals kept their distance from political movements to avoid conflicts with the government. Besides discussing the Viennese initiatives, they criticized the clericalism and traditionalism of Hungarian government-funded school reforms. In 1924, Ede Bresztovszky published an article in *Szocializmus* (*Socialism*) – the Social Democratic Party's scholarly journal – in which, following educational politics in Vienna, he argued that modern schooling, instead of being built on strict discipline and religious education, should consider the psychology of the child.[37]

Adler's name and the more concrete use of concepts from individual psychology became more prominent in the Hungarian social democratic discourse just as the party experienced its first major challenges in controlling its membership. This internal crisis shaped the context in which Adler's thoughts were reinterpreted. From 1925 onwards, the number of unemployed and lower-skilled workers increased, and these groups, due to their precarious economic position, were more receptive to illegal communist agitation. From the mid-twenties, the MSZDP party leadership took repeated actions against its internal, communist-led opposition, making a concerted effort to crack

[36] Péter Sipos, *A szakszervezetek és a Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt, 1890–1930* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984).

[37] Ede Bresztovszky [Ky], "A klerikalizmus és az iskolareform", *Szocializmus* 14, no. 7 (1924), pp. 290–291.

down on the communist-backed groups led by István Vági. In February 1925, the party passed a resolution to exclude Vági's followers from the unions and asserted stricter control over its members.[38] These actions were paired with a generational conflict, as young workers, as well as women – who were less embedded in the existing party structures and enjoyed fewer benefits on the labor market – were often seen by older party members as a potential communist threat. This struggle reflected the contradictory structural integration of the party paired with the oppressive governance techniques of the Horthy regime. On the one hand, the number of MSZDP-related associations grew steadily, and workers' associations, sports clubs, and cooperatives developed independently or partially independently of unions, with a membership less committed to the MSZDP. Meanwhile, the Horthy regime introduced vigorous control over any suspected communist activity, and these measures were also extended to the MSZDP's organizations.[39] On the other hand, due to the postwar inflation preceding the 1929 peak of the over-accumulation crisis, more conflicts arose between militant unions and the party leadership. The MSZDP interpreted the Adlerian concept of "community sense" (*Gemeinsinn*) from the perspective of the party's struggle with controlling and integrating members holding inferior positions in the labor market. In 1926, Bresztovszky interviewed Adler on how the economic crisis had affected the mental lives of children and those in the broader society. The interview was conducted in one of the Viennese counseling clinics. Though the discussion starts with the mental health of children growing up during the economic crisis, the focus falls on how unemployment disrupts social cohesion through people's exclusion from the collective labor of the whole of society.[40] In the following year, when Adler published his book *Menschenkenntnis* (*Understanding Human Nature*),[41] Bresztovszky reported on the yearly Congress of Individual Psychology and also interviewed the Dresden-based Marxist professional Otto Rühle on the role of individual psychology in the enhancement of solidarity within the proletariat. In the interview, Rühle talked mainly about public education. Still, contrary to advocates of the "labor school concept", he did not refer to the importance of cooperative problem-solving, but found the central role of education in "the elimination of situations that may provoke the feeling of inferiority". At the same time, he emphasized that teachers should strengthen children's sense of responsibility towards their community. Accordingly, the interview concluded that the treatment of neurotic

[38] Péter Sipos, *A szakszervezetek és a Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt, 1890–1930. Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), p. 83.

[39] Sarolta Kővágó, "Szavalókórusok a magyar munkásmozgalomban (1926–1933)", *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 26, no. 2 (1980), pp. 87–89.

[40] Ede Bresztovszky [ky], "Az államok hiányos organizációja idézi elő az erkölcsi epidémiáka", *Népszava*, June 19, 1926, p. 4.

[41] Alfred Adler, *Menschenkenntnis* (Köln: Anaconda Verlag, [1927] 2008).

adults with a working-class background should also include encouraging them to join a collective, community-based class struggle.[42]

In the second half of the 1920s, the Hungarian reception of Adler's works also increased in journals. In 1928, László Zilahi, the editor of Adler's journal, *Internationale Zeitschrift für Individualpsychologie* (*International Journal of Individual Psychology*), dedicated two long articles to Adler. Zilahi aimed to provide a general overview of Adler's approach to psychology and education. Still, besides reiterating the foundational principles of individual psychology, he brought in another less prevalent aspect in the discourse of 1920s Hungary. He discussed the mother's role in the child's early socialization parallel to the role of formal education in the social production and reproduction of a collective society. The role of the "good" mother was reconceptualized in the context of the social democrats' attempt to assure social cohesion within a mass base they had already acquired but struggled to maintain and control. The socialist mother was now obliged, first of all, to provide her child with emotional safety and healthy self-esteem; secondly, she was responsible for integrating her child into the broader community.[43] This concept of socialist motherhood was introduced into the social democratic workers' education by Mária Takács, who held several lectures on motherhood and individual psychology in the unions' collective spaces, translated a book on child-rearing by individual psychologist and Adler student Erwin Wexberg,[44] and also edited the journal *Házasság és Kultúra*[45] *(Marriage and Culture*). *Házasság és Kultúra* was a kind of depth-psychology-oriented social-democratic women's magazine, which published, among other things, advisory articles by Viennese and German individual psychologists and psychoanalysts on marriage, love, and sex. In 1925, with the National Women's Organizing Committee, Takács started a counseling office[46] for mothers. This counseling service followed the concept of Adler's guidance clinics, but contrary to the Viennese examples, where counseling was directly integrated into the school system, the Budapest-based initiative only targeted mothers and reached out to them through worker's associations. Consequently, it framed child-rearing as the mother's private matter. In Takács's still preserved and archived notes on parenting, she extensively discussed the parents' (mainly the mother's) responsibilities in "social habituation", dedicated several chapters to discussing the children's need for acquiring healthy self-control, self-reliance, and self-confidence, and also emphasized the im-

[42] Bresztovszky Ede [ky], "Marxizmus és individuálpszchológia", *Népszava,* 1 October 1927, p. 5.

[43] Zilahi László, "Az emberismeret tudománya. Alfred Adler individual pszichológiája", *Munka*, no. 3 (1928), 81–85, and no. 4 (1928), pp. 101–105.

[44] Erwin Wexberg, *Az ideges gyermek* (Budapest: Grünberger, [1926] 1930).

[45] A "'Házasság és Kultúra' új száma megjelent", *Népszava*, May 25, 1928, 7. *Házasság és Kultúra* (1927–1928).

[46] [Without title], *Népszava*, October 23, 1925, p. 13.

portance of sex education.[47] The attitude of the social democratic intelligentsia towards Vienna, motherhood, and depth psychology is well illustrated by the article "Applied Psychoanalysis in the Jugendamt in Vienna", published in 1926. The author described an instructive case of two working mothers, one hypochondriac and one who had been waiting for a cure for her epilepsy since the birth of her daughter at an *Erziehungsberatung* (educational counseling) class of the Amt für verwahrloste Kinder (Office for Neglected Children), a sub-department of the Vienna Jugendamt. The article portrays Vienna as a model, with a well-established network of psychological counseling for working people, and at the same time, presents the role of depth psychology in social policy and a parable of what a "good mother" is.[48]

In 1916, Ferenczi reviewed Adler's theory with a caustic sneer.[49] As opposed to psychoanalysis as an empirical science, he labeled it a speculative philosophy, too impatient with psychology not yet offering empirical answers to certain questions. The article probably did not benefit the relationship between psychoanalysts and individual psychologists in Hungary, and this opposition was also reflected in the left-wing public. Still, the rivalry was only a shade of the fault line between communists and social democrats. The Cluj-based journal *Korunk* (*Our Time*), edited by the communists László Dienes and Gábor Gaál, sought to bridge the traditions of prewar bourgeois radicalism and Marxism.[50] The Marxist debate around depth psychology took place mainly in *Korunk* starting in 1926.[51] The leading Hungarian proponent of the socialist reading of individual psychology, Ernő Kahána, a Transylvanian social democrat doctor, wrote a series of articles arguing that there were two relevant schools of thought in depth psychology: psychoanalysis and individual psychology. Two, because there were two relevant classes in terms of the production of value: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This dichotomy was expressed in depth psychology by the opposition of bourgeois psychoanalysis and socialist individual psychology. "Freudism, with its proclamation of the principle of an irresponsible and unrestrained individual – especially sexual – gratification, and its rendering of the community as an obstacle to this gratification, is the most characteristic product of the overdriven individualism of our time"[52] – he wrote in the first article. In the second, he continued: "With Freudianism, the alienation of individuals

[47] Politikatörténeti Intézet, 658. 13/155.

[48] Jenő Gömöri, "Alkalmazott pszihoanalízis a bécsi Jugendamtban", *Korunk* 1, no. 5 (1926), pp. 302–304.

[49] Sándor Ferenczi, "Az Adler-féle irányzat kritikája", in *Ferenczi Sándor összes művei 3*, eds. Anna Borgos and Katalin Pető (Budapest: Oriold és Társai, [1919] 2023), pp. 218–223.

[50] Ferenc Erős, "A Korunk című folyóirat és a pszichoanalízis (Szemelvények Neufeld Béla írásaiból)", *Pszichológia* 6, no. 2 (1986), pp. 293–307, here 294.

[51] István Kapás, *Pszichoanalízis, ideológia, társadalom* (Budapest: Oriold és Társa, 2020).

[52] Ernő Kahána, "A modern pszichológia és a szocializmus I.", *Korunk* 5, no. 10 (1930), pp. 681–689, here 689.

[…] and the dissection and analysis of the individual soul reached its climax, after which the synthesis of the dissected parts on a higher level, the collectivization of the disintegrating individuals, follows. Freud represents the passing age; Adler stands on the threshold of the new age."[53] He also wrote that the community described in abstract form in individual psychology was, in today's historical reality, the proletariat:

> In today's society, the proletarian mass is the only approximation of the notion of community demanded by individual psychology. Only in this community can a sense of community be born, free of all sentimentalism, and people be raised who, in all their actions, represent the mass, the community. Only in such a community can men be created who, if they exercise power, will not be exercising power as individuals, even if they exercise it alone as individuals.[54]

A few years later, one of the editors of *Korunk*, Gábor Gaál, writing under the pseudonym László Szeremley, made a similar argument,[55] framing individual psychology as a step taken by depth psychology from classical psychoanalysis towards Marxism. So, for many social democrats, "Freudism" was associated with bourgeois intellectualism, while individual psychology was associated with the successful social democratic project of Red Vienna. As such, Kahána lamented the fact that, in *Korunk* (which he saw as important for the socialist movement), the discussion was always about bourgeois-reactionary psychoanalysis instead of progressive individual psychology.

By the early 1930s, Adler's principles had become widely accepted even among leading MSZDP intellectuals with more traditionalist, unionist views. Soma Braun, who led a comprehensive adult education program at the headquarters of the Metalworkers' Federation, gave a series of lectures on mass psychology in 1933 and 1934. In 1935, he published a book on the same subject. Braun does not mention Adler's name in his book, and the list of references is dominated by Gestalt psychologists such as Köhler and experimental psychologists like Wundt. Yet, the book follows the internal logic of individual psychology. When Braun discusses primary human instincts, he starts with "self-esteem", and his narrative revolves around the social preconditions and the historical transformation of "community sense". Since Braun worked in close collaboration with unions, and his audiences were mainly made up of organized male workers, in his educational programs, he followed a unionist agenda, framing the productive labor of skilled workers as an important agent of social cohesion. This approach is equally present in his book on mass psychology, where he argues that in a collective society,

[53] Ernő Kahána, "A modern pszichológia és a szocializmus II.", *Korunk* 5, no. 11 (1930), pp. 797–805, here 800.

[54] Kahána, "A modern pszichológia és a szocializmus II.", p. 804.

[55] László Szeremley, "A lélektan krízise – a krízis lélektana", *Korunk* 8, no. 7 (1933), pp. 339–340.

acknowledging one's skills and expertise should not be underestimated, since social behavior is based on the inner drive coming from our self-esteem to appear as socially valuable as possible. Moreover, he not only links collective life directly to the labor of skilled workers, but also proposes an interpretation of social history in which the highest form of "community sense" in contemporary society equals union consciousness.[56]

In sum, individual psychology began to spread among the intellectuals of the Social Democratic Party at a time when the party's internal integrity was under threat. Individual psychology was seen, especially in light of the Red Vienna example, as a tool for building left-wing hegemony, a "complementary science" to persuade mothers to raise community-minded children and teach workers how to lead fulfilling married lives. Since psychoanalysis was popular mainly among the liberal intelligentsia, and Adler was openly left-wing, many social democrats saw individual psychology as the "left-wing depth psychology", a new evolutionary step forward from the "obsolete bourgeois" psychoanalysis.

Anti-psychological communists

Between the two world wars, *100%* was the only legally published (Budapest-based) cultural periodical in Hungary that followed the agenda of the illegal KMP. Contrary to the already centralized Soviet cultural production, the Central European communist discourse remained less formalized, whereas the post-1919 forced emigration of Hungarian leftist intellectuals resulted in their better integration into international communist networks through the Red Aid. *100%*'s editorial board had close ties with Vienna- and Moscow-based communist circles, and even though censorship prevented them from using an explicit Marxist and Leninist vocabulary, they followed the Soviet discourse closely. The international poetry they published celebrated the growing revolutionary class consciousness of the working class. *100%* opposed the social democratic platforms, but it only came into open confrontation with them when the Great Depression further deepened the conflicts between the two parties. Still, the debate on depth psychology played a considerably minor role compared to the debates on unemployment and the urban-rural conflict. *100%* published harshly critical notes on depth psychology in the late 1920s, although, like the Soviet critics of the 1920s, they mainly criticized the depth psychological theory of history and civilization. When János Kodolányi, a left-wing writer, used Freudian language in a debate, the editorial staff inserted a comment in front of his article:

> In fact, we are forced to conclude that Kodolányi [...] gives himself over to the breeding of the latest bourgeois narcotic [...]. The connection between capitalist development and anal eroticism, the substitution of Freud for Marx, would be

[56] Soma Braun, *Társadalomlélektan* (Budapest: Jenő Klimos, 1935), pp. 224–225.

> better left to [...] the *Nyugat* [...]. [*Nyugat* (*West*), as we have seen, was the newspaper of the Budapest liberal intelligentsia.][57]

In 1929, the editorial team of *100%* briefly criticized depth psychology: "The Freudian theory is only a modern (fashionable) version of the bourgeois mass psychology, which, under the pretext of being scientific, proves that the mass is immature [...] and tries to make the workers believe that they are confronted with an 'eternal natural law'."[58] In the same commentary, they stress that they do not wish to see Freudian or Adlerian doctors abandon their "tried and tested medicine", because the editorial board of *100%* is not competent in this topic. Nevertheless, they considered themselves qualified to "fight against the infiltration of these ideologies, which have their social basis in the crisis of the city bourgeois intelligentsia, into the workers' movement and [...] show[ing] that these ideologies are nothing but the rotten products of capitalist production in crisis".[59] Finally, in the same year, they published a few pages of articles on Marxism and psychoanalysis by Béla Illés (under the pseudonym of László Nemes), who was a contributor to *Sarló és Kalapács* (*Hammer and Sickle*), the journal of the Hungarian Communists in Moscow. The article denounces those who, among Marxists, try to make psychoanalysis acceptable: "They fail to see the purely reactionary idealist tendency that is now the very backbone of Freudism." In fact: "This group goes so far as to present psychoanalysis as a materialist science, which is dialectical in its methods and makes up for one of the 'shortcomings' of Marxist philosophy in studying psychological experience. It is this group that is the most dangerous for us because it tries to impose a purely bourgeois ideology on the worldview of the working class."[60] On the whole, *100%* celebrated the awakening class consciousness of the working class, and it invariably saw the social theory that foregrounded the unconscious as a counter-revolutionary theory and its spread on the left as a great danger.

In 1929, Andor Németh, a writer who had been allowed to return to Hungary from his emigration to Vienna a few years earlier because of his political role during the Commune, argued against the – assumed or actual – conservativism of depth psychology. This was one of the most critical arguments by the Marxist intelligentsia against depth psychological therapeutic practice – namely, that the ultimate goal of psychoanalytic therapy was to make the subject accept reality, thereby rendering it pro–status quo, conservative, and counter-revolutionary.[61]

[57] [Without author,] "Editorial comment to the article 'Ifjú szívekben élek (Válasz Szász Zoltánnak)'", *100%* 2, no. 1 (1928 October), p. 252.

[58] [Without author,] "100% üzenetei", *100%* 2, no. 5 (1929 February), p. 35.

[59] [Without author,] "100% üzenetei", p. 35.

[60] László Nemes, "Pszichoanalízis és marxizmus", *100%* 2, no. 8 (1929 June), pp. 358–361, here 359.

[61] Andor Németh, "Kritikai jegyzetek a lélekelemzés terápiájához", *Korunk* 4, no. 5 (1929), pp. 325–331.

In the Soviet Union during the 1920s, practicing psychoanalysis was not only not dangerous but also highly prestigious. By the early 1930s, however, this situation had changed.[62] Not unrelated to the power struggle between Trotsky and Stalin – Trotsky defended psychoanalysis – or the smear campaigns against reformist or radical opposition voices, by the end of the 1920s, thanks mainly to the propaganda work of the Deborin group, all forms of so-called "Freudism" had begun to be regarded as reactionary ideology. In Hungary, the intellectuals close to *100%* were probably the most well-informed about developments in the Soviet Union, and by 1934, Wilhelm Reich's theory had begun to gain popularity in certain Hungarian communist circles. In *Korunk*, the most aggressive attack on depth psychology – probably a response to Reich's growing popularity – was a comprehensive three-part series of articles[63] written by Erik Molnár, a member of the illegal communist party, who also published in *100%* under the pseudonym Erik Jeszenszky in 1934. Molnár, like György Lukács in his earlier[64] and later arguments,[65] contended that both fascism and psychoanalysis relied on irrationality and underestimated the role of consciousness in history. Molnár stressed that a theory that saw people as irrational did not fit into the politics of class consciousness.[66] Furthermore, he argued that only Marxist dialectics could adequately capture the relationship between society and the individual. Reich was accused of adopting an anti-empirical universalism from psychoanalysis, remaining unable to explain why the Russian Revolution had succeeded if, under capitalist conditions, the conformist psychological character was reproduced everywhere in the same way.

In sum, communist intellectuals with close links to the communist party and the Moscow-based émigrés saw psychoanalysis in particular and depth psychology in general as dangerous ideas that emphasized human irrationality and thus were contrary to the Marxist political ideal. The latter suggested that the irrationality of the working class accepting its own exploitation and oppression could be replaced by the working class rationally recognizing its own position and possibilities and rejecting its own exploitation.

[62] Etkind, *Eros of the Impossible*, pp. 212–213.

[63] Erik Jeszenszky, "Dialektikus materializmus és pszichoanalízis", *Korunk* 9, no. 6 (1934), pp. 450–454. Erik Jeszenszky, "Az egyenlélektan és a társadalmi jelenségek", *Korunk* 9, no. 7–8 (1934), pp. 547–555. Erik Jeszenszky, "A pszichoanalizis értelme és értéke", *Korunk* 9, no. 9 (1934), pp. 652–660.

[64] György Lukács, "Freud's Massenpsychologie", *Die Rote Fahne*, May 22, 1922.

[65] György Lukács, *Az ész trónfosztása: Az irracionalista filozófia kritikája* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974 [1954]). In English: Georg Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason* (Delhi: Aakar Books, [1954] 2016).

[66] Erik Jeszenszky, "Válasz az előbbiekre /Neufeld Béla: A pszichoanalizis értelme és értéke", *Korunk* 9, no. 10 (1934), pp. 774–775.

Pro-psychoanalysis and Freudo-Marxist communists

In *Korunk* and other journals, communist intellectuals committed to psychoanalysis constantly attacked Adlerian social democrats. In 1926, in the very first issue of *Korunk*, Miklós Elekes, a Marxist doctor and neurologist, argued using an orthodox form of psychoanalytic cultural theory. Elekes began his higher education in Budapest, and as a medical doctor, he actively participated in the youth workers' movement during the Soviet Republic. After the fall of the Commune, he continued his studies in Vienna and subsequently obtained a degree in Cluj, where he continued to practice. At this time, he was probably not connected to the Hungarian Communist Party. Elekes argued that humanity was in a regressive period, which explains the aggressive tendencies of the age and the immense greed for money.[67] At the end of the same year, Ernő Kahána argued[68] – in an Adlerian manner – that the psychology of the individual is the school of thought that assumes humans to be essentially communal, in contrast to psychoanalysis, which sees humans as essentially anti-civilization, and Freud's anthropology does not fit the socialist movement. In his response, titled "Freud and Adler", Elekes described individual psychology as superficial and too humanistic – idealist – to benefit the socialist cause. Kahána's counter-response, titled "Freud or Adler," argued that psychoanalysis could not rival individual psychology unless it examined personality as a whole. The debate between the psychoanalytic communist and the Adlerian social democrat illustrates the homology of the fault lines.

Elekes also came to the defense of psychoanalysis[69] against Andor Németh when Németh argued that psychoanalytic therapy was conservative because it aimed to accept the status quo. Elekes stressed that through transference, the therapist encourages the subject to confront the repressed pathogen, thereby liberating and restoring freedom of action, which makes him not pro–status quo, but rather an encourager of action. A year later, in 1930, the extensive debate on the relationship between Marxism and depth psychology began in *Korunk*. In an article titled "Psychoanalysis and Marxism",[70] the doctor and writer Ágoston Erg – whose writings were also published in *100%* – described the Soviet psychologist Alexander Luria's arguments that psychoanalysis, if it did not attempt to become sociology, could be an important methodology for Marxism. He argued that the Soviet Union was the only country where the full potential of psychoanalytic therapy could be exploited because psychoanalytic work there "is not hindered by the arbitrariness of the Church or by bourgeois pseudo-pover-

[67] Miklós Elekes, "Korunk neurózisa", *Korunk* 1, no. 1 (1926), pp. 30–36.

[68] Ernő Kahána, "Adler Alfréd individuálpszichológiája", *Korunk* 1, no. 12 (1926), pp. 764–777.

[69] Miklós Elekes, "Van-e pszichoanalitikus terápia", *Korunk* 6, no. 7–8 (1929), pp. 548–549.

[70] Ágoston Erg, "Pszichoanalízis és marxizmus", *Korunk* 5, no. 9 (1930), pp. 645–647.

ty".[71] Erg was probably unaware that psychoanalysis was finally discredited in the Soviet Union at about this time and that it was also around then that Luria had finally given up his initial sympathies with psychoanalysis, which illustrates a lack of information on the part of certain communist intellectuals. The communist authors sympathetic to psychoanalysis were only loosely associated with the illegal communist party and the editorial staff of *100%* around the turn of the 1930s, and they were probably also out of touch with the Soviet position on psychoanalysis.

Around 1930, Reich's teachings began to spread among Hungarian communist intellectuals, especially in Transylvania, and especially among those who were only indirectly connected to the Hungarian Communist Party. Reich succeeded in launching the SEXPOL movement in 1931 under the aegis of the German Communist Party (KPD), the national association of SEXPOL (Deutschen Reichsverband für Proletarische Sexualpolitik). SEXPOL's founding declaration argued that sexual misery was a segment of class oppression. In this way, the declaration ultimately became an extension of the general program of the communist parties into a new area. Furthermore, the Declaration claimed that there was only one known example where sexual reform had taken place, proving that sexual liberation was not a utopia: the Soviet Union[72] – even though by 1930, the conservatist turn there had become clearly visible.

The two most active authors in promoting SEXPOL in Hungary were Lajos Nagy and Béla Neufeld. Neufeld had been a member of the Galilei Circle before the war, then moved to Cluj. Although he published regularly in Hungarian in *Korunk*, he was only indirectly involved with the Communist Party of Hungary. Neufeld responded to Molnár's article – where the latter had argued that psychoanalysis, like fascism, was based on irrationality[73] – by arguing that psychoanalysis only revealed irrational motives for human action, and psychoanalysis itself was not anti-rationalist like fascism.[74] Neufeld, who could be called a Freudo-Marxist in the Reichien sense of the term in this period, wrote that in socialist societies – he already saw the Soviet Union as an example of this – the Oedipus complex, or at least its pathologizing effect, was disappearing:

> It is obvious that in the socialist society of the future, which will put an end to patriarchal family systems, the Oedipus complex, or at least its pathogenic effect, will be eliminated. Friedrich Engels' prediction that the institution of the

[71] Erg, "Pszichoanalízis és marxizmus", p. 646.

[72] Erős, *Analitikus szociálpszichológia*, pp. 109–166.

[73] Erik Jeszenszky, "Dialektikus materializmus és pszichoanalízis", *Korunk* 9, no. 6 (1934), pp. 450–454. Erik Jeszenszky, "Az egyenlélektan és a társadalmi jelenségek", *Korunk* 9, no. 7–8 (1934), pp. 547–555. Erik Jeszenszky, "A pszichoanalizis értelme és értéke", *Korunk* 9, no. 9 (1934), pp. 652–660.

[74] Béla Neufeld, "A pszichoanalízis értéke és értelme", *Korunk* 9, no. 10 (1934), pp. 772–774.

> patriarchal family in collective societies would be abolished has been borne out in the example of Russia.[75]

In 1933, Neufeld wrote another article titled "Psychoanalysis and Marxism", in which he described Reich's Freudo-Marxist views (alongside Sapir and Bernfeld).[76]

Lajos Nagy, a writer who both worked for *Nyugat* and published in *100%*, contrasted SEXPOL with social-democratic sexual politics and bourgeois psychoanalysis. In other words, he used Reich's sexual radicalism to highlight how moderate the social democrats' Red Vienna–inspired sexual reform program was. In his 1930 article, he mocks the attitude of an unnamed social-democratic author writing for a social-democratic journal and compares his prudery to that of a bishop. (Bourgeois) psychoanalysts are not spared either: "Psychoanalysts know about sexual misery, but they have not yet been able to draw the social consequences of their own discoveries, or have not been willing to. They do not want to discuss neuroses as a social disease, they do not seem to want to know about true prophylaxis, they want to cure neuroses within the framework of contemporary society."[77] In 1931, he wrote on the occasion of the Hungarian translation of the Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Stekel's book *Modern Marriage*: "That the misery of sexual life cannot be solved by reforms in today's society, just as economic misery cannot be eliminated by social policy, is not Stekel's claim, but rather Wilhelm Reich's. And Stekel, instead of empty speculations [...] could have looked at what is happening in Russia."[78] Furthermore, Lajos Nagy mockingly brushed aside Ferenczi's argument after the publication of *Civilization and Its Discontents* that psychoanalysis would be conservative: "Sándor Ferenczi ended one of his lecture series with the surprising statement that 'politically speaking, psychoanalysis is conservative rather than revolutionary.' This is, of course, a mistake, which occurred [...] because Ferenczi the psychoanalyst confused psychoanalysis with himself."[79]

In sum, psychoanalysis and Freudo-Marxism were popular among Marxists connected to the Hungarian Communist Party only indirectly or loosely, and these intellectuals not only opposed "bourgeois" psychoanalysis, but also criticized the moderateness of the Adlerian social-democratic intelligentsia by projecting individual psychology-psychoanalysis opposition onto the communist-social-democratic fault line.

[75] Béla Neufeld, "A társadalmi realitás és neurosis", *Korunk* 6, no. 6 (1931), pp. 415–420.

[76] Béla Neufeld, "Pszichoanalízis és marxizmus", *Korunk* 8, no. 4 (1933), pp. 340–344.

[77] Lajos Nagy, "Nemi szabadság", *Korunk* 5, no. 7 (1930), pp. 500–504. See: Antal Bókay, "'Freudomarxista' volt-e József Attila", *Imago Budapest* 9, no. 1 (2020), pp. 6–29, here 22.

[78] Lajos Nagy, "A modern házasság", *Korunk* 6, no. 5 (1931), pp. 389–391.

[79] Nagy, "Nemi szabadság", p. 503.

Adlerian or omnivore communists

In the 1930s, two communist intellectuals linked to the KMP, István Kulcsár (a doctor) and Béla Székely (a journalist), carried out the communist reception of individual psychology in Hungary. According to Kulcsár's memoirs, he joined the Adlerian group in the 1930s because he felt the Freudians were too rigidly "Talmudically closed". Székely was a Hungarian representative and importer of the Freudo-Marxist theoretical tradition, although he was closer to individual psychology than psychoanalysis. Between 1935 and 1936, they edited the journal *Emberismeret* (Hungarian translation of *Menschenkenntnis*). The journal published five issues – four special issues – and gave space to various psychological trends alongside individual psychology. In 1935, a special issue of *Emberismeret* was published under the title "Against and For Psychoanalysis". The issue included a translation of Freud's essay on Adler and Jung,[80] Reich's "Psychoanalysis and Socialism",[81] and several articles examining psychoanalysis from different angles. Overall, the journal was characterized by a synthesis of depth psychology and Marxist sociology despite its theoretical heterogeneity. In the special issue on suicide, for example, Székely writes:

> We can less and less apply Adler's statement that "suicide can only be understood individually, although it has social preconditions and consequences." This "although" is so much in the foreground; suicide has become such a social mass phenomenon that its psychological understanding is only a theory, in contrast to the other truth, which is not determined by us but by external circumstances; in a word, by society.[82]

Székely published his book *Your Child*[83] in 1934, which is essentially an Adlerian child-rearing advice book, and its arguments are not essentially different from those of the social democrats, except for its openness to psychoanalysis. According to Adlerian principles, the book's first sentence is, "There is no bad child!" At the same time, Székely was most interested in synthesizing psychoanalysis and individual psychology, although he described the latter as more fundamental. He wrote, for example, about the castration complex. Still, in such a way that the castration complex is only possible because of a biologically based "community drive".[84] Ultimately, Székely encouraged parents to raise their children to be community-minded from a very young age. The

[80] Sigmund Freud, "Adler és Jung", *Emberismeret* 2, no. 1 (1935), pp. 41–51.

[81] Wilhelm Reich, "Pszichoanalizis és szocializmus", *Emberismeret* 2, no. 1 (1935), pp. 67–73.

[82] Béla Székely, "Gyermek-öngyilkosságok lélektana és profilaxisa", *Emberismeret* 1, no. 2–3 (1934), pp. 113–120, here 120.

[83] Béla Székely, *A Te gyereked… a modern gyermeknevelés kézikönyve* (Budapest: Bibliotéka, 1934).

[84] Székely, *A Te gyereked… a modern gyermeknevelés kézikönyve*, 79–81.

book's mission becomes apparent only at the ending: "By liberating the child, we undertake to liberate all mankind to greater happiness and contentment."[85]

In sum, in the 1930s, a few communist intellectuals tried to reconcile the arguments in favor and against depth psychology along the lines of "rational debate" and "synthesis striving". The waning of the debate in Korunk and *100%* by the mid-1930s was perhaps also linked to the end of the Red Vienna project, the dismantling of the German Communist Party, and the increasing isolation of the Soviet Union. As the possibility of revolution receded, the debate about depth psychology became increasingly theoretical rather than political. By the mid-1930s, this created an opportunity for thoughtful dialogue, comparing trends and positions and weighing the pros and cons. On the other hand, the debate had become irrelevant, and with the rise of fascist forces, the status of depth psychology no longer seemed very important.

The end of the discourse

In 1929, Freud published his essay *Civilization and Its Discontents*,[86] in which he first definitively extended metapsychology to social phenomena, making it clear that psychoanalysis as a therapeutic praxis cannot be separated from the psychoanalytic theory of anthropology and society. Second, he claimed a certain political conservatism by arguing that the so-called *Unbehagen*, the general malaise, is a common feature of all civilizations. It originates in phylogenetic guilt, i.e., the guilt passed down through generations for killing the primal father in the primal horde,[87] ontogenetic guilt left by the Oedipal situation, and the frustration of foregoing the immediate and direct satisfaction of drives. György Lukács, following Marx, described the historical mission of the proletariat as leading humanity to the "realm of freedom".[88] Yet it follows from *Civilization and Its Discontents* that society is in itself antithetical to freedom. This also posed a dilemma for postwar Freudo-Marxism, about which Marcuse wrote: "If absence from repression is the archetype of freedom, then civilization is the struggle against this freedom."[89] To put it simply, the socialist intelligentsia of the period looked forward to an era in which people could finally be happy, but Freud clearly stated in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that this was not possible:[90] "One might say the intention that man

[85] Székely, *A Te gyereked… a modern gyermeknevelés kézikönyve*, 139.

[86] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, [1929] 1961).

[87] This theory was previously expounded by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, [1913] 2001).

[88] Lukács, *History and Class* Consciousness (Berlin and Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag GmbH, [1923] 1971).

[89] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press [1955] 1971), p. 31.

[90] Wallerstein has argued that *Civilization and Its Discontents* was a document of liberal intellectual

should be *happy* is not included in the scheme of *Creation*."[91] In the 1950s, Marcuse solved this dilemma by introducing the notion of surplus repression, distinguishing between the repression necessary to maintain civilization and the surplus repression required only to maintain the power of the ruling class.[92] However, Argentinian psychoanalysis, for example, heralded a return to the young Freud.[93] Similarly, in Hungary, in 1936, in an article[94] written on the occasion of Freud's 80th birthday, Neufeld noted with some resignation that *Civilization and Its Discontents* was a mistake and that to change the world, Marxists would have to turn to early Freud. He then drew attention to Reich's book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, where, however, he no longer appeared to expect socialism to neutralize the Oedipus complex – the end of global left optimism met the transformation of Freudian psychoanalysis. Instead, Neufeld seemed to expect the psychoanalyst to understand the irrationality of the masses: "The social practice of dialectical materialism cannot be indifferent to the recognition of the role of the irrational, the unconscious, and anyone who observes our times cannot sufficiently appreciate the phenomenon of irrational masses."[95] Then, in 1934, *Korunk* published extracts from Reich's book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* under the title "The Propaganda of National Socialism and the Hooked Cross".[96] It was during this period that communist discourse began to change and resemble the later Freudo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School. Depth psychology was no longer so much a revolutionary "complementary science" – a means to educate children to be community-minded, or cure mass neurosis. It had now become more a theory of explaining irrationalism – that is, Nazism and the absence of proletarian revolution – serving as the foundation of "Western" Marxism in its attempt to answer the question of how and why the non-revolutionary subject is reproduced. For the early Reich and his Hungarian followers, understanding how and why sexuality is repressed in capitalism is important for including the topic of sexuality

disillusionment with modernity. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Social Science and Contemporary Society: The Vanishing Guarantees of Rationality", *International Sociology* 11, no. 1. (1996), pp. 7–25.

[91] Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 21.

[92] The cultural-critical argument – that is, that there is too much repression in contemporary society – was also characteristic of the early period of psychoanalysis, appearing in Freud as "civilized sexual morality" and in Ferenczi as "unnecessary repression". Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness", in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud. Volume IX*, Sigmund Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1981 [1908]), pp. 177–204. Sándor Ferenczi, "Pszichoanalízis és pedagógia", in *Ferenczi Sándor*, ed. Ferenc Erős (Budapest: Új Mandátum, [1908] 2000), p. 62.

[93] Jose Bleger, *Psicoanálisis y dialéctica materialista* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1988).

[94] Béla Neufeld, "Freud Zsigmond ember és világszemlélete", *Korunk* 11, no. 6 (1936), pp. 493–497.

[95] Neufeld, "Freud Zsigmond ember és világszemlélete", p. 497.

[96] Wilhelm Reich, "A nemzeti szocializmus propagandája és a kampóskereszt", *Korunk* 9, no. 3 (1934), pp. 212–215.

in revolutionary politics. For Marcuse, it is important for showing how capitalism has reached a stage where revolution is (almost) impossible.

Then, as the great economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s led to the collapse of the First Austrian Republic, the banning of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, the end of the Red Vienna project, the rise to power of the Nazi party in Germany, and the isolation of the Soviet Union, the tone changed constantly. In Hungary, the left-wing media ceased to exist. *100%* operated until 1930, and the publication of *Korunk*, edited from Cluj, was interrupted for almost 20 years after 1940.

Conclusion

In Hungary, between the two world wars, a complex and lively discourse on depth psychology developed independently of the network known as the Budapest School. The positions taken in the discourse are defined by the rivalry of social democratic intellectuals with communists, the opposition of those committed to individual psychology to those committed to psychoanalysis, and the absence or existence of links with the illegal communist party and the Moscow communists. Until the mid-1930s, this discourse was fundamentally different from the later German-American Freudo-Marxist tradition, as the international political space for action seemed much more open than in the post–World War II period – even though Hungary was ruled by an oppressive conservative regime – and short-term political goals set the stakes.

Among intellectuals associated with the Social Democratic Party, individual psychology emerged from the mid-1920s as a tool for hegemony building and as the "know-how" of the desired institutional system, following the Viennese example. Yet the Adlerian discourse, especially the idea that child-rearing should center around enhancing a sense of community among the children's collectives, also became inherently intertwined with the Social Democrats' struggles to gain better control over their prospective voters while competing with both communist and nationalist political actors. Consequently, for the social-democratic intelligentsia, individual psychology was primarily an applied science of child-rearing, marriage, and mental health in the organization of the working class.

In contrast, communist intellectuals close to the illegal communist party and with close links to Moscow were hostile to any depth psychology initiative. The communist intelligentsia criticized psychoanalytic social and historical theory for its emphasis on the role of irrationality in human behavior. This emphasis on irrationality, it was argued, was contrary to the expectation that the working class would, in the near future, recognize its own socioeconomic position and role in history, assert its rational interests, and proclaim proletarian dictatorship by revolutionary means.

Some communist intellectuals, only loosely connected to the KMP, became followers of Freud and Reich. These intellectuals saw psychoanalysis as a revolutionary "complementary science". They contrasted the radical program of sexual liberation with

the moderate social democratic approaches and the depth of psychoanalysis with the bourgeois superficiality of individual psychology.

In the 1930s, as the success of the communist and social democratic parties in Europe became increasingly unlikely and the Soviet Union became increasingly isolated, the discourse around depth psychology became more theoretical. At this time, communist intellectuals linked to individual psychology created a platform for theoretical debate and synthesis experiments. As the short-term political weight of the issue faded, so too did the intensity of the debate. Finally, by 1940, the left-wing media in Eastern Europe had almost disappeared, and with them, the Hungarian left-wing discourse on depth psychology.

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THE HISTORICAL GROUP, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND THE NAZI MENACE

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Abstract

The article discusses the reception of psychoanalysis or, as the case may be, an analytical social psychology in the Czechoslovak Republic during the mid-1930s. It deals with two groups that were proponents of this approach: the Historická skupina (Historical Group), whose members were interested in the social psychological exploits of the (originally) Frankfurt-based Institute for Social Research, and a circle of emigrant German-speaking psychoanalysts who, under the guidance of Otto Fenichel, tried to merge Freud with Marx. Also, the contacts between these two groups are explored, as well one of the main interests of both groups: an analysis of fascism and antisemitism by psychoanalytic means and some of the ramifications of their discussions are highlighted. The article closes with a brief discussion of some of the conceptual shortcomings of Freudomarxism.

Keywords
Critical theory, psychoanalysis, freudomarxism, Historická skupina, Czechoslovak marxist historiography, analysis of national socialism, antisemitism
DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.3

Marx used to say that Germany was 200 years behind in everything; now she is accordingly ahead in being regressive by just as much.[1]

I.

The memory of psychoanalysis's reception in Czechoslovakia and its successor states is a repressed one. But unlike in the original sense of the term, that is, repression in psychoanalysis, the reasons for this do not stem from the unconscious but rather from political sources.[2] After a short heyday in the 1930s, in which, as we will see, especially left-wing and Marxist intellectuals tried to sharpen their understanding of the world by psychoanalytical means, not only the Nazi occupation but also the dominant official doctrine of Soviet Marxism that had (after a short period of interest in it) begun around 1925 to condemn Freud's work[3] and after 1948 made any proximity to these notions dangerous. Thus, even some of the intellectuals from the pre-war time started to tiptoe around their older ways of thinking. This can be shown by a few examples from the papers of Jaroslav Charvát, a founding member of the Historická skupina, the Historical Group, a small intellectual circle in opposition to the mainstream historiography of the 1930s in Czechoslovakia that tried in its journal *Dějiny a přítomnost* (*Past and Present*) to further develop Marxism and analyze contemporaneous society by adopting, among other thinkers, Freud.

Of course, especially in the early 1950s, the mention of any deviation of the party line was dangerous. Such as when, in the summer of 1952, Charvát was called upon by the Office of the President of the Republic to write a "personal cadre's appraisal" of Jan Pachta, as well of the Historical Group. Pachta happened to be the group's member who focused the most on psychoanalysis. Pachta was not a historian by training, but had studied philosophy and psychology, which made him suitable for this role. Inter-

[1] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 59, 15. Juli 1939", in *Otto Fenichel. 119 Rundbriefe*, ed. Johannes Reichmayr and Elke Mühlleitner (Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld, 1998), pp. 1155–1181, here p. 1180.

[2] It seems, however, that there is a rising interest in the topic. The journal *Luzifer-Amor,* which specializes in the history of psychoanalysis, has recently published two focus issues on the topic: *Luzifer-Amor. Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse*, no. 68 (2021) and no. 70 (2022).

[3] For this development, see Helmut Dahmer, *Libido und Gesellschaft. Studien über Freud und die Freudsche Linke* [Libido and Society. Studies on Freud and the Freudian Left] (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1982), pp. 264–277. This does not preclude that on the margins of society (and the party), interest in a synthesis of Marx and Freud continued, especially in the Czechoslovak Surrealist movement.

estingly, Pachta was also one of the few members of the group who were a member of the Communist Party in the 1930s.

In his appraisal roughly 20 years later, Charvát went to great lengths to only state the obvious and tried to make Pachta's interest in Freud seem innocent. While he noted that in the group's journal that "Comrade Pachta published studies and reviews on social psychology, influenced by Freudism" and that he also "co-edited translations of Freud's works", Charvát not only praised Pachta's more historical works and opined that his "strong short-sightedness impaired his own direct look at things" thus "causing a tendency for speculation". Charvát also underscored that he of course had "not the slightest doubt about the truthfulness of his Marxist-Leninist conviction, his devotion towards the working class, the communist party, the people's democratic system and his love towards the SSSR".[4]

Even when in 1975 a *Festschrift* was being prepared for the 70th birthday of Jaroslav Charvát, it became clear how precarious the situation still was. On the one hand, all the authors wanted to emphasize that the group had been the first Marxist group of historians in Czechoslovakia; on the other hand, they had to try to downplay the role that Freudian theory had played in their endeavors. Consequently, Freud was mainly painted as an early aberration that was later overcome. Josef Petráň, for example, described Freud's theory as that of a passing fad:

> The Historical Group was, as it presented itself in its beginnings to the public, heavily influenced by some theoretical and methodological currents that were in those days very popular among the left-oriented intelligentsia, which some of them later turned away from to the Marxist-Leninist position. It was mainly influenced by the avant-garde Freudomarxism, which had already left its mark here before, predominantly in poetry and the arts.[5]

Against this, one of the contributors, Jaroslav Vavra, who wrote on the founding of the group, voiced the opinion in a draft for his contribution that something had been lost by abandoning and silencing this current and underscored the theoretical potential that existed in this constellation:

[4] Jaroslav Charvát, "Osobní posudek" [Personal Assessment], Archiv Národního Muzea, NAD 185 Fond Charvát, kart. 1. All translations are by the author. On Charvát, see Bohumil Jiroušek, *Historik Jaroslav Charvát v systému vědy a moci* [The Historian Jaroslav Charvát Within the System of Science and Power], (Prague: Arsci, 2011).

[5] Josef Petráň, "Historická skupina. (Komentář k vzpomínkám jejích členů)" [The Historical Group. (Commentary on the Memories of Its Members], in *Studie z obecných dějin. Sborník historických praci k sedmdesátým narozeninám Prof. Dr. Jaroslava Charváta* [Studies in General History. A Collection of Historical Writings for the 70th Birthday of Prof. Dr. Jaroslav Charvát], ed. Jaroslav Pátek and Věra Šádová (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1975), p. 22.

> And I would even dare to claim that without this phase, despite its repression and the unease connected to it, our Marxist historiography in the 1950s would appear differently, it would have succumbed way more to the 'idea of Marxism in its upturned form', as wrote F[rantišek] Graus, at least in the case of medieval history and modern history up to 1918.[6]

A nondogmatic connection of psychoanalysis with Marxism as an antidote against Stalinism and an opportunity foregone – it is not a big surprise that this passage did not make it into the published version of the contribution,[7] and it shows how delicate even these timid attempts of salvaging the more psychoanalytical side of the Historical Group's theory production still remained in the 1970s.[8]

After 1989, the party affiliation of the Historical Group's members and the role some of them played during Stalinism and its purge of "bourgeoise" elements from the Czechoslovak historical sciences excluded a more detailed study of their reception of psychoanalysis in the interwar years. Only after the year 2000 were a few articles and theses written,[9] mainly focusing on historiographical aspects.

This article aims to study the point Vávra alluded to, to examine the lost hopes and possibilities for a theory of society by revisiting this special historical point when Marxism and psychoanalysis encountered each other in the First Czechoslovak Republic.

II.

When Josef Doppler, a Bratislava-born student of the critical theorist Max Horkheimer, wrote a letter to his former professor in 1938 after a long silence and told him about his endeavors of the past few years, he did not forget to mention his contact to the

[6] Jaroslav Vávra, "Genese a místo Historické skupiny" [Genesis and Position of the Historical Group], Archiv Národního Muzea, NAD 185 Fond Charvát, kart. 5.

[7] Jaroslav Vávra, "Ke genezi a místu Histrické skupiny" [On the Genesis and Position of the Historical Group], in *Studie z obecných dějin. Sborník historických praci k sedmdesátým narozeninám Prof. Dr. Jaroslava Charváta,* ed. Jaroslav Pátek and Věra Šádová (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1975), pp. 55–62.

[8] Mentioning Graus, who had gone into exile after 1968, and underscoring in the text the importance of Záviš Kalandra, who had fallen victim to the show trial against Milada Horáková obviously did not help either.

[9] E.g., Bohumil Jiroušek, "The Journals of the Historical Group", *Prague Economic and Social History Papers,* no. 12 (2010), pp. 101–116; Viktor Smyček, "Historická skupina v pohybu na dráze let 1935–1938" [The Historical Group During the Years 1935–1938] Bachelor Thesis, Masaryk University, Brno, 2013. A short mention of the reception of critical theory and psychoanalysis can be found in Pavel Siostrzonek, "Česká recepce frankfurtské školy. Ohlédnutí za třicátými, šedesátými a sedmdesátými léty" [The Czech Reception of the Frankfurt School. Glimpses into the 30s, 60s, and 70s], *Filosofický časopis* 55, no. 5 (2007), pp. 691–707.

Historical Group and their proximity to critical theory. He told Horkheimer about his lectures at the meetings "of the young Czech historians of the circle 'Dějiny a přítomnost', which also explicitly appreciates the pursuits of the institute [the Institut für Sozialforschung, IfS, whose director Horkeimer was] and the *Zeitschrift* [the Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung, ZfS]".[10]

And indeed, on the pages of their journal *Past and Present*, the Historical Group made clear that in some respects the institute in Frankfurt, then already in exile, was a model to them. It was Jan Pachta, who, in a series of short reports on institutions which explored new methods in historiography, noted that the IfS's approach to history was kindred to that of the Historical Group, which did not choose the title of their journal without reason:

> Up to now, historians were afraid of explaining contemporaneous phenomena, insisting that there is a need of temporal distance, so that the living time will be dead and it can be understood and written down like a fact of nature. In opposition to this, in the Institute for Social Research, one is working on a new science of the present and for the present, a science which is not just a description which serves the sterile conservation of the past, but the living study which uncovers the motivating forces and causalities of social deeds and by this also the means of changing social life.[11]

Early critical theory's attempt to combine different academic disciplines for their research interested Pachta too, and he emphasized the importance of psychological studies to this end: "One of the most important tasks for the scholars of this journal [the ZfS] is the development of a social psychology which answers to the needs of historiography."[12] And as for critical theory, it was clear for Pachta that such a social psychology had to be based on the teachings of Freud. One year before reporting on the activities of the IfS, Pachta had presented and staunchly defended Freud's work in an article in another publication. He had underscored the importance of the notions of the unconscious and of the drives and criticized Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, and Otto Rank for blurring Freud's work on this point. Pachta closed his article with the words: "Within the human

[10] Josef Doppler, "Letter to Horkheimer, November 1938", Archivzentrum der Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 12 – Korrespondenzen unter anderem mit Carl Dreyfuss (p. I 6, 184–311). On Doppler and his connections to critical theory, see: Florian Ruttner, "'Religious Affilation: Dissident. Josef Doppler, a Political Scholar on the Margins of Academia?", *Střed/Centre*, no. 2 (2024), pp. 55–75.

[11] Jan Pachta, "Institut für Sozialforschung" [Institute for Social Research], *Dějiny a přítomnost. Sborník Historické skupiny,* no. 1 (1937), p. 100.

[12] Pachta, "Institut für Sozialforschung", p. 99.

unconscious lies hidden an immense material, and its clarification and analysis is the task for further research."[13]

Consequently, Pachta saw this further research as his task, and saw it also already partly realized in the writings of the IfS. In his presentation of the institute, he also announced that in the next issue of *Past and Present* a longer review of the volume on authority and family,[14] released by the IfS in 1936, would be published. In this review, written by Arnošt Rubeš, there is surprisingly little reference to psychoanalysis as the author focuses more on Horkheimer's general theoretical introduction than on Erich Fromm's social-psychological part, but he also underscores the importance of Freud's teachings as his "theory on 'Superego', 'Ego' and 'Id' and on the psychical process of 'identification' offers a wholly new perspective on the problem of authority as well as on the study of social dynamics". With these tools, one can understand how "external control enters into people's interior and turns into internal control". [15] This internalization of social imperatives was seen as a central point in their research in what, apart from direct force, holds societies together.

This was also the central point in Pachta's big essay on *Social Psychology and Historiography,* which he published in the same issue of *Past and Present* as his report on the IfS. This text refers to and is also in its structure of argumentation very close to Horkheimer's article *Geschichte und Psychologie,* which he published in 1932 in the ZfS. Some of Pachta's arguments are more or less reformulations of Horkheimer's.[16] Like Horkheimer, Pachta sees psychology as an indispensable "auxiliary science" for historiography whose main task it is "to discover how human psychological forces and dispositions depend upon the social relations and which psychological factors act jointly in historical changes".[17] With the help of psychoanalysis, one would be able to explain "why people accept an ideology that contradicts their conscious interests, why they stick to a traditional economic system although their labor power and their needs have changed, or why mass anxiety emerges among the masses during revolutions".[18] Freudian psychoanalysis with its notions of the unconscious and drives should

[13] Jan Pachta, "Objev nevědomí" [The Discovery of the Unconscious], *Magazin DP,* no. 4/1 (1936), p. 15.

[14] Max Horkheimer (ed.), *Studien über Autorität und Familie. Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialforschung* [Studies on Authority and Family. Research Reports of the Institute for Social Research] (Paris: Alcan, 1936).

[15] Arnošt Rubeš, "K problému autority a rodiny" [On the Problem of Authority and Family], *Dějiny a přítomnost. Sborník Historické skupiny,* no. 2 (1937), p. 202.

[16] Max Horkheimer, "Geschichte und Psychologie" [History and Psychology], *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung,* no. 1/2 (1932), pp. 125–144.

[17] Jan Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt" [Social Psychology and Historiography], *Dějiny a přítomnost. Sborník Historické skupiny,* no. 1 (1937), pp. 58–74, here p. 59.

[18] Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt", p. 61.

shed light on these irrational mechanisms. Pachta, also here very close to Horkheimer, formulates that the need for a social psychology to understand certain social constellations is an indication that these constellations are themselves irrational: "The more historical deeds are guided by conscious and rational motives, the less there is a need for psychological explanations."[19] Thus, the need for social psychology should be abolished with a more rational society.

The central locus, where social imperatives are internalized, is for Pachta the family, here echoing (and referencing) Erich Fromm's article *Über Methode und Aufgabe einer analytischen Sozialpsychologie*[20]: "The family is the medium through which society imprints on the children, and by this the grownups as well, its specific structure."[21] Pachta also follows Fromm in his critique that Freud did not reflect social differences between families and only analyzed bourgeoise families.

In all these points, Pachta echoes Horkheimer's and Fromm's writings, but he tries to apply these concepts as well onto Czechoslovak history. In the last third of his article, he wants to add a social psychological aspect to the heated contemporaneous debate on how to interpret the Hussites, which of course also played a role in the young republic's project of nation building.[22] On the basis of Freud's critique of religion, Pachta tries to show that a "'religious idea' is not the last motive of human action, which one cannot further analyze, but is a symbolical form of the real desires of the drives".[23] He then tries to emphasize the revolutionary character of the Hussite movement by linking the chiliastic expectancy with revolutionary hate: "But these chiliastic fantasies express at the same time hate against the rich and exploiters or are symbolic expressions of unconscious, aggressive and revolutionary popular tendencies."[24] For Pachta, this hate has, in the context of the patriarchal, personal form of feudal domination, an anti-authoritarian thrust: "Closely connected to the hate of the Taborites, which is a hate of the brothers against the fathers and authority, is the peculiar trait of the social and psychological structure of Hussitism: its democratic, brotherly character."[25]

[19] Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt".

[20] Erich Fromm, "Über Methode und Aufgabe einer analytischen Sozialpsychologie" [The Method and Function of an Analytical Social Psychology], *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, no. 1/2 (1932), pp. 28–54.

[21] Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt", p. 66.

[22] For an overview on the debate, see Petr Čornej, "Jan Slavík v kontextu české Husitologie první poloviny 20. století" [Jan Slavík in the Context of Czech Studies in Hussitism in the First Half of the 20th Century], in *Život plný střetů. Dílo a odkaz historika Jana Slavíka (1885–1978)* [A Life Full of Clashes. The Work and Legacy of the Historian Jan Slavík], ed. Lukáš Babka and Petr Roubal (Prague: Národní knihovna ČR, 2009), pp. 59–84.

[23] Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt", p. 66.

[24] Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt", p. 70.

[25] Pachta, "Sociální psychologie a dějezpyt", p. 71.

While these interpretations are an original attempt to interpret the motivation of the Hussite movement, they are not wholly convincing. As later studies argue, hate against the father is by no means a guarantee for a democratic development; on the contrary, in their studies on the authoritarian personality, critical theorists pointed out that there is a specific type of rebellious authoritarian character who cultivates "blind hatred of *all* authority, with strong destructive connotations, accompanied by a secret readiness to 'capitulate' and to join hands with the 'hated' strong".[26] And in his studies on fascist propaganda, Adorno points out that the notion of brotherhood can have its dark, regressive side as well:

> The undercurrent of malicious egalitarianism, of the brotherhood of all-comprising humiliation, is a component of fascist propaganda and Fascism itself. [...] Freud interprets this phenomenon in terms of the transformation of individuals into members of a psychological 'brother horde'.[27]

But these insights were the fruit of years of examining and criticizing fascism and German national socialism, which the members of the Historical Group had just started. Given their interest in understanding contemporaneous phenomena through history and the social sciences, their general left-leaning outlook, and the fact that they were living in a republic that became more and more threatened by Nazi Germany, it is not surprising that the group turned its interest towards understanding and analyzing Fascism and National Socialism to counter their rise. This, and the additional impetus this endeavor received from the emigration of a group of German-speaking psychoanalysts to the Czechoslovak Republic after Hitler's rise to power in 1933 turned Prague in the mid-1930s into a creative hotbed where some concepts of the analysis of aspects of Fascism and National Socialism were drafted for the first time and later further developed during their next stops of exile.

III.

One of the first of these analysts to arrive in Prague, and also perhaps the most active in the Czechoslovak public sphere, was Heinrich Löwenfeld, who later published under the pseudonym Jiří Benda[28] in *Past and Present* as well as under different pseudonyms

[26] Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: John Wiley, 1964), p. 762.

[27] Theodor W. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda", in *Soziologische Schiften I. Gesammelte Schriften 8,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997), pp. 408–433, here p. 425.

[28] But to make things more complicated, he was not the only one to use this pseudonym. Rudolf Beck, a German-speaking Czechoslovak Marxist, also used it for his article on a critique of Josef Pfitzner.

in other publications. Before we discuss his contributions in more detail, a few words on this group of psychoanalysts in exile are in order. Its central figure was Otto Fenichel, although he only arrived in Prague in 1935.[29] Born in 1897 in Vienna, he entered the psychoanalytical movement at the end of World War I and moved in the 1920s to Berlin and joined the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, where he and other young psychoanalysts, among them Wilhelm Reich, began to discuss the possibilities of merging Marx and Freud. After 1933, Fenichel fled first to Oslo, but because of, among other reasons, his break with Wilhelm Reich (who also had sought exile in Scandinavia), he was motivated to settle in Prague. There, not only did he become a central figure of the official Psychoanalytical Study Group in the Czechoslovak Republic,[30] but he also tried to continue the Freudomarxist project. Already in his Scandinavian exile he had begun to send *Rundbriefe,* newsletters to likeminded, leftist psychoanalysts he trusted, to keep in touch for theoretical discussions and to organize a left opposition within the psychoanalytical movement. These *Rundbriefe* are a treasure trove for reconstructing discussions and left networks within the psychoanalytical movement, of which the Prague group formed a central node.

Together with Thomas Rubinstein, Fenichel initiated a Marxist-Psychoanalytical Working Group in Prague to promote discussion on Marx and Freud. The group had a rather informal character and did not form part of the official structure of the International Psychoanalytical Association. Rubinstein was not only the new partner of Wilhelm Reich's first wife, Annie Reich, who was also an integral part of the Prague group, but he additionally had been a high-ranking functionary in the Komintern: under the pseudonym James Thomas, he had been during the 1920s the "permanent commissioned representative of the Komintern for Western Europe"[31] in Berlin but left the party due to his opposition to Stalinism. In 1933 he fled to Prague and became interested in psychoanalysis.[32] Not all members of the initial group are known, but Ota Friedmann, Heinrich Löwenfeld, Jela Löwenfeld, and Hanna Heilborn are mentioned.[33]

[29] For the details of the following, see Elke Mühlleitner, *Ich – Fenichel. Das Leben eines Psychoanalytikers im 20. Jahrhundert* [I, Fenichel. The Life of a Psychoanalyst in the 20th Century] (Wien: Paul Zsolnay, 2008) and Russell Jacoby, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis. Otto Fenichel and the Political Freudians* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[30] At first, the Study Group was considered within the International Psychoanalytical Association, a sub-branch of Vienna, until it got recognized as an independent group in 1936.

[31] Karl Retzlaw, *Spartakus. Aufstieg und Niedergang. Erinnerungen eines Parteiarbeiters* [Spartacus. Rise and Fall. Memories of a Party Worker] (Frankfurt a. M.: Neue Kritik, 1971), p. 219.

[32] That a rather high-ranking renegade of the communist movement was a prominent figure in the Freudomarxist endeavors in Prague might have added to the reluctance of the members of the Historical Group to talk about it. As will be shown, Rubinstein had been in contact with them.

[33] Mühlleitner, *Ich – Fenichel,* p. 278.

The group started its meetings in early 1936, and in his July newsletter Fenichel reported to his peers:

> The Prague Marxist-Psychoanalytical working group, about whose foundation and first sessions I reported, met biweekly from January to July and thoroughly went over [Frederick] Engels's *The Peasant War in Germany*. During the first few evenings, we tried to complete Engels's material by way of other sources from a historical and culture-historical point of view. Then we dedicated a few evenings to sociology and psychology of religion and finally we started to skim the booklet in an unconstrained way for passages where psychoanalysts could add substantial complements. We were for the most part satisfied when we discovered the right problem formulation for a 'Marxist Psychoanalysis'. The discussions were very inspiring for all the participants.[34]

Fenichel notes, however, problems as well, due to the "unfortunate personal composition of the working group".[35]

Luckily, Fenichel took some (up to now unpublished) notes on the discussions in this working group under the title "Psychoanalytical Ideas on Engels's 'Peasant War'",[36] so one can get a rough impression of the discussion's contents. They are cursory notes not meant for publication, but there are three reasons to highlight and discuss a few of them.

Firstly, they touch at some points on problems similar to the ones in Pachta's article, which begs for a comparison. Secondly, some hint at general traits of Fenichel's thought, and thirdly, some show how productive these discussions were for Fenichel's further production of texts.

The first question Fenichel notes revolves again around the question of how the psychological glue, in the form of a religious system of beliefs, that held the feudal system together lost its adhesive power to the extent that it made the uprising possible. It is noteworthy that Fenichel sees at work more material causes than psychological ones, and, other than Pachta, rejects the assertion that aggressions against the father play a decisive role:

> How did the insurrection then come about? […] Surely not alone by real misery, which shows the frailty of illusionary compensation, and as well not by patricide

[34] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 28, 7. Juli 1936", in *Otto Fenichel. 119 Rundbriefe*, ed. Johannes Reichmayr and Elke Mühlleitner (Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld, 1998), pp. 435–447, here pp. 441–442.

[35] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 28, 7. Juli 1936", p. 442.

[36] Otto Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'" [Psychoanalytical Ideas on Engels's 'Peasant War'], University of California Los Angeles, Department of Special Collections. Collection 1613. Fenichel, Otto Papers, box 6, p. 1.

> tendencies stemming from the Oedipus complex, but rather by the material decline of the church's real power, the causes of which are described by Engels.[37]

It is common in all of Fenichel's argumentations that he very carefully tries not to overestimate the role of psychological factors.

In opposition to Pachta, Fenichel is also skeptical when it comes to mysticism and chiliastic fantasies and maintains that religious forms of thought are always an obstacle for revolutionary activity, coining the definition "Mysticism means thinking for yourself, but befuddled by tradition".[38]

Engels's text already had the particularity that it aimed to take the abortive peasant's uprising of the 16th century as a prism to shed light on the question as to why the revolution of 1848 had failed. This approach is now in a sense repeated by Fenichel and his group. When they discuss the psychological reasons that stood against the revolt, they ask whether "displacing sadism into another direction [that is not in the form of aggression against the ruler] as is the case in fascism"[39] might have played a role. By discussing these past mechanisms, they wanted also to discuss the burning questions of their time.

Some of the problems first jotted down during these discussions are later elaborated in some of Fenichel's later texts. For example, in his notes Fenichel is intrigued by the gory details of the repression against the beaten peasants that Engels gives:

> Cut off noses and ears: What is the unconscious motive of active castration? The psychology of the 'trophy'. One takes possession of the authority of the powerful by eating him, by eating his genitals, by collecting his genitals, finally by hanging stag antlers on the wall and collecting stamps. […] Are castrative cruelties by both sides executed in the same way? Why does the ruling class always tend to be more inclined this way? Because they feel to be in the right: castrative justice.[40]

In his text *Trophy and Triumph,* published in 1939, Fenichel refers to these notes as well as to the Marxist working group itself:

> A small group of analysts of which I was one were inquiring into the use of analytic knowledge for the understanding of historical events and came, among other things, upon the following problem: In all wars, whether external or internal, there have been and are *cruelties* that are far in excess of tactical necessities and of the

[37] Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'", p. 1.

[38] Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'", p. 2.

[39] Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'", p. 2.

[40] Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'", p. 5.

> amounts of hatred actually mobilized in the single individual. Only psychology can explain these. […] These atrocities were committed not by the rebels but by the representatives of law and order; and one often has the impression that in the history of the world such things have been done more often and more extensively by the defenders of the legal state than by the insurgents. […] representatives of the prevailing traditional order act with a *good conscience,* and are thus overall better able to 'idealize' cruel instinctual actions, whereas their opponents are inhibited by feelings of guilt.[41]

Another example of this is the discussion of nationalism in the notes. The working group underscored that Engels explained "nationalism from a materialistic point of view" when he discusses the different relations between the classes that made an early centralization of power in France and England possible, but not in Germany. Fenichel comments: "But what makes nationalism possible? What is it psychologically? A greater extent of that with which one identifies. The powerful in exterior with qualities of the Ego."[42] The theory of the role of narcissism for nationalism that is noted here in a nutshell is elaborated in the text of 1939:

> All those later narcissistic feelings of well-being in which one's own insignificance feels sheltered with something great which nevertheless has an ego quality are of this sort. Such are: patriotism ('my nation is infinitely greater than I, and yet is I'); religious ecstasy (God is infinitely greater that the self, yet the believer is one with Him) […] and the relation to authority in general (the authoritarian leader is infinitely greater than any single individual of his nation – and yet he himself is a single individual of the nation).[43]

This reasoning is later pointedly repeated by Adorno, who stated that while "appearing as a superman, the leader must at the same time work the miracle of appearing as an average person, just as Hitler posed as a composite of King-Kong and the suburban barber."[44]

IV.

While the last example shows how far-reaching thoughts were being discussed in Prague in 1936, Fenichel was not entirely happy with the progress of the working group. In

[41] Otto Fenichel, "Trophy and Triumph. A Clinical Study", in *The Collected Papers of Otto Fenichel. Second Series,* ed. Hannah Fenichel and David Rapaport (New York: W. W. Norton, 1954), pp. 141–162, here pp. 149–150.

[42] Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'", p. 5.

[43] Fenichel, "Trophy and Triumph. A Clinical Study", p. 143.

[44] Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda", p. 420.

September 1936 he complained in a *Rundbrief*: "We all are psychoanalysts and dabblers in Marxism."[45] In order to alleviate this problem, Fenichel proposed three possibilities: Firstly, to study Marx more intensely. Fenichel even toyed with the idea of Marxist summer schools for psychoanalysts, but these plans came to naught. The second idea was to cooperate more closely with other institutions with a similar program; Fenichel named the IfS and Reich's "Sex Pol in Oslo" and added that "despite all the differences it will be necessary to follow closely and discuss the publications of both institutions in order to learn what there is to learn".[46] The third possibility was to get Marxists to study psychoanalysis, not only to "interest good Marxists in psychoanalysis, but to win them over to get a full analyst's training".[47]

Half a year later, Fenichel enthusiastically reported on a success regarding the last issue: "A group of young Czech historians, who are working at the historical seminar of the Czech university [in Prague] and of whom one is in analysis, contacted Thomas [Rubinstein] and then me as well in order get in touch with us and discuss their work."[48] Of course, these historians were members of the Historical Group, the one in analytical training was most probably Pachta.[49] Fenichel was quite enthusiastic: "They are convinced of the validity of historical materialism, are trained in its application, and strive to implement psychoanalysis, which they apparently have understood for the most part, in the correct place in materialistic historical research."[50] He was also very interested in the group's journal. However, as he did not speak Czech, the language barrier was seemingly one of the problems why, despite the common goals, a closer cooperation did not come into fruition, and Fenichel had to rely on the report of an unnamed colleague of his whose abstracts of the articles of the first issue of *Past and Present* he forwarded to the recipients of the *Rundbrief.* There, Pachta's article is considered "the most important contribution of the journal",[51] even if there are some hints that Pachta's interpretation of Hussitism is not seen as wholly convincing.[52]

The interest was mutual: Fenichel reports that an article by Heinrich Löwenfeld already had been published in *Past and Present,* and that "for the next issue they asked for my piece on antisemitism, furthermore they asked Thomas for a lecture in their circle

[45] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 29, 6. September 1936", in *Otto Fenichel. 119 Rundbriefe*, ed. Johannes Reichmayr and Elke Mühlleitner (Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld, 1998), pp. 448–490, here p. 462.

[46] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 29, 6. September 1936", p. 463.

[47] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 29, 6. September 1936".

[48] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 36, 1. Juni 1937", in *Otto Fenichel. 119 Rundbriefe*, ed. Johannes Reichmayr and Elke Mühlleitner (Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld, 1998), pp. 577–591, here p. 588.

[49] At least this is what the editors of the *Rundbriefe* assume.

[50] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 36, 1. Juni 1937", p. 588.

[51] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 36, 1. Juni 1937", p. 589.

[52] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 36, 1. Juni 1937", p. 590.

on class consciousness".[53] And indeed, in the Historical Group's business correspondence with the directors of *Past and Present's* publishing house, there are mentions of a planned article on the "historical function of antisemitism"[54] for an issue in 1938. This issue, however, was never published due to the political situation. Whether Rubinstein's lecture took place in the end is not clear. Similarly, it is not clear whether the plan for the fall of 1937 – that members of the Historical Group should join Fenichel's Marxist working group – was ever realized.[55]

Fenichel left the Czechoslovak Republic in the spring of 1938 and most of the other émigrés followed suit around the time of the fall of the republic after the Munich betrayal. Most of the Czechoslovak members of the psychoanalytic group that stayed behind perished in the Shoah. The only survivor was Theodor Dosužkov, who later, after 1948, continued with his psychoanalytical work in the underground.[56]

Thus, a possibly longer and more fruitful cooperation with the members of the Historical Group was tragically cut short. But what do we know about the two texts that Fenichel mentioned?

V.

Heinrich Löwenfeld's text *On the Psychology of German Fascism*,[57] which was published in *Past and Present*, has a quite interesting history. It shows both Löwenfeld's antifascist effort to warn and educate the public about the mechanisms of authoritarian movements as well as some of the problems of his theoretical endeavors. The text stems from a lecture that Löwenfeld had given already in the fall of 1935 at the (German-speaking) adult education center Urania in Prague. Over one year later, in February 1937, a popularized version of the text found its way to a broader Czechoslovak public when it was published under the pseudonym "Dr. Jindřich Lev" under the title *Psychology of the Dictator. The Man Who Hides* in one of the Czechoslovak republic's intellectual flagships, *Přítomnost* (Present).[58] After the publication in *Past and Present* in the same year, the text was nearly

[53] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 36, 1. Juni 1937", p. 588.

[54] Jaroslav Charvát, "Letter to the board of the editorial 'Druženství práce', February 12 1938", Památník národního písemnictví, Literarní archiv, Fond Druženství práce, Historická skupina ke sborníku Dějiny a přítomnost, p. 2.

[55] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 40, 23. Oktober 1937", in *Otto Fenichel. 119 Rundbriefe*, ed. Johannes Reichmayr and Elke Mühlleitner (Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld, 1998), pp. 625–672, here p. 627.

[56] Michael Giefer, "Die Entwicklung der Psychoanalyse in der Tschechoslowakei von den Anfängen bis 1939" [The Development of Psychoanalysis in Czechoslovakia From Its Inception Until 1939], *Luzifer – Amor,* no. 68 (2021), pp. 7–26, here pp. 24–25.

[57] Jiří Benda (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "K psychologii německého fašismu" [On the Psychology of German Fascism], *Dějiny a přítomnost. Sborník Historické skupiny,* no. 1 (1937), pp. 74–85.

[58] Dr. Jindřich Lev (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "Psychologie diktátora. Muž, který se skrývá" [The Psychology of the Dictator. The Man Who Hides], *Přítomnost,* February 24, 1937, pp. 127–128.

forgotten before the original manuscript of the lecture was published in the 1970s in a German psychoanalytical journal (under the Americanized version of Löwenfeld's name).[59] It is interesting to note that, in a comparison of this version with the one in *Past and Present,* some passages criticizing a dogmatic Marxist approach are missing from the latter. Löwenfeld pointedly wrote, for example, that Marxists "see it as their main task to interpret Marx. Their discussions are tantamount to thinking that each one deems himself the best interpreter",[60] making a productive discussion impossible.

The central question Löwenfeld poses in his text is how German fascism could become a mass movement:

> One of the main psychological problems is how can it be that people are again and again inclined to ignore their real interests and do not behave according to rational deliberation but according to irrational motives, that are unknown to them. [...] The German riddle appears like a conglomerate of the most basic material interests and irrational, mystical driving forces, which also seize those who, in reality, only suffer under a fascist regime.[61]

In the popularized version published in *Přítomnost,* this problem is broken down to the question "Which needs were satisfied by this ideology?"[62]

Löwenfeld argues that the economic and political crisis which increasingly presented itself in the form of fate, led the masses to regress to a former state of mind, in which magical thinking substitutes rational deliberation. He then dissects some elements of this thinking, in which the cult of the leader, whose base he sees in the family and the Oedipus situation, are combined with aggressive impulses against a racially-defined enemy. "In all of these ideological elements specific moments of the drive appear: slavish, masochist submission under authority on the one hand, and aggressive, sadistic behavior towards a subordinate and external enemy on the other."[63] Thus, the text tries to capture this peculiar mix of fascist submission and aggression, while being aware that this was just the beginning of a deeper analysis as it contained only "fragmentary impulses for a psychology of fascism".[64]

In this way the text was also discussed. Fenichel wrote for the *Rundbriefe* (of which Löwenfeld obviously was not a recipient) a rather ambivalent review of the lecture at the Urania:

[59] Henry Lowenfeld, "Zur Psychologie des Faschismus" [On the Psychology of Fascism], *Psyche. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen,* no. 6 (1977), pp. 561–579.

[60] Lowenfeld, "Zur Psychologie des Faschismus", p. 577.

[61] Jiří Benda (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "K psychologii německého fašismu", p. 75.

[62] Dr. Jindřich Lev (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "Psychologie diktátora. Muž, který se skrývá", p. 127.

[63] Jiří Benda (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "K psychologii německého fašismu", p. 81.

[64] Jiří Benda (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "K psychologii německého fašismu", p. 84.

> Our local colleague Löwenfeld presented to a Zionist audience a lecture 'On the Psychology of Fascism' [...] While the piece does not contain much original material, but consists mainly of a reproduction of thoughts taken from Fromm's programmatic article and my own "On Psychoanalysis as the Nucleus etc." applied to the contents of fascist ideology, which themselves borrowed from the positive parts of Reich's booklet "Mass Psychology", it shows great understanding of these works and the respective problems and is thus very welcome due to the lack of more or less correct "applications" of psychoanalysis.[65]

Fenichel's main point of critique is that the method is "still too much of an old 'psychoanalysis by interpretation', [...] that it takes the Oedipus complex as too absolute, and that it analyses the material basis of the respective disposition for changes in the [psychological] structure, which entrenches ideology, inadequately or in a wrong way".[66] In other words, it took the old psychoanalytical categories and applied them in a simplistic way on the social situation. But still, Fenichel invited Löwenfeld to present his work in a meeting of the psychoanalytical group, as in Prague there was "one of the few local branches, [where] it is still possible to discuss"[67] questions like these.

One could add two other points to this critique. Firstly, Löwenfeld takes over Reich's assertion that authoritarianism is fed mainly by sexual repression, that "national-socialist propaganda has its greatest source thanks to the consequences of an education which suppresses sexuality during childhood and puberty; the result of this education is anxiety".[68] Reich's sexual-political fight against making sexuality taboo as practical antifascism, which was a result of this assertion, was soon put into question as it became clear that the Nazis were levelling sexual taboos as well. In his studies for the Office of Strategic Services in the United States on Nazi Germany, Herbert Marcuse noted that this can also strengthen society's grasp over the individual: "The abolition of sexual taboos tends to turn this realm into an official, public domain. The same way National Socialism negates the difference between state and society, it also negates the one between society and individual."[69] Additionally, more recent historical research

[65] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 20, 23. November 1935", in *Otto Fenichel. 119 Rundbriefe*, ed. Johannes Reichmayr and Elke Mühlleitner (Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld, 1998), pp. 283–290, here p. 286. The texts Fenichel sees as Löwenfeld's main sources are specifically: Erich Fromm, "Über Methode und Aufgabe einer analytischen Sozialpsychologie"; Otto Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis as the Nucleus of a Future Dialectical-Materialistic Psychology", *American Imago,* no. 4 (1967), pp. 290–311; Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Orgone Institute Press, 1946).

[66] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 20, 23. November 1935", p. 286.

[67] Otto Fenichel, "Rundbrief 20, 23. November 1935", p. 287.

[68] Jiří Benda (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "K psychologii německého fašismu", p. 84.

[69] Herbert Marcuse, "Über soziale und politische Aspekte des Nationalsozialismus" [On Social and Political Aspects of National Socialism], in *Feindanalysen. Über die Deutschen* [Analyses

has shown that National Socialism propagated promiscuity – though only, of course, within its ideological framework.[70]

Secondly, Löwenfeld underestimates the role of antisemitism in National Socialism. While it is naturally mentioned, it has no dynamics of its own and is seen only as a means "to veil and distract from reality", which is mainly found in a "petit-bourgeoise way of thinking".[71]

But a deeper understanding of antisemitism by a psychoanalytical approach was exactly what Fenichel was working on.

VI.

The article that Fenichel did not in the end publish in *Past and Present* is an interesting example of the discussions on a theory of antisemitism that took place in the circles discussed here. Being raised in a Jewish family in Karl Lueger's Vienna, the phenomenon was nothing new to Fenichel, as his notes on his teenage years show. For young Fenichel, "Lueger is a vulgar man, he is an antisemite who wants to devour us or shoot us".[72]

Being aware of the dangers of antisemitism, Fenichel also made it a topic in the discussions within the Marxist-Psychoanalytical Working Group in 1936. He noted that Engels quite nonchalantly mentioned that the early Bundschuh movement – a network of conspiratorial peasants preparing for a revolt – planned pogroms as well. Engels writes: "The conspirators wanted to plunder and exterminate Jews, whose usury then, as now, sucked dry the peasants of Alsace".[73] In his notes on the discussions, Fenichel comments on this passage:

> Psychology of antisemitism: a. Supplement of the usual materialistic interpretation. American negro ('displacement supplement') b. Supplement of the usual psychoanalytical interpretation: Castration complex only one symptom of the general scary character of preserved archaic customs. The god of the vanquished = the devil.[74]

Obviously, at this stage Fenichel's aim was a broader explanation which encompasses not only antisemitism but racism as well, and he kept working on this topic. Arnold

of the Enemy. On Germans], ed. Peter-Erwin Jansen (Lüneburg: zu Klampen, 1998), pp. 91–112, here p. 109.

[70] See Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism. Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[71] Jiří Benda (Heinrich Löwenfeld), "K psychologii německého fašismu", p. 84.

[72] Mühlleitner, *Ich – Fenichel. Das Leben eines Psychoanalytikers im 20. Jahrhundert,* p. 21.

[73] Frederick Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), p. 82. The deeper issues of Engels's misjudgment on antisemitism cannot be discussed here.

[74] Fenichel, "Psychoanalytische Einfälle zu Engels 'Bauernkrieg'", p. 4.

Zweig's essay on *The Jew in the Thorns,*[75] an antisemitic fairy tale of a tricked servant by the brothers Grimm, was also discussed in the working group as Zweig tried to interpret the story by psychoanalytical means. Fenichel was very interested in Zweig's essay and addressed him in a letter, as he found it very convincing how Zweig shows "how the servant, who was defrauded of his pay, procures what has been withheld, not from the master but from the latter's displacement substitute, the Jew, and what makes the Jew fitting for this role".[76]

In April of 1937, Fenichel held a lecture in Prague's "Jewish Student's Reading and Speaking Hall"[77] on the same topic. This lecture was then published in the United States in a revised form[78] and finally – posthumously, as Fenichel died in January 1946, and again revised – it formed a part, along with text of authors like Horkheimer, Adorno, and Else Frenkel-Brunswik, of Ernst Simmel's important publication on antisemitism.[79]

While we cannot discuss in detail the development of Fenichel's theory of antisemitism, a few points, which influenced the further general development of the theory and which are up to today widely accepted, can be mentioned. The focus will be on the version from 1940, as presumably it is the one closest to the lecture from 1937.

As did Löwenfeld, Fenichel poses the question of which psychological benefit the individual receives through antisemitism ("What advantage does antisemitism bring to the average man?"[80]), thus shifting the focus from some alleged Jewish characteristics to the antisemite's psychology. One of those advantages, as Fenichel points out, is that antisemitism gives the antisemite, who is "in a conflict between the rebellious tendency and the respect for authority, in which they have been trained [...] the means of satisfying both these contradictory tendencies at the same time".[81] But this "scapegoat theory",[82] as Fenichel calls it, is not enough. In a second step, he looks for the causes why "this role [is] so fatally suitable to him [the Jew]". Fenichel notes that Jews were always identified with money and the sphere of circulation but does not want to give too much emphasis to this factor. However, he notes that this identification makes a difference regarding racism against, for example, black people, that "this point is not admissible in some cases of social phenomena analogous [sic] to antisemitism, for

[75] Arnold Zweig, "Der Jude im Dorn" [The Jew in the Thorns], *Die neue Weltbühne,* no. 23 (1936), pp. 717–747.

[76] Fenichel, "Rundbrief 28, 7. Juli 1936", p. 444.

[77] Mühlleitner, *Ich – Fenichel. Das Leben eines Psychoanalytikers im 20. Jahrhundert,* p. 292.

[78] Otto Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", *American Imago,* no. 2 (1940), pp. 24–39.

[79] Otto Fenichel, "Elements of a Psychoanalytical Theory of Anti-Semitism", in *Anti-Semitism. A Social Disease,* ed. Ernst Simmel (New York: International Universities Press, 1946), pp. 11–32.

[80] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 26.

[81] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 26.

[82] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 26.

instance the persecution of negroes in America".[83] That is, while he notes that all persecuted groups share the trait of "foreignness",[84] Fenichel starts to differentiate between a theory of antisemitism and racism. This difference has become central to more recent attempts towards a theory of modern antisemitism, which in turn criticized currents that thought of antisemitism as a subtype of racism. While the racist attributes to the victim a proximity to concrete nature, being actually closer to animals than to humans, the modern antisemite ascribes a "mysteriously intangible, abstract and universal"[85] power to the Jews. Here, Fenichel takes the first steps in this direction.

But most importantly, Fenichel identifies the psychological mechanism of projection as a key for understanding antisemitism:

> We believe that the Jew appears to the antisemite as murderous, dirty, and debauched so that he should not become aware of these same tendencies in himself. […] The Jew not only unconsciously represents for the rioters the authorities whom they do not dare to attack, but also their own repressed instincts which they themselves hate and which are forbidden by the authorities against whom they are directed.[86]

However, Fenichel also notes the "limitation of the psychological explanation", that "the full utilization of the psychological facts which we have studied so that they become a real and politically effective power is only possible under certain economic and political circumstances".[87] But this led Fenichel to a rather naïve, instrumental theory of ideology, with which he ends the article:

> We only need to look at the facts around us, and to consider these facts in the light of the psychological basis of antisemitism, in order to see what this complicated phenomenon, antisemitism, really is in the present-day world: A weapon in the class-warfare dominating the present civilized world.[88]

[83] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 28.

[84] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 28.

[85] Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: Notes on the German Reaction to 'Holocaust'", *New German Critique,* no. 19 (1980), p. 106.

[86] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 31.

[87] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism", p. 39.

[88] Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism". This last passage is dropped in the revised 1946 version of the text.

VII.

This notion of ideology, which only understands ideology as a tool or weapon of the mighty, not as a "consciousness which is objectively necessary and yet at the same time false",[89] points to a fundamental problem of the Freudomarxist movement. As Helmut Dahmer puts it, and as Fenichel suspected when he wrote that they were dabblers in sociology, they "adopted Marxian theory in the form of their contemporaneous Soviet Marxism [...] their interest was more a *general* materialist view of history than the historically specific critique of political economy".[90] Despite their proximity to the thinkers from Frankfurt, Fenichel's circle never did develop a critical theory but insisted on the status of psychoanalysis as a natural science that had to be combined with a naturalistically misunderstood materialist theory of history – thus missing the connection between both fields: "The Marxist analytics remitted this way is in principle what constitutes the special merit of psychoanalysis – that, as a psychology it expresses theoretically (more or less adequately) the mediation of individual and society."[91] One can only speculate that it was this naturalization of theory that was one of the moments which later eased Pachta's turn to Stalinism or at least prevented his interest in psychoanalysis to be an obstacle in this development.

Around the time Fenichel came to Prague and the – in many respects undoubtedly productive – discussions described above gained momentum, other thinkers of critical theory started to doubt the validity of this path. In a letter to Walter Benjamin, Adorno wrote to the former, who had started to read Freud for his project on the arcades: "About three months ago, in a big letter to Horkheimer, and more recently in a discussion with Pollock, I took the view, against Fromm and especially against Reich, that the true 'mediation' of society and psychology does not lie in the family, but in the commodity character and the fetish, that fetishism is the real correlate to reification."[92]

Later, Adorno harshly criticized a revisionist version of Freud, as propagated by Erich Fromm after his break with the Frankfurt Institute, which tried to find a synthesis of Marx and Freud in the way of a revision of both thinkers. Adorno insisted that this was not necessary, at least not in the sense proposed by Fromm. He pointed out that the original Freudian theory and writings of Marx already had a common ground in the thrust against social heteronomy. The individual is shown by Marx to be an appendage of the social process of capital accumulation, of a movement in which value "has

[89] The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, "Ideology", in *Aspects of Sociology,* ed. Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973), pp. 182–205, here 189.

[90] Helmut Dahmer, *Libido und Gesellschaft. Studien über Freud und die Freudsche Linke,* p. 281.

[91] Dahmer, *Libido und Gesellschaft.*

[92] Theodor W. Adorno, "Letter to Benjamin, June 5, 1935", in *Theodor W. Adorno Walter Benjamin. Briefwechsel 1928–1940* [Theodor W. Adorno Walter Benjamin. Correspondence 1928–1940], ed. Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1994), pp. 122–126, here p. 124.

acquired the occult quality of being able to add value to itself",[93] and Freud pointed out that even within one's mind "the ego is not master in its own house",[94] it is dependent on the unconscious drives. For Adorno, this critical thrust was lost in this revision, and the revised psychoanalysis became mere psychotherapy, trying to appease the neurotic individual with an irrational society, whereas "psychoanalysis in its most authentic and by now already obsolete form comes into its own as a report on the forces of destruction rampant in the individual amidst a destructive society".[95] The loss is for Adorno deeply connected with the assumption of an optimistic and deterministic philosophy of history, psychoanalysis's "own over-identification with the momentum of history",[96] turning it into a conformist endeavor. To maintain the critical thrust, the relation between sociology and psychoanalysis must be seen as itself historic and must be discussed for every historical moment anew.[97]

Where do the two currents in interwar Czechoslovakia discussed in this paper stand in this development? For Pachta and the Historická skupina it seems clear: their conviction to be on the right side of history made them abandon psychoanalysis altogether and treat it as an embarrassing fad in their youth.

Fenichel assumed a more ambiguous position: while sharing the notion of psychoanalysis as a natural science, focusing on a psychology of the Ego (which was popular among the revisionists as well) and criticizing Freud's meta-psychological ideas of a death drive, he also positioned himself at the same time as an orthodox Freudian, criticizing the turn of psychoanalysis towards mere psychotherapy, although without any success worth mentioning.[98] For him, as for most who were forced into exile, an optimistic philosophy of history did not seem convincing. That Fenichel saw that regression had a bright future can be seen in the quote that serves as this paper's motto, as well as in his writings on antisemitism. However, he never reflected more extensively on these subjects in his writing, his rather early and sudden death in 1946 foreclosing that possibility.

With this in mind, one could perhaps revisit the discussions in Prague and ask what they tell us about what was to follow in the remainder of the 20th century, as the need for psychoanalysis for understanding our society is still immense. For sure, the idea

[93] Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production,* MEGA II.9, (Berlin: Dietz, 1990), p. 134.

[94] Sigmund Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Work of Sigmund Freud. Volume XVII*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1981), pp. 137–144, here p. 143.

[95] Theodor W. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology II", *New Left Review,* no. 47 (1968), p. 95.

[96] Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology II", p. 96.

[97] For a more recent attempt to do so, see Uli Krug, *Der Wert und das Es. Über Marxismus und Psychoanalyse in Zeiten sexueller Konterrevolution* [Value and Id. On Marxism and Psychoanalysis in Times of Sexual Counter-Revolution] (Freiburg i. Br.: ca ira 2016).

[98] See Jacoby, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis,* p. 118ff.

formulated by Horkheimer and Pachta, that the more rational a society is organized, the less psychoanalytical categories are needed to understand it, definitely does not apply to the current one. In the end, it was also Adorno who wrote that in "the epoch of the concentration camps, castration is more characteristic of social reality than competition".[99]

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[99] Theodor W. Adorno, "Revisionist Psychoanalysis", *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* no. 3 (2014), pp. 326–338, here p. 333.

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UNRAVELLING THE CRITICISM

Socialist Albania's Examination of Freudian and Neo-Freudian Theories*

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Abstract

This article delves into the criticism levelled by official ideologists of socialist Albania against Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism, primarily examining Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoto's book Neo-Freudianism: One of the Foundations of Bourgeois Liberalism *(1974). The study aims to trace the genesis of these criticisms, questioning whether they stemmed from an original Marxist analysis within Albanian theoretical discourse or were significantly shaped by criticisms articulated by "Soviet revisionists". Riska and Zoto's criticism focuses primarily on Freudianism's "pseudoscientific nature", its alignment with bourgeois ideology, and its focus on unconscious instincts. It argues that a comprehensive understanding of the human psyche necessitates a holistic examination integrating biological and social dimensions.*

Keywords

socialist Albania, critique of freudianism, neo-freudianism, marxist analysis, ideological purity

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.4

* This article has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 854503).

Introduction

This article aims to analyse the criticisms expressed by the official ideologues of Socialist Albania towards Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism. The ideological discourse of the Albanian Stalinist leadership deemed these ideologies "bourgeois and reactionary philosophies".[1] While in the West, Freudianism/psychoanalysis has been primarily identified as an approach to psychological treatment,[2] in Albania, it, while acknowledged to exist as such in "bourgeois countries", was predominantly understood as a "trend in bourgeois idealist philosophy and psychology" and hence labelled a reactionary ideology.[3]

Consequently, although there were criticisms of "Sigmund Freud's non-scientific approach",[4] in analysing the causes and treatments of psychological illnesses, criticisms were chiefly directed at Freudianism as a philosophy. It was seen as an idealist, reactionary philosophy that aimed to explain social phenomena such as conflict, religion, science, and morality as manifestations of instincts shaping the human psyche, sidestepping class struggle, ownership of the means of production, and production relations as decisive factors in social phenomena.[5] Likewise, psychoanalysis as therapy was prohibited from being practiced in clinical fields in Socialist Albania. Under the dogmatism of the Stalinist regime, any form of psychotherapeutic treatment of mental illnesses was prohibited, and clinical treatment was restricted solely to medication.

This article analyses the first book criticizing Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism published by official theoreticians in socialist Albania. Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoto's *Neo-Freudianism: One of the Foundations of Bourgeois Liberalism* (1974) was penned in Albanian, tailored mainly for the domestic audience. Through a deep dive into these texts, this exploration endeavours to unearth socialist Albania's criticism of Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism. The book's title implies a focus on Neo-Freudianism, but its core predominantly comprises criticisms of Sigmund Freud himself. Addressing Neo-Freudianism, the authors acknowledge its integration of social and cultural influences on the human psyche, notably attributing this perspective primarily to Erich Fromm. However, when discussing Neo-Freudianism throughout the book, they generally refer to it in the singular or plural form without explicitly naming individual scholars. Their primary criticisms are aimed at certain authors, whom they

[1] Hoxha, Enver. "Letërsia dhe artet në luftë me ndikimet e huaja [Literature and the Arts at War with Foreign Influences]". In *Vepra 50,* 1–15. (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1986), p.12.

[2] American Psychological Association. "Psychoanalysis". *APA Dictionary of Psychology.* November 15, 2023. https://dictionary.apa.org/psychoanalysis.

[3] Universiteti i Tiranës, Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. "Frojdizëm [Freudianism]". In *Fjalor i filozofisë [Dictionary of Philosophy]* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1981) p.146.

[4] Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. "Frojdizëm".

[5] Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. "Frojdizëm", p.147.

label as Neo-Freudians, for attempting to merge Freudianism with Marxism, without explicitly naming them.[6]

Neo-Freudianism, while primarily considered in the West as an approach stemming from Freud's psychoanalysis, emphasizing social and cultural aspects over biological ones,[7] was entirely perceived in Albania as a bourgeois philosophy/ideology, neglecting the therapeutic aspects of the approach.[8] This is primarily because the official ideology linked the spread of Neo-Freudianism in capitalist countries to the contemporary and beneficial interests of the bourgeoisie.

According to Riska and Zoto, and in line with the general ideological discourse in Socialist Albania, Neo-Freudianism was considered a bourgeois and reactionary philosophical trend, developed by Freud's followers. These followers, while reforming certain specific views of Freudianism, preserved the core of psychoanalysis, which posits that human consciousness is dictated by irrational forces. Riska and Zoto argue that Neo-Freudianism, by seemingly referencing Freud, ultimately provides the greatest service to him by preserving his philosophy. At its core, both Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism, they claim, serve the interests of the bourgeoisie.[9]

If we examine the criticism that these authors levelled against Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism from a Marxist perspective, it becomes evident that their perspective is highly dogmatic. Therefore, this article will critique the criticism, drawing from the perspective of heterodox Marxist authors.

As such, this article tries to contribute to the field of intellectual history within the context of Cold War history and the history of Marxism–Leninism. It explores the ideological discourse in socialist Albania, particularly how the regime interpreted and criticized philosophical and psychological theories like Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism. Additionally, it contributes to the study of Albanian history under socialism, focusing on the efforts of the Stalinist regime to maintain ideological purity and control over intellectual currents.

Dialectical Engagements: Marxism and Psychoanalysis in Critical Discourse – Perspectives from Soviet Thinkers.

One of the primary tasks assigned by the Stalinist leadership of the country to Albanian theorists was to generate an original critique based on Marxism–Leninism, independent from the influence of "Soviet revisionists" and bourgeois philosophies. As the book's

[6] Riska, Viktor, and Zoto, Kleanthi. *Neo-Frojdianizmi - Një nga bazat teorike të liberalizmit borgjez* [Neo-Freudianism: One of the Theoretical Bases of Bourgeois Liberalism] (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1974), pp. 4, 45.

[7] American Psychological Association. "Neo-Freudian". *APA Dictionary of Psychology.* April 19, 2018. https://dictionary.apa.org/neo-freudian.

[8] Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. *Frojdizëm,* p. 148.

[9] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, pp. 11–12.

preface states, "the ideological struggle preceded the political one".[10] Thus, the first aim of this article is to explore the origins of Riska and Zoto's criticism of Freudianism, seeking to discern whether they emanated primarily from an original Marxist analysis within Albanian ideological discourse or were significantly shaped by the criticisms articulated by "Soviet revisionists".

Therefore, to facilitate this exploration of the first chapters of the book where Freudianism is criticized, a summary will be provided of the Soviet authors Valentin Voloshinov and Dmitry Fedotov to investigate their influence on Albanian authors.

Probably the first comprehensive Marxist critique of Freud was made by Valentin Voloshinov (1895–1936), whose primary research was in the field of linguistics. Voloshinov regarded language as an ideological medium, which, in this capacity, also influences human consciousness. Consequently, according to him, understanding social psychology requires the study of verbal communication.

In his work *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, Voloshinov asserts that Freudianism failed to engage in a "dialogue" with contemporary psychology, neglecting to clarify its precise position concerning the psychology of its era.[11] Another critique points to the absence of the development of scientifically effective methods in Freudianism's theoretical approach. Instead, it persists in utilizing the antiquated subjective method of psychology based on self-observation and interpretation. Another criticism regards Freudianism's perceived "pansexualism", condemning it for excessively attributing the dynamics of sexual impulses as the sole explanation for societal, ideological, and cultural phenomena. Voloshinov contends that this "pansexualism" reflects a bourgeois philosophy reacting to its decline.[12]

Lastly, Voloshinov highlights the deficiency of Freud's theory in addressing the material foundations of character formation inherent in the body's constitution or the tangible social impacts of the environment. Voloshinov also criticized those Soviet Marxists who made efforts to reconcile Marxism and Freudianism by examining how historical materialism aligns with Freudian ideas. He regarded these attempts as flawed or unsuccessful. He began by asserting that Freudianism fundamentally and structurally differs from Marxism, and concluded by highlighting the connection between psychoanalysis and the foundational beliefs of the class consciousness of the contemporary European bourgeoisie.[13]

Voloshinov's critique of Freudianism and those thinkers who tried to reconcile it with Marxism limited the opportunities for such an approach in the Soviet Union,

[10] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p.3.

[11] Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov, *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, trans. I.R. Titunik (London: Verso, 2012 [1927]), p. 60.

[12] Voloshinov, *Freudianism*, pp. 87–90.

[13] Voloshinov, *Freudianism*, p. 120.

whose thinkers continued to maintain the official criticism regarding Freudianism and Psychoanalysis as a bourgeoisie ideology.[14]

Thirty years after Voloshinov's book, the Soviet Psychiatrist Professor Dmitry Fedotov (1908–1982), director of Institute of Psychiatry of USSR Medical Sciences Academy (1952–1960) and one of the most productive Soviet psychiatrists of his time, wrote an article titled "Freudianism: A Reactionary Manifestation of Bourgeois Ideology". In this article, he argues that Freudianism is a manifestation of bourgeois ideology and a pseudoscientific theory that claims to explain not only biological but also social laws.[15]

According to him, the cornerstone of Freudian theory is the declaration that the fundamental moving forces that determine the conduct of a human being and society are unconscious instincts, which originate in the sexual experiences of early childhood. This emphasis on unconscious instincts is a reflection of idealism, which posits that the world is fundamentally mental or spiritual in nature. Fedotov argues that Freudianism is linked more with Kantianism than with anything else, which is a reflection of bourgeois ideology.[16]

The article also emphasizes the importance of Vladimir Lenin's tenets on the social and gnoseological roots of idealism in the criticism of Freudianism. Lenin argued that any idealistic system gives a one-sided explanation of the various modes of cognition. He also mentions Pavlov's physiological school of thought, which provides an enormous amount of experimental and theoretical material that can be used to unmask the pseudoscientific and reactionary doctrines of bourgeois science, including Freudi-anism.[17]

Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism in the Ideological Discourse of Socialist Albania

The socialist regime in Albania rejected Freudianism because it emphasized personal psychological factors while ignoring the influence of economic and social conditions on human development. This clashed with the Marxist belief that economic and social circumstances largely determine individual choices and transformation. Freudianism's focus on the individual was seen as incompatible with Marxist analysis. Similarly, Albanian communists criticized Neo-Freudianism for attempting to combine Marxism with Freudianism, viewing it as a way to justify capitalism. Neo-Freudianism was blamed for attributing societal issues in Western countries, such as poverty, addiction, and suicide, to individual psychological factors rather than to economic conditions, which was considered a diversion from Marxist principles.

[14] Sheila Viera de Camargo Grillo, "Marxism, Psychoanalysis, and Sociological Methods: Voloshinov's, Soviet and European Marxists' Dialogue with Freud". *Bakhtiniana* 12, no. 3 (2017), p. 82.

[15] Dmitry Fedotov, "Freudianism: A Reactionary Manifestation of Bourgeois Ideology", *Political Research, Organization and Design* 3, no. 2 (1959), p. 35.

[16] Fedotov, "Freudianism", p. 36.

[17] Fedotov, "Freudianism", p. 38.

Although, according to the official discourse of Albanian leaders, these bourgeois and revisionist ideologies had taken root in bourgeois and revisionist countries, the concern was that they could influence the masses in Albania. This fear is a constant theme in the ideological discourse of Albanian political leaders, as well as in the pages of the book under discussion. The authors express that this is why a critique of these ideas from a Marxist perspective is deemed necessary.[18]

This ties in with the role the Albanian leadership assumed for itself as a custodian of the ideological purity of Marxism-Leninism after the rupture of relations with the Soviet Union. Until the early 1960s, Albania's leadership aimed to defend pure Marxist-Leninist principles but hadn't positioned Albania as a centre for revolutionary theoretical thinking. In 1961, scholars were instructed to discontinue referencing works from the Soviet Union and socialist countries post-1953, due to perceived revisionism. They were tasked with developing essential Marxist–Leninist theories, a responsibility initially held by the Higher Party School and other educational institutions. These faculties expanded their studies to criticize global bourgeois philosophies and ideologies.

A pivotal step was the transformation of the Party History Institute into the Institute of Marxist–Leninist Studies in 1966. This institute conducted theoretical studies not only on Albanian life but also on international matters, establishing departments analysing global workers' movements, fighting revisionism, and criticizing bourgeois ideologies. It organized conferences and sessions critiquing various global streams of thought.[19]

This institute also aimed to solidify Enver Hoxha's cult of personality, positioning him as a significant Marxist–Leninist thinker and publishing and translating his works globally. Hoxha's criticism scrutinized global politics, philosophical trends, and approaches in capitalist or "revisionist" countries.[20] Among its multifaceted objectives, the Institute played a vital role in critiquing bourgeois philosophy in capitalist-revisionist countries, including Freudian and Neo-Freudian theories.

Just as in the Soviet Union and other countries of the Socialist Bloc, Freudianism was regarded in Albania as a reactionary idealistic current within bourgeois psychology and philosophy. The primary criticism against Freudianism was that it detached human psychology from the material conditions and circumstances that had birthed it. Sigmund Freud's theory was interpreted as explaining psychological issues and acting

[18] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, pp. 3–5.

[19] Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Sektori i Enciklopedisë. "Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste Leniniste [Institute of Marxist–Leninist Studies]". In *Fjalori Enciklopedik* Shqiptar [Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary] (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1985), p. 825.

[20] Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Sektori i Enciklopedisë. "Marksizëm-Leninizmi në Shqipëri [Marxism-Leninism in Albania]". In *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar* [Albanian Encyclopaedic Dictionary] (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1985), p. 927.

solely through physiological causes, thus they saw psychoanalysis as pseudoscience and a completely artificial theory. [21]

Moreover, Freudianism was criticized for viewing humanity's major achievements and issues (such as art, literature, science, justice, and warfare) as products of an unconscious human psyche rather than material conditions and the labour of productive forces.[22]

On the other hand, Neo-Freudianism was considered an attempt to synthesize Freud's theories with other philosophical currents, aiming to establish Freudianism within the ideological and cultural fabric of the Western world. Neo-Freudianism was seen as an ideological justification for problems caused in the West by capitalism, such as moral decay, degeneration, crime, alcoholism, and drug addiction. As it served as an ideological justification for problems originating from the bourgeois order, according to Albanian Marxist–Leninist authors such as Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoti, Neo-Freudianism was extensively propagated in the capitalist world. This explains its significant dissemination and influence in philosophy, the arts, and aesthetics. Riska and Zotos's criticism of Neo-Freudianism centred on its portrayal of the human inner world as irrational and the external world as meaningless. The primary notion was that an individual's path to freedom resided in the depths of their psyche, leaving institutions free. Therefore, according to this ideology, one could attain freedom and self-discovery in isolation.[23]

Hence, Neo-Freudianism was regarded as a dangerous reactionary ideology that not only justified problems caused by the capitalist system but also hindered resistance by offering withdrawal, solitary life, and surrender as solutions. The characters depicted in movies, books, and plays influenced by Neo-Freudianism were depicted as irrational, drug-addicted, alcoholic, and isolated individuals wasting their time without achieving personal change or integration into society. Moreover, other artistic works like paintings and music, which might have reflected or evoked feelings of solitude, pessimism, and self-isolation, were considered to be influenced by Neo-Freudianism and needed to be severely criticized.

One of the primary works against Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism was published in 1974 by Viktor Riska and Kleanthi Zoto, titled *Neo-Freudianism: One of the Foundations of Bourgeois Liberalism*.[24] This book, approximately eighty pages long, is a concentrated extract highlighting the main criticisms of Marxist–Leninists in Albania regarding Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism.

[21] Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. *Frojdizëm*, p. 147.

[22] Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. *Frojdizëm*, p. 147.

[23] Fakulteti i Shkencave Politike dhe Juridike. *Frojdizëm*, 148.

[24] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi.*

As mentioned, Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism were considered dangerous currents of bourgeois philosophy, criticized in the speeches of Enver Hoxha and in the respective voices of the Albanian Philosophical and Encyclopaedic Dictionary. However, to our knowledge this book is the only one dedicated specifically to this topic until 1989. Only in 1989, on the eve of the regime's collapse, was a similar book published, written by Artan Fuga entitled *Neo-Freudianism: Philosophy of the Alienated Human*.[25]

To place it in its historical context, Riska and Zoto's book was published immediately after the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania (June 1973), where liberal trends in literature, arts, and culture were severely condemned. Directives were given to cut off all "bourgeois-revisionist influences" in these fields and throughout Albanian society.[26] The Fourth Plenum occurred after a softening phase of the Albanian Stalinist regime. Enver Hoxha himself had called for a relaxation of restrictions particularly in the fields of literature, arts, and culture. However, following the 11th Festival of Albanian Radio-Television in December 1972, this liberal phase was abruptly interrupted, leading to significant repression. There is ambiguity regarding whether this liberal phase was permitted to gauge who would express enthusiasm, only to later face punishment, or whether it had simply spiralled out of Hoxha's control.

While in-depth studies on this matter are lacking, the memories of key figures from that time, such as Todi Lubonja, the former Director of Albanian Radio-Television, who faced imprisonment and internment after this Plenum, suggest the latter. Hoxha feared that these liberalizing measures would awaken a desire for deeper changes within Albanian society, potentially even challenging his personal power. Moreover, it seems there was pressure from the more conservative faction of the Party against this liberalism, along with intelligence from the State Security (secret police) indicating that these trends were not only failing to quell the population's dissatisfaction but were also paving the way for further demands and profound political changes.[27]

Consequently, after this Plenum, there was a purge of figures in literature, art, and culture, as well as various writers and artists, accusing them of spreading works with Freudian influences. Notably, Enver Hoxha personally criticized the staging of the play *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller, directed by Piro Mani, asserting that the play had Freudian influences.[28]

[25] Artan Fuga, *Neofrojdizmi:filozofi e njeriut të tjetërsuar* [Neo-Freudianism: The Philosophy of the Alienated Human]. Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Universitar, 1989.

[26] Ardian Isufi, "Plenium i IV dhe ndikimi i tij në artin pamor të piktorit Edison Gjergo [The Fourth Plenium and its impact on the visual art of painter Edison Gjergo]", *ANGLISTICUM: Journal of the Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies* 7, no. 9 (2020), pp. 75–76.

[27] Todi Lubonja, *Nën peshën e dhunës* [Under the weight of violence], (Tirana: Marin Barleti, 2010), pp. 120–130.

[28] Dhimitër Orgocka, Interview by Pandi Laço. *Histori me Zhurmues – Viti 1968 – Sezoni 3* RTV Klan, February 6, 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4Xm00-z1zE&t=5317s.

Similarly, in 1974, there was a suppression of psychotherapeutic practices in Albanian psychiatry. Dr. Ulvi Vehbiu, a pioneer in Albanian psychiatry educated in Moscow in the 1950s, and later specializing in France in the early 1970s, primarily focusing on autogenic training psychotherapy, faced censure for his treatment method after returning to Albania. Although not psychoanalysis, his autogenic treatment was deemed to have Freudian influences, leading to its prohibition. Subsequently, psychiatric treatment in Albania was limited solely to medication.[29]

It is worth noting that this persecution of foreign ideological influences and their impact on Albanian society, particularly in literature, the arts, and culture, was not limited to Freudian or Neo-Freudian influences in these fields. With equal severity, the regime also tracked down and punished the influences of other so-called bourgeois-revisionist philosophical currents in Albanian culture and society, always driven by the fear of external influence that could undermine the foundations of the socialist society.

Amidst the continuous fear regarding the persistent influences of bourgeois and revisionist ideologies on the masses, which were perceived to jeopardize the sustainability of socialism in Albania, a profound contradiction is discernible in the regime's public discourse. How could a socialist societal order, "with common ownership of the means of production", feel so threatened solely by external ideological influences? According to the official ideology, socialism in Albania ensured general well-being, equality, and justice in the distribution of material goods among people. So, then, how was it explained that these individuals living in the "socialist welfare state" were so vulnerable to the influence of foreign ideologies? The response to this was usually justified by citing "remnants of petty-bourgeois morality in Albanian society", as well as the absence of the formation of a healthy socialist consciousness. This analysis of societal problems, not by analysing the economic factors leading to them but by overemphasizing ideological elements as the root cause, contradicts Marxism itself, particularly the orthodox form rooted in material determinism that they purportedly "defended".[30]

This reveals that one of the concerns of Albanian political leadership was how the influence of Freudianism, Neo-Freudianism, and other political philosophies labelled as bourgeois-revisionist in Albanian society could potentially threaten the power of the Party bureaucracy. Consequently, efforts were made to pre-empt any such influence, not only by forcefully prohibiting the dissemination of this literature in Albania but also by subjecting these philosophical currents to Marxist critique.

This leads to the above-mentioned point that the prohibition of the dissemination of so-called bourgeois and revisionist philosophies in Albanian society, as well as their

[29] Ardian Vehbiu, *Të rrëfesh profesionistin* [To Confess About the Professional]. Tirana: Peizazhe të Fjalës, January 23, 2023, https://peizazhe.com/2023/01/20/ta-rrefesh-profesionistin/.

[30] Sofokli Meksi, *Stalinizmi shqiptar: një vështrim nga poshtë* [Albanian Stalinism: A View from Below]. (Ph.D. thesis, University of Tirana, 2015), pp. 233–234.

critique from a Marxist–Leninist perspective, stemmed also from the political leadership's fear that the spread of these philosophical currents could undermine its personal power.

Even before the establishment of the socialist regime in Albania, during the Partisan War, the personality cult of the principal leader, Enver Hoxha, was exceedingly powerful. Initially revered as the commander of the War, and later as the leader of Socialist Albania, this cult was solidified further during the period of Albania's alliance with the Soviet Union, particularly while Stalin was alive. However, following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, where Khrushchev denounced Stalin's personality cult, Albania also saw some restraint imposed on Hoxha's cult of personality.[31]

Yet, with the breakdown of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union, the cult surrounding Hoxha, the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania, the Politburo, and the members of the Central Committee, grew immensely. Hoxha was no longer seen solely as the leader building socialism in Albania but also as the savior of the global socialist revolution, which had been "betrayed" by Soviet and other socialist bloc leaders.[32]

The zenith of this glorification came particularly after 1967, when Hoxha began to present himself both domestically and internationally as a distinguished Marxist–Leninist leader. However, even before this period, among the working masses, ordinary party members, and both mid- and high-ranking communists, Hoxha's image as a visionary, courageous, infallible, incorruptible, and principled leader had already been firmly entrenched. After him, the cult extended to other communist leaders, such as members of the Politburo and Central Committee. This entire leadership was portrayed by regime propaganda as rational, capable, and able to address not only Albania's issues but also global ones, guiding the construction of socialism at home while inspiring revolution abroad.[33]

On the other hand, Stalinist regimes such as the Albanian one, harbored a persistent fear of the influence of foreign ideologies on the broader population. They claimed that only a select group of people, the professional revolutionary leaders, had achieved the political maturity necessary to be immune to such ideological influences. The masses, in contrast, could fall prey to these ideologies, thus endangering not only the "construction of socialism" but also the power of the ruling class, which positioned itself above society. This fear of losing power led to the creation of a vast apparatus of censorship

[31] Elidor Mëhilli, "Defying De-Stalinization: Albania's 1956", *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 4 (2011), pp. 4–56, here pp. 21–23.

[32] Ylber Marku, "Stories from the International Communist Movement: The Chinese front in Europe and the limits of the anti-revisionist struggle." *Cold War History* 21, no. 2 (2021): 139–157, here pp. 145–47.

[33] Meksi, *Stalinizmi shqiptar*, pp. 84–85.

to suppress any influence from "bourgeois-revisionist" ideologies deemed hostile to the regime. This apparatus monitored the spread of any ideas or ideologies that could threaten the leadership.[34]

As part of this broader battle waged by Albania's bureaucratic apparatus against foreign ideologies that could threaten the communist regime's power, Freudianism was also targeted. Psychoanalysis, with its critique of authoritarian leaders and the motives behind their actions to maintain power, clashed with the ideological discourse of the Albanian communist leadership, which presented itself, especially Enver Hoxha, as a genius leader driving the construction of socialism in Albania and inspiring the global communist revolution.

According to psychoanalysis, dictatorial leaders display the traits of an authoritarian personality, characterized by an excessive desire to control and dominate others.[35] Freud suggested that these tendencies might stem from unresolved inner conflicts within their psyches. Such leaders also exhibit narcissistic tendencies, reflected in a deep sense of self-importance and a constant need for admiration, likely rooted in deep-seated insecurities.[36] Another important element of Freudianism is its emphasis on unconscious drives and desires shaping human behavior. For dictators, their aggressive impulses, which might have been repressed due to societal norms, find expression through the mechanisms of violence within the dictatorial state. Additionally, their unacceptable urges are often projected onto so-called "enemies of the state", who serve as scapegoats, allowing the leader to maintain a façade of righteousness.[37]

Psychoanalysis also invokes the Oedipus complex to understand dictators' relationship with power. Dictators may present themselves as father figures to the nation, attempting to fulfill an unconscious desire for absolute power. Furthermore, their systematic elimination of opponents can be seen as a manifestation of the Oedipal desire to remove the father figure.[38]

In summary, in direct opposition to the Marxist–Leninist ideological discourse, which portrayed the party and state leadership as a group of highly enlightened individuals with a strong class consciousness, and the only ones' immune to bourgeois-revisionist ideologies – in Stalinism, this was particularly evident in the principal leader – psychoanalysis, particularly Freudianism, revealed that the actions of these leaders resulted

[34] Meksi, *Stalinizmi shqiptar*, p. 43.

[35] François Villa, "The Psychoanalytical Method and the Disaster of Totalitarianism: Borderline States". *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 6 (2014), pp. 267–287, here pp. 271–272.

[36] Villa, "The Psychoanalytical Method", pp. 273–275.

[37] Olga Marlin, "Psychoanalytic View of the Totalitarian Mentality: The Case of the Czech Experience". In *The Social Unconscious in Persons, Groups, and Societies*, ed. Earl Hopper, Haim Weinberg (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 85–87.

[38] Villa, "The Psychoanalytical Method", pp. 280–281.

from inner psychological conflicts.[39] Moreover, according to psychoanalysis, dictators' actions were driven by their narcissistic tendencies and unconscious aggressive impulses.

All these characteristics, which according to Freudian theory can be used to analyze the actions of dictatorial leaders, including communist leaders like Enver Hoxha, were sufficient reasons to discredit such leadership. This leadership presented itself not only as ultra-rational and capable but also as enlightened enough to guide the entire nation in the construction of socialism. Therefore, the prohibition and official criticism of Freudian theory by Albanian ideologues, such as Riska and Zoto, aside from their criticism that Freudianism eliminated the concept of class struggle, came also due to the fear that Freudianism could also be used to criticize and delegitimize the political leadership in Albania, especially Enver Hoxha.

Tracing Albanian Marxist–Leninist Criticism of Freudianism

Riska and Zoto emphasize in the introduction that their book aligns with the Fourth Plenum's directives of the Central Committee and its instructions to combat foreign bourgeois and revisionist influences. This was considered crucial as, surrounded by enemy states, Albania believed that without winning the ideological struggle, it could not achieve political and economic victory.[40] Additionally, the introduction states that this book aims at the younger generation of the country (Albania), as they are the most vulnerable to foreign ideological influences. Apart from aiming to uphold the ideological purity of Marxism–Leninism, they write this criticism because they consider that these theories are gaining ground as a consequence of Soviet revisionism and are "direct attacks on socialist Albania", which attempt to corrupt individuals who "lack proper socialist consciousness" and pose a risk to the regime. Therefore, "explaining the reactionary and anti-scientific essence of all these ideologies" is seen as a task for Marxist–Leninist theoreticians.[41]

From the outset of the book, Neo-Freudianism is considered "one of the most important theoretical bases of contemporary bourgeois-revisionist liberalism." Without further elaborating on the specifics of Neo-Freudianism or its representative authors, the authors call Neo-Freudianism "the most advanced stage of Freudianism".[42]

In tracing the history of Freudianism and psychoanalysis, they acknowledge that in its early days, when it was established as a method of treating psychic illnesses by Sigmund Freud, it yielded some results. The main problem with psychoanalysis and Freudianism arises when "it was transformed into a distinct philosophy with a social character that claimed to solve societal problems by explaining their essence from the

[39] Marlin, "Psychoanalytic View of the Totalitarian Mentality", p. 92.

[40] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 3.

[41] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 3..

[42] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 5.

perspective of psychoanalysis".[43] Since Freudianism reduced humans and their social life solely to unconscious psychic processes, Riska and Zoto claim that it contradicted modern psychology. However, they do not make any reference to other psychologists or psychological theories that criticize Freud in these terms.

Furthermore, they explain that followers of Freud established what is termed Neo-Freudianism, which, although recognizing the influence of social and cultural factors in shaping individuals, retains the essence of psychoanalysis, asserting that irrational phenomena are the main driving forces guiding human beings.

According to Riska and Zoto, Neo-Freudianism preserves the essence of Freudianism but presents it differently, partly discrediting Freudian theories. They write that:

> The most significant representative of Neo-Freudianism, Erich Fromm, in his works, presents humans as beings subject to irrational forces. The primary force driving human actions is the desire to escape freedom, and to achieve this, individuals either become aggressive or conformist.[44]

They criticize Fromm for his theory of human psychology, which centres around "aspirations for happiness, freedom, wealth, and love". According to Riska and Zoto, Fromm considers these aspirations to be the essence of human existence and the driving force of society, so he is wrong because he disconnects human needs from socioeconomic conditions and the dialectical connection between the individual and society, instead taking humans out of concrete historical reality.

> While Fromm attempts to create a synthesis between Marx and Freud, he provides a wrong interpretation of Marx's theses on humans and merely reinforces Freudian theories, asserting that humans are driven by instincts, which are their primary psychic force.[45]

The main criticism the authors level against Neo-Freudianism is that it does not dissociate itself from the fundamental principles of psychoanalysis and social influences on individuals; it does not view them from a class perspective, thus failing to provide a proper understanding of the relationship between individuals and their social environment. For them, by preserving the essence but altering the appearance of Freudianism, Neo-Freudianism better serves the bourgeoisie in line with the changing demands of bourgeois society.[46]

[43] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 7.

[44] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 10. [All translations from Albanian are mine]

[45] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 33.

[46] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, pp.11, 34.

Furthermore, Riska and Zoto write that the root of these problems with Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism is that they are theories based on idealistic and metaphysical philosophy. As such, they consider ideal irrational elements as the driving force of human activity, detaching the human psyche from the material and societal conditions that shape it.[47] In contrast, materialist philosophy perceives the world of ideas as a reflection of the material world. Then, relying on Pavlov's theories, the authors write that:

> Physiologically, it is proven that the cerebral centres of rational and irrational actions are connected, with the former (cerebral centres of rational actions-IB) dictating the latter's (cerebral centres of irrational actions-IB) behaviour. This is particularly evident in the theories of conditioned and unconditioned reflexes, demonstrating that humans are capable of perceiving and reacting to the world. Consequently, the human psyche is a reflection of social conditions, class relations, and their activities, not the unconscious. Since Freudianism emphasized the unconscious as guiding human actions, it is a metaphysical and non-scientific theory.[48]

The psychoanalytic theory is seen as a hindrance to the development of psychology, as it only deals with the realm of ideas, feelings, and emotions and not with the study of the brain as an organ.[49] Therefore, it is considered groundless, reactionary, and hostile to progressive science and culture.

As mentioned above, following the rupture of relations with the Soviet Union, the Albanian political leadership prohibited humanities scholars, especially those in philosophy, psychology, and political economy, from referencing Soviet authors in their work. These authors were considered revisionists by then, and the task of Albanian theoreticians was to critique their approaches rather than reference them. This prohibition preceded 1961, the year of the break in Albanian–Soviet relations, or even 1956, the start of the de-Stalinization process, but it went back to 1953, the year of Joseph Stalin's death.[50] Works produced during this period were deemed to lack proper control and to be susceptible to contamination by revisionism. Furthermore, Albanian

[47] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 23.

[48] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 24.

[49] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 27.

[50] It's interesting how the "ideological purity" of the Soviet Union was seen as inseparable from Stalin's physical existence. Such a trend would later manifest itself in Albania with Enver Hoxha, evident in his diary notes, where his anxiety about Albania "degrading" into revisionism after his death is apparent. This concern might have been one of the reasons that led to purges in the arts and cultural sectors, the military, and the economy in the 1970s, after Hoxha's myocardial infarction. For how the life and death of the leader, and the longevity of the regime, were perceived in socialist Albania, see: Këlliçi, Klejd. *Një varrim për çdo regjim [A Burial in Every Regime]* (Tirana: Berk, 2023), p. 213.

Marxist–Leninist theoreticians were tasked with developing original criticism of both bourgeois philosophies and revisionist tendencies within Marxism.

However, this was easier said than done, especially considering that the vast majority of scientific workers in Albania, at least until the mid-1980s, were educated either in the Soviet Union or other socialist countries. Their exposure to Marxist–Leninist theory or other philosophical currents mainly occurred through Soviet authors or translations into Russian. Therefore, they continued to use their work, albeit without explicit references or by justifying it through strong references from the classics of Marxism–Leninism. Within the critical discourse surrounding Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism, Riska and Zoto manifest a noticeable influence from Fedotov's article published in 1958, yet they refrain from making direct references to his work due to the above-mentioned prohibition.

Fedotov and Riska and Zoto criticize Freudianism as being rooted in bourgeois ideology and criticize its pseudoscientific claims. They emphasize that Freudianism attempts to explain not just biological but also social laws, presenting itself as a comprehensive philosophy. At the crux of their argument lies the scrutiny of Freud's accentuation of unconscious instincts, particularly stemming from childhood sexual experiences. Riska and Zoto use Fedotov's argument to assert that Freud's emphasis on unconscious instincts is a reflection of idealism, which posits that the world is fundamentally mental or spiritual in nature. This critique argues that Freudianism is linked more with Kantianism than with anything else, which is a reflection of bourgeois ideology.[51]

Echoing Lenin's perspective on the origins of idealism in social and cognitive domains, Riska and Zoto, like Fedotov, suggest that Freudianism, due to its inherent idealism, offers a one-sided explanation of human cognition, disregarding vital materialistic and societal determinants. Furthermore, Riska and Zoto, much like Fedotov, draw upon Pavlov's physiological school of thought as a potent resource for debunking pseudoscientific and reactionary propositions within bourgeois science, including Freudian tenets.[52]

In essence, both criticisms converge in condemning Freudianism for its pseudoscientific postulations, rootedness in bourgeois ideology, and emphasis on unconscious instincts, which align more with idealism than with a real psychological understanding of human behaviour. Therefore, despite the Albanian leadership's aspirations for autonomous Marxist–Leninist thought free from Soviet influence, particularly in their criticism of Freudianism, the profound influence of Fedotov's ideas is evident in the foundational principles of Riska and Zoto's work.

After critiquing Freudianism as an ideology rooted in reactionary idealism, Riska and Zoto assert that materialism offers a contrasting view. They argue that the human psyche can only be understood by studying human nature in its entirety, incorporating both

[51] Fedotov, "Freudianism: A Reactionary", p. 33.

[52] Fedotov, "Freudianism: A Reactionary", 35–36.

biological and social dimensions, with a particular emphasis on the social aspects. As humans are social beings, their actions with family, school, and above all, the process of labour, shape their psyche and consciousness, making them conscious. The only way for psychology to progress, according to Riska and Zoto, is if it relies on class relations, since ideological relations are a consequence of economic ones. The Neo-Freudians' attempt to address the consequences of capitalism using psychological theories is not only considered ineffective but also deemed the best way to serve capitalism without altering its essence.[53] Moreover, they see no opportunity for someone in a capitalist society to have a free conscience:

> An individual within a capitalist relationship of exploitation finds it very difficult to form a healthy proletarian consciousness and achieve full self-awareness; this can only be accomplished in socialist countries where the construction of socialism and the process of educating the new individual under the guidance of the vanguard Party create a socialist consciousness.[54]

The authors of the book also try to analyse the political consequences of the spread of Neo-Freudianism. According to Riska and Zoto, the widespread dissemination and propagation of Neo-Freudian theories in capitalist and revisionist countries stem from "the contradictions inherent in the capitalist system in these countries and their consequences".[55] Consequently, instead of changing the basis of these consequences (the capitalist order) bourgeois philosophers seek to address social wounds caused by capitalism through psychological means. Moreover, they do not attribute class relations as the cause of problems in capitalist society but to human nature driven by the unconscious.[56]

> By looking at the essence of humans in their psychic aspects rather than their social relations, Neo-Freudians serve capitalism as they attribute its consequences, such as social injustices, wars, exploitation, and moral decay, to the biological nature of humans and their innate emotional state. Here, the reactionary essence of Neo-Freudianism becomes apparent, attributing the causes of violence to human beings rather than to the capitalist system or the policies of imperialist states.[57]

For them, the spread of Neo-Freudianism as a social philosophy has led to a degenerated society, with phenomena such as increased alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual decay,

[53] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 28.
[54] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 29
[55] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 13.
[56] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 14.
[57] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, pp. 42–43.

and hippie movements. On the other hand, Neo-Freudians consider these phenomena as the normal, inevitable consequences of human nature driven by instincts.[58]

The final part of the book deals with the risk of the influence of Neo-Freudian ideology in socialist Albania, suggesting that this ideology could have influenced literature, arts, and culture in the country and why the uncompromising fight against this ideology was an integral part of the struggle for socialism in Albania.

A Critique of the Criticism of Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism in Albanian Marxist–Leninist Discourse

As previously mentioned, the main objective of this article is to provide a critique of the criticisms made by Albanian Marxist–Leninist authors, such as Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoto, against Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism. This section will present a critique of their work, with a particular focus on the dogmatic views held by Riska and Zoto in their criticism of Freud and his followers, such as Erich Fromm.

The issue with Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoto's criticism of Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism lies in their ideological stance, as they fail to delineate Marxism and Psychoanalysis as two theories addressing distinct realms. Marxism concerns itself with collective societal dynamics, encompassing class conflict and broader historical processes. Conversely, Freud delves into analysing the individual, exploring their resultant instinctual makeup and personal growth. Freud's therapeutic contributions address individual neuroses and the mechanisms of repression. Consequently, the fundamental divergence between Marx's and Freud's methodologies emerges: Marx concentrates on communal societal concerns, whereas Freud focuses on individual psychological matters.[59] However, despite engaging with distinct domains and their irreconcilability, this doesn't preclude the possibility of interaction between these two theories, whether in explaining the effects of capitalism or even revolutionary action. Marxism and Freudianism, despite focusing on different subjects and employing different methodological approaches, intersect in addressing certain aspects of reality. Marx and Freud shared a common emphasis on the importance of contradiction in understanding the human world. Both thinkers rejected the idea that the given fact of reality was self-constitutive, and instead saw reality as emergent from the interplay of forces that had been split off in a historical process and were struggling toward a surface that worked actively to confine them.[60] No social theory can exist without probing into the individual and the "drive-dynamic" prerequisites of collective processes, just as no examination or treatment of the individual can completely disregard the social

[58] Riska and Zoto, *Neofrojdizmi*, p. 60.

[59] Norbert Leser, "Marx and Freud", *ARSP: Archiv Für Rechts- Und Sozialphilosophie / Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy* 66, no. 3 (1980), pp. 363–365.

[60] Joel Kovel, "The Marxist View of Man and Psychoanalysis", *Social Research* 43, no. 2 (1976), p. 225.

context and dimension of human existence. Hence, the primary similarity between Marx's and Freud's concepts lies in their acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between individual and collective processes.[61]

Viewed from a Marxist perspective, this could be seen as a step within Freudianism towards materialism. While originating from a theory that reduces humans to reflections of instincts and psychological factors, it recognizes the influence of social, economic, and cultural factors. Although not the same as the Marxist approach explaining repression as a reflection of class relations, it is closer to materialism by considering the impact of economic and social factors on the formation of human psychology. This in fact is the essence of Neo-Freudianism: emphasizing that social, economic, and cultural influences are equally as important as biological factors in shaping human psychology. Additionally, they criticise Freud for overemphasizing instincts, which neglects the consequences that challenging economic conditions may bring to psychological issues.[62]

Regarding the rejection of the development of proletarian consciousness in capitalist societies, this contradicts the concept of class struggle, the role of the working class in class struggle, and emancipatory philosophy in making aware the proletariat about regarding its rights and emancipatory and political potential.

Indeed, Marx writes that in class societies, the subjugated classes fail to recognize that it is the conditions of production, the ownership of the means of production, that determine the production relations, and their reflection in the superstructure, the power relations. The ideology of the dominant class, which holds sway even over the subjugated classes, including the working class, prevents the latter from understanding exploitation or perceiving the production relations as decisive in determining the conditions of production.[63] However, this doesn't mean that Marx closes off the possibility for the proletariat to emancipate itself, to comprehend the conditions of exploitation, and his endeavour to alter the ownership of the means of production, thus also the production relations. When Marx writes in the "Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach" that hitherto philosophers have attempted to interpret the world, but the goal is to change it, he acknowledges the potential of critical philosophy in enlightening the working class about its revolutionary role in changing the ownership of the means of production, consequently affecting working conditions and lifestyles. This doesn't imply that revolutionary thinkers will maintain paternalistic positions toward the working class and show them the path of truth, but rather that they may sow revolutionary ideas among

[61] Leser, "Marx and Freud", p. 370.

[62] Cheliotis, "For a Freudo-Marxist Critique", p.460.

[63] Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, "A Critique of German Ideology", *Marxist Internet Archive*, 1968. Accessed October 15, 2023, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf.

the masses, which, as they raise their consciousness and emancipate themselves, reveal their transformative power within society.[64]

Lenin assigned this leading role to the vanguard party,[65] while in Stalinist regimes, including Albania, the leader's role in directing, ensuring success, and guaranteeing the continuity of the revolution was emphasized. Yet, this cannot imply that in non-socialist countries, the subordinate classes cannot form a class consciousness and change their conditions, as ultimately revolutions, including the October Revolution, or the National Liberation War in Albania occurred and would occur in class societies. Moreover, one of the tasks of these ideological and propaganda organisms in socialist Albania was also the ideological and political influence behind the overthrow of capitalist states. If the proletariat in these countries could not develop complete class consciousness, then this effort was in vain.

Besides the criticism of Freudianism in the mentioned books, they also criticize what they term Neo-Freudianism – meaning authors who followed Freud's philosophical trend. However, except for Freud, they focus on Erich Fromm, due to his attempts at a theoretical synthesis between Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx. Erich Fromm contended that Freud's theory excessively emphasized the individual and overlooked the societal and economic elements contributing to psychological issues. Moreover, Fromm criticized Freud for emphasizing sexuality's role in human behaviour, asserting that this emphasis disregarded essential facets of human nature such as the craving for social bonds and the quest for significance and direction in life.[66]

Fromm attempted to reconcile the theories of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx.[67] Fromm believed that Freud's psychoanalytic theory could be used to explain the psychological effects of capitalism, while Marx's theory of historical materialism could be used to explain the economic and social effects of capitalism. Fromm argued that capitalism creates a society in which people are alienated from themselves, from each other, and from nature. He believed that this alienation leads to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, and narcissism. Fromm also argued that the ruling elites in capitalist societies use their power to legitimize their position and maintain their sense of self-worth, rather than for the benefit of the masses they govern.[68] Overall, Erich Fromm's

[64] Marx, Karl. "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right". *Marxist Internet Archive*, 2000. Accessed October 15, 2023, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr.

[65] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?". *Marxists Internet Archive,* 1962. Accessed October 18, 2023, www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/ii.htm.

[66] Fromm, *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis*, p. 36.

[67] Leonidas K. Cheliotis, "For a Freudo-Marxist Critique of Social Domination: Rediscovering Erich Fromm Through the Mirror of Pierre Bourdieu", *Journal of Classical Sociology* 11, no. 4 (2011), p. 439.

[68] Erich Fromm, *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis: Essays on Freud, Marx, and Social, Psychology.* (New York: Holt, 1970), pp. 60, 62, 74, 82.

synthesis of Freud and Marx aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social and psychological effects of capitalism.[69]

The criticisms against Fromm articulated by Riska and Zoto is that he seemed to have misunderstood – or more accurately, distorted – Marxism, while endeavouring to create a synthesis between it and Freudianism.

Certainly, aside from his criticisms of Freud – namely that his theory was too focused on the individual and did not adequately address the social and economic factors that contribute to psychological problems – Fromm also had several criticisms of Marx's theory. He argued that it was lacking in satisfactory psychological insights and that Marx's heavy preoccupation with the economic facets of capitalism prevented him from paying sufficient attention to the passions and strivings which are rooted in man's nature. Fromm also believed that Marx's theory did not provide a convincing remedy for the ills of capitalism, as it did not explain how the economic basis of society came to be translated into the ideological superstructure. Finally, Fromm argued that Marx's theory did not adequately address the issue of individual freedom, as it focused primarily on the collective struggle of the working class against the ruling class.[70] Nevertheless, this does not mean that he intended to discredit Marxism in favor of Freudianism; rather, the objective was to perceive both theories as complementary frameworks for analyzing the ramifications of capitalism.

What can be argued is that the connection that Riska and Zoto make between the manifestation of internal contradictions of capitalism and the popularity of Neo-Freudian theories in capitalist countries is difficult to support by arguments. Some of the criticisms they raise about Neo-Freudianism, which reduces human existence solely to its biological aspects and institutions, are criticisms that Neo-Freudians themselves make about Freud, including Erich Fromm, whom they primarily refer to. While Marxism offers insights on a systemic level, Freudianism provides a lens through which to examine its effects on the individual scale.

Conclusions

In this article, an attempt has been made to analyse the criticisms that official ideologists of Socialist Albania directed towards Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism, primarily focusing on the book authored by Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoto, *Neo-Freudianism: One of the Foundations of Bourgeois Liberalism* (1974). This inquiry was driven by two central aims: firstly, an exploration into the origins of these criticisms, seeking to discern whether they emanated primarily from an original Marxist analysis within Albanian theoretical discourse or were significantly shaped by the criticisms articulated by "Soviet revisionists". Additionally, to critique this criticism of Neo-Freudianism from the

[69] Cheliotis, *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 458–460.

[70] Cheliotis, "For a Freudo-Marxist Critique", pp. 450–452.

perspective of authors of heterodox Marxism. Thus, this article aims to contribute to the field of intellectual history within the context of Cold War history and the history of Marxism–Leninism.

In a similar critique to that presented by Dmitry Fedotov, Riska and Zoto scrutinize Freudianism for its pseudo-scientific propositions, its alignment with bourgeois ideology, and the emphasis on unconscious instincts, positing these aspects as more rooted in idealism than contributing to a genuine psychological comprehension of human behaviour. Their argument revolves around the belief that a comprehensive understanding of the human psyche requires an examination of human nature holistically, integrating biological and social dimensions while emphasizing the primacy of social elements. They contend that human actions within the family, educational settings, and particularly in the realm of labour significantly shape both psyche and consciousness, facilitating self-awareness.

Riska and Zoto advocate for psychology's progression by anchoring it in class relations, underscoring that ideological relations are a derivative of economic ones. They critique Neo-Freudians for attempting to ameliorate the consequences of capitalism using psychological theories, which they consider not only ineffective but also as inadvertently perpetuating capitalism without fundamentally altering its nature. While drawing a noticeable influence from Fedotov's 1958 article, they refrain from directly referencing his work due to the aforementioned prohibition. Hence, concerning the objective of the Albanian political leadership to develop an autonomous critique of bourgeois ideologies detached from Soviet influence, regarding the criticism of Freudianism, it can be observed that this goal remains unrealized.

Both Albanian authors criticize Freudianism while overlooking the distinct spheres addressed by Marxism and Freudianism. Marxism delves into collective societal dynamics, encompassing class conflict and historical processes, while Freudianism focuses on individual psychology, exploring instinctual behaviour and personal development. This dichotomy between communal concerns in Marxism and individual psychological focus in Freud creates a fundamental methodological divergence. However, despite these distinct realms, these theories intersect in explaining capitalism's effects or revolutionary actions; however, due to ideological reasons, Riska and Zoto fail to acknowledge potential commonalities or reconciliation.

Additionally, their criticisms of Freudianism as reducing humans solely to biological beings, mirrored by the Neo-Freudians they criticise, reflect a similar viewpoint. Notably, the author they frequently reference, Erich Fromm, contends that Freud's theory excessively emphasizes the individual while neglecting societal and economic factors contributing to psychological issues.

The analysis of Viktor Riska and Marianthi Zoto's book, reveals a recurring theme in their intent to critique Freudianism and Neo-Freudianism. Their justifications for these criticisms, as evident throughout their introductions and content, aim not only to uphold the ideological purity of Marxism–Leninism but also to address concerns about

these theories gaining traction as a consequence of Western imperialism and Soviet revisionism. They perceive these ideas as direct threats to socialist Albania, aiming to corrupt individuals lacking proper socialist consciousness, posing a risk to the regime.

During the 1970s in Albania, a pervasive fear of bourgeois and revisionist ideologies influencing the masses contradicted the regime's narrative of a socialist societal order with common ownership over the means of production. The regime feared external ideological influences overturning socialism, despite its claim of ensuring general well-being and equality among its citizens. This contradiction in the regime's discourse lies in attributing vulnerability to foreign ideologies to remnants of petty-bourgeois morality and the absence of a healthy socialist consciousness. This emphasis on ideological rather than economic factors as the root cause of societal issues contradicts orthodox Marxism's material determinism, which the regime purportedly upheld.

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"WHERE ARE THESE (NEO-)MARXISTS?"

Žižek's Lacanian Theory of Ideology and the Repression of Political Economy

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Abstract

Psychoanalysis has probably never taken such deep roots in the thinking of critical intellectuals in any environment of "real existing socialism" as in Slovenia. In the nexus of Lacan and classical German philosophy, introduced in Slovenia above all through the works of Debenjak, the Slovenian milieu found an idiosyncratic strand of critical theory known as the "Ljubljana School of Lacan" that is perhaps more alive than any other. We focus on the works of Slavoj Žižek and ask the simple question: what is actually specifically Marxist about his thought? Marx's work is enriched here by Lacanian logic, which in particular allows us to rethink the position of the (proletarian) subject in society and the functioning of its counterpart, the ideological subject. But in the course of this, political economy seems to be displaced to such an extent that Marx can only be recognised in outline. In dialogue with the historical context of Yugoslavia, namely Marković and Debenjak, we follow a crosscut through Žižek's work to establish the thesis that his ontology falls short of its own standards, insofar as it is not Marxist enough – in the simple sense of offering some kind of political economy, that is able to identify the symptom(s) of our historical constellation.

Keywords

ideology, subversion, political economy, praxis, lacanian ontology, Slavoj Žižek

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.5

"Okay, but… well… let's go to… eh…" – A simple question rarely fails to make an impact. In the debate spectacle between Slavoj Žižek and Jordan Peterson, the latter was thrown off course by the simple question of where these "neo-Marxists", whom he sees himself shooting at in the cultural war's opposite trench, actually are. The spectacle itself was staged according to this logic: the Super Bowl, with a capitalist home team and a communist away team. Žižek's question highlighted that the academic discourse that Peterson criticizes as "postmodern neo-Marxism" has little to do with *Marx*. Žižek then names David Harvey and Fredric Jameson as exceptions to the rule – authors with whom he himself frequently engages.

This aligns with one of Žižek's favoured figures of identification: the truly radical Marxist who, contrary to the liberal-left mainstream, still offers a genuine radical philosophy-politics that does not shy away from unpopular decisions and violence. Countless analyses have been devoted to defining what this radical philosophy-politics entails. Is Žižek's offer of identification merely empty posturing? If he belongs to any Marxist tradition at all, is he merely a Stalinist in disguise?[1] Or is he a valuable source from which we must draw to develop an identifiable political position beyond him (with Alain Badiou) – also in order to avoid Žižek's symptom: his anti-Slavic nationalism in the Balkans?[2] Is Žižek's materialism of real abstraction the post-Althusserian antidote to Cultural Studies, revealing the subversive force of purely negative subjectivity, as formulated via Lacan and Hegel?[3] Many more could be mentioned here. Žižek's political thinking is questionable in any case.

Despite his self-stylization as a Marxist or Leninist, one thing is conspicuously absent from Žižek's enormous œvre: political economy. The question therefore arises: *What, exactly, is specifically Marxist about Žižek's thinking?* Any answer must pinpoint the exact relation between Žižek's (allegedly Marxist) thinking about society, societal change, and ideology and his broader philosophical project of formulating an ontology of the lack/excess, which draws heavily on Lacanian psychoanalysis and Hegelian thought. So, we could also ask: *What the hell do psychoanalysis and Hegelian logic have to do with Marx?* Here, we restrict ourselves to analyzing Žižek's theory of ideology and the ontological claims embedded within it, insofar as they are implied in that theory – We do not, however, consult his political writings in the narrower sense or his re-reading of Lenin. After all, there are only so many elements one can smuggle into a single line of thought. But in doing so, we also follow a mere fact: the only reference to Marx in Žižek's work that is continuous and systematical is his engagement with Marx's notion of commodity fetishism.[4] Let's search for his "Marxism" there then.

[1] Cf. Andrew Robinson, Simon Tormey, "Žižek's Marx: 'Sublime Object' or a 'Plague of Fantasies'?", *Historical Materialism* 3, no. 14 (2006), pp. 145–174.

[2] Cf. Sean Homer, *Slavoj Žižek and Radical Politics* (New York/London: Routledge, 2016).

[3] Cf. Geoff Pfeifer, "Žižek as a Reader of Marx, Marx as a Reader of Žižek", in *Repeating Žižek*, ed. Agon Hamza, (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2015), pp. 213–225.

Our answer is straightforward: Žižek is not Marxist in the most basic sense, as he does not offer political-economical analysis or strategy. I aim to demonstrate this, however, through an immanent critique. His ontology *does* offer a philosophically compelling formalization of Marxian thought. It simply fails *according to its own standard* without the inclusion of political economy.

We frame our question within a kind of case study[5] of the specific form of Marxist-inspired thinking in Slovenia, which became known as the Ljubljana School of Lacan, presenting an idiosyncratic form of critical theory. In particular, Lacanian psychoanalysis offered an alternative to three dominant readings of Marx in the 1980s: firstly, the "official" reading of the Yugoslav bureaucracy and the "humanist" reading of the Praxis environment, Kosík, or Sartre. Secondly, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the "Freudo-Marxism" attached to it. And thirdly, the "structuralist" reading of Althusser. In the nexus of Lacan and classical German philosophy, the latter being introduced in Slovenia primarily through the works of Božidar Debenjak, the Slovenian milieu cultivated an idiosyncratic strand of critical theory that is perhaps more alive today than ever, especially in the USA, Australia, South America and Slovenia itself.

So let us start with some brief notes on the historical and systematical context of Yugoslavia in which Žižek (born 21.03.1949 in Ljubljana) grew up and started to do philosophy – that is, the first dominant reading of Marx we just mentioned.

The historical and systematical context: Yugoslavia, *Praxis*, and the alleged deadlock of the "third way" dissidents

As is well known, since the official break between Tito and Stalin in 1948, Yugoslavia had been pursuing a unique socialist project, explicitly seeing itself as an alternative to Stalinism in Soviet Russia and the Warsaw Pact countries. Perhaps the most important thinker of this project, Edvard Kardelj, saw the developments in Soviet Russia as a degeneration of the proletarian revolution into a "state-capitalist bureaucratic despotism".[6]

[4] The very first chapter of his early *The Sublime Object of Ideology* starts with the entanglement of Marx and Lacan via the notion of the *symptom*, which he locates in Marx's notion of commodity fetishism – and this has been the central reference point in turning to Marx ever since. In his much later *Incontinence of the Void* – one of the books in which he most directly engages with Marx, in the second part "The belated actuality of Marx's critique of political economy" – one finds some structural, not so much political, comments on the labour theory of value, the notion of surplus-value, and the sort – but the main point is centred around the notion of "real abstraction", which is what is supposedly happening in commodity fetishism.
Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London/New York: Verso, 2008), p. 3 et seq.
Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void: Economico-Philosophical Spandrels* (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 2017), p. 149 et seq., especially 175–192.

[5] This gives us freedom to dwell on historical and intertextual contexts, even where not absolutely necessary for the main line of thought.

[6] Edvard Kardelj, "On the Law on People's Committees", Speech at the FPRY National Assembly (01.04.1952), p. 13, https://archive.org/details/socialist-democracy/mode/2up.

According to Kardelj, this is not the result of external intervention or simple malevolence, but is an inherent danger of the revolution that is taking place in the agrarian environment that Marx called the "Asiatic mode of production": subsistence production in village communities that are largely unconnected to one another and whose surplus value is siphoned off via compulsory levies to a despotic caste.

In such an environment, the proletariat is weak – concentrated almost exclusively in St Petersburg and Moscow in tsarist Russia – and according to Kardelj, the greatest danger to the young revolution was not so much the expropriated bourgeoisie, allied with capitalist foreign countries, but the petty bourgeoisie and peasants. To master them, rapid economic development through a state monopoly and strong security forces were needed – in other words, an enormous bureaucratic apparatus. But, "by inescapably creating an enormous bureaucratic mechanism for strangling and subjugating those blind forces, the revolution coincidently created a power which ended by subordinating to iteself [sic] both the revolution and the working class".[7]

While Kardelj recognizes the necessity of these institutions within this specific historical constellation, he concludes that the political leadership must be especially vigilant to prevent this bureaucratic apparatus from taking on a life of its own. Rather, it should constantly work towards its own abolition. In Yugoslavia, the progressive reforms of the late 1940s and 1950s aimed to achieve this: the separation of state and party, the strengthening of local administration, and the establishment of workers' councils at the company level.[8] The latter went hand in hand with the introduction of market socialist elements: companies were in a certain degree of competition with each other and generated profit, which was distributed by the council.

"Self-management" was to become the centrepiece of the Yugoslav "third way", the master signifier of this discourse. However, it also created problems: highly qualified workers were quickly privileged in the self-governing councils, leading to growing income disparities. While rapid and violent industrialization, á la Soviet Russia, was rejected – though Kardelj regarded it as a success[9] – in favour of slower, more controlled growth, this approach resulted in unemployment. In their competitive struggle, the companies became dependent on investment, which the Western bloc was willing to provide.

The problems were reflected philosophically in an *immanent* critique of the discourse on self-management: the thinkers associated with the journal *Praxis* continued the reading of Marx as represented by Kardelj. For Kardelj, Marx's legacy lay above all in his gesture, most eloquently articulated in the *Brumaire*, of "Try. Fail. Fail better".[10] The

[7] Kardelj, "On the Law on People's Committees", pp. 11–12.

[8] For a very brief overview, see James Robertson, "The Life and Death of Yugoslav Socialism", *Jacobin*, 17.07.2017, https://jacobin.com/2017/07/yugoslav-socialism-tito-self-management-serbia-balkans.

[9] Kardelj, "On the Law on People's Committees", p. 12.

[10] Kardelj, "On the Law on People's Committees", p. 20.

revolution must constantly renew itself, repeatedly thwarting its own course when the material situation demands it. Marković, one of the main protagonists of the *Praxis* group, echoes this in his critique of the institutionalized form of self-management itself. In an article published in 1976, but probably written in 1974 or 1975[11] – before the majority of the *Praxis* group members were expelled from the universities – Marković presents the group's struggle as the struggle of revolutionary Marxism against bureaucratic hardening, using terms very similar to those used by Kardelj 20 years earlier to describe the revolutionaries' struggle against Stalinism.

Much of Marković's account of the *philosophical* history of the *Praxis* group is not centred around a fundamental philosophical struggle against the ideas of the ruling bureaucracy. On the level of philosophical debate, Marković's account revolves around the representatives of an orthodox dialectical materialism still present in the late 1940s and early 1950s – in other words, a philosophy for which certain dialectical laws apply indiscriminately to nature and history and according to which the party functionary must dominate the working class for their own good. An important point of reference for this thinking is Engels's *Naturphilosophie*, in which he formulates these dialectical laws, and Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, in which the theory of knowledge corresponding to this ontology is formulated, according to which the elements of knowledge – mental representations – are reflections of the objective-material world.

The *Praxis* group counters the a priori framework of *Diamat* with the eponymous concept of interpersonal activity, which is capable of shaping this framework. To do so, they return to Marx's early texts, which are rejected in the *Diamat* tradition as immature, as yet unscientific. For them, the young "humanist" Marx becomes the paradigmatic Marxian thought that deals with problems that "underlay all his mature work and furthermore are still the living, crucial issues of our time and indeed of the whole epoch of transition".[12] The question of *truly* human social practice and its realization forms the core of these problems.

This presupposes the following constellation: (1) There is an *essential* human practice – a practice that corresponds to human essence. (2) This is not a descriptive statement of an essential quality, but a normative statement, insofar as this practice may or may not be realized (and should be in case it is not) – it is essential as a *possibility*. (3) What can stand in the way of realization are "unfavourable historical conditions"[13] – certain socio-economic conditions. Marković summarizes this in the concept of *alienation* and defines the task of philosophy as follows using (3):

[11] Mihailo Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The Praxis Group", in *Marxism and Religion in Eastern Europe*, ed. Richard T. De George, James P. Scanlan (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1976), pp. 63–89.

[12] Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The *Praxis* Group", p. 69.

[13] Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The *Praxis* Group", p. 81.

> This discrepancy between the individual's actual existence and his potential essence – i.e. between what he is and what he could be – is alienation. The basic task of philosophy is to analyze critically the phenomenon of alienation and to indicate practical steps leading to human self-realization, to praxis.[14]

The question then naturally arises regarding the status of this human essence. According to Marković, there are two fundamental positions on this within the *Praxis* group. The first understands this essence as an a priori framework – Marković speaks of a "transcendental"[15] concept of human essence. The second views it "historically", understanding it as the essential possibility not of man in general, but of man in a certain historical situation – in other situations, it may be different.

Marković attributes this divergence to a methodological difference. Those adhering to the first position, by rejecting *Diamat*, lose any sense of dialectics and construct rigid, binary oppositions in their conceptual analyses. Proponents of the second position, on the other hand, endeavour to justify a methodological dialectic that can overcome the shortcomings of *Diamat*. For Marković, who belongs to this latter group, this entails three key principles. Firstly, the primacy of the whole over the parts – in other words, of universal concepts over their particulars. Secondly, the primacy of a diachronic perspective, which unfolds through the contradictions of inner limitations and their resolution – exemplified by the essential possibility of a historical situation that is prevented from being realized by certain constellations within this situation. Thirdly, this dynamic should be turned back onto the "dialectical method" itself. It, too, is engaged in the confrontation with its object – and is modified in the process if needed.

Marković attributes this second position with a particular interest in returning to Hegel to formulate this dialectic. We are now approaching the point at which we can bring these developments together with Žižek's thinking. One such Hegel-orientated thinker was Božidar Debenjak[16] – Žižek's doctoral supervisor for his first dissertation in Ljubljana in 1981. Debenjak also saw the Yugoslav revolution as having failed halfway, insofar as the government had become entangled in the imperialist power struggle: "They entered – and successfully – into the game of power facing outside and permanent civil war facing inside, and they, too, developed the most sophisticated technology in the service of the army and the police."[17]

[14] Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The *Praxis* Group", p. 81.

[15] Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The *Praxis* Group", p. 83.

[16] He published at least a few times in the *Praxis* journal (e.g. in vol 5., no. 1–2, 1969, and in vol. 11, no. 1–2 ,1974) and is, in the broad sense of a "humanist" inspired fight against *Diamat*, in line with the *Praxis* group, but is not counted among its inner circle.

[17] Božidar Debenjak, "Einige Fragen zur revolutionären Anthropologie", *Praxis International* 5, no. 1–2 (1969), p. 197.

This raises the question: "What should the revolution be like that steps out of the existing world order?"[18] Žižek also aligns himself with the complex of questions implied therein about "real" revolution, which changes the basic coordinates of our coexistence – in contrast to "false" revolution – and the relationship of revolution to ideology and delusion. Debenjak's answer centres on the proletarian consciousness, which he sees as essential to any genuine revolution. Contrary to the objective, sociological concept of the proletariat prevalent in *Diamat*, which simply refers to the set of people who are dependent on the sale of their labour power, Debenjak argues, with reference to the ideas of early Marx and late Engels, for an "anthropological" concept of the proletariat. In short, one can decide to be a proletarian. What determines this proletarian consciousness is the awareness of one's own complete *nothingness*: "A proletarian is someone who is aware, or at least feels, that he has been bestowed with nothingness, that he is non-power and non-capital *as himself*, not as his other".[19]

Only when the subject fully experiences itself as reduced to nothing can a revolution change the fundamental social matrix. The *Manifesto*'s famous dictum about the proletariat having "nothing to lose but its chains" is interpreted here as an individual experience, relatively independent of one's own objective social position. This is precisely where Žižek begins, posing the question anew: What constitutes revolutionary consciousness as a condition of profound social change? He approaches this question, loosely drawing on very similar passages in Marx, primarily through the Lacanian concept of the subject. In an idiosyncratic interpretation of Hegel, he separates the logic of this concept of the subject from Debenjak's still anthropological framing and expands it into an ontology. But we are getting ahead of ourselves; we will return to this in the third part.

Back to Marković. Žižek can be situated within the following problem: If the limitation of essential possibility in the dialectical process is understood as an *internal* limitation – in other words, a socio-historical constellation not only produces a horizon of possibilities (some of which are to be singled out as essential), but also simultaneously generates the obstacle to realizing these possibilities – why should this be any different in any constellation, revolutionary or otherwise? It is the "humanist" concept of a *resolution of contradictions* in the coming society that Žižek is suspicious of. And it becomes questionable because behind the rhetoric of dynamic self-overcoming of the new and always new, the humanist again reproduces the very a priori framework at the level of political utopia, which it combats in philosophical methodology. The dissolution of alienation (between state and society, party and working class, etc.), formulated on the basis of a "human essence", becomes an ahistorical concept after all – against its own

[18] Debenjak, "Einige Fragen zur revolutionären Anthropologie", p. 196.

[19] Debenjak, "Einige Fragen zur revolutionären Anthropologie", p. 198.

claim. The difference between a "transcendental" concept of praxis and a "historical" one, which Marković tries to draw, is blurred at this level.

In terms of political interventions in a narrow sense, Marković was calling for further reforms in self-management, gradually aiming to replace the state institutions entirely with worker's councils and abolish the party altogether.[20] In a nutshell, the critique developed here takes the form of "quite good already, but we need much more". In Yugoslavia, we thus have the interesting case of the intellectual movements of dissidence running strictly along the lines of the prevailing ideology – which is why Marković also notes that the "mortal sin of the *Praxis* group seems to consist in taking these ideas seriously".[21]

Žižek formulates this point in relation to his Heideggerian beginnings, which probably have their roots above all in one of his teachers, Ivo Urbančič – also a thinker associated with the *Praxis* group:

> All of a sudden, however, I became aware of how these Yugoslav Heideggerians were doing exactly the same thing with respect to the Yugoslav ideology of self-management as Heidegger himself did with respect to Nazism: in ex-Yugoslavia, Heideggerians entertained the same ambiguously assertive relationship towards Socialist self-management, the official ideology of the Communist regime – in their eyes, the essence of self-management was the very essence of modern man, which is why the philosophical notion of self-management suits the ontological essence of our epoch, while the standard political ideology of the regime misses this "inner greatness" of self-management . . . Heideggerians are thus eternally in search of a positive, ontic political system that would come closest to the epochal ontological truth, a strategy which inevitably leads to error.[22]

So here we have the problem once again in Heideggerian vocabulary. According to the *Praxis* group, there is a non-ideological ("ontological") core of the ideology of self-government that corresponds to the essence of our historical constellation. Unfortunately, however, this core is not realized factually ("ontically"). In this conceptual constellation, Marković's theoretically proclaimed concept of the inner limitation of a historical situation is abandoned in favour of the outer limitation of an intrinsically pure core.

According to Žižek, this assertion of a non-ideological core is the ideological operation *par excellence*. Nothing assures the stability of an ideology more than the belief that there is a shining pure core, a holy noumenon beneath the sad, unfortunately brutal phenomena. Žižek's theory of ideology can also be understood as an answer to the

[20] Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The *Praxis* Group", p. 76.

[21] Marković, "Marxist Philosophy in Yugoslavia: The *Praxis* Group", p. 88.

[22] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London/New York: Verso, 2000), p. 13.

problem of the Yugoslav dissidents explained here. Peeling away an alleged non-ideological core leads to a dead end, where the existing ideology is ultimately only confirmed in one's very act of struggling against it. In the final instance, the distinction between ideology and non-ideology itself becomes questionable. Furthermore, Žižek, according to Sean Homer, identifies a "naïveté of those 'Third Way' dissidents – and one must presume that Žižek includes himself here – who believed there was an alternative to totalitarianism *and* capitalism".[23]

Either totalitarianism or capitalism, and an unclear distinction between ideology and non-ideology – so, first of all, no concept of ideology at all. That hardly sounds Marxist. Why, then, does he insist on the "Marxist notion of ideology" and what is that supposed to entail? To explore this, let us begin with some notes on what has been said so far, approaching Žižek's theory of ideology.

Identification and over-identification: Ideology and subversion

We must note a tension here: If the reference to the essential possibility of the epoch in which humanity finally emancipates itself from oppression through self-government ultimately only reinforces the ideology of existing oppression, why then does the bureaucracy react with ever more violent repression? Žižek points out the following inversion of our usual understanding of the relationship between ideology and belief: In the case of Yugoslavia, we have an ideology that *only works on the condition that it is not "really" believed*. Žižek claims this structure "not only for Slovenia, but, let's say, generally for so called 'late capitalism'".[24] Building on Sloterdijk's *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, he attempts to understand cynical distance as one of the conditions of "late capitalist" ideology(ies).[25] For Yugoslavia, taking the central concepts of self-management and so on seriously is the first step towards dissidence – simply because one will quickly realize that reality has little to do with these concepts.

This assessment initially contradicts the previous point that the *Praxis* group is unwillingly on the side of the prevailing ideology. So, is belief in the core of the ideology subversive or not? Here it helps to contrast Žižek's assessment of the *Praxis* Group with that of another Yugoslav phenomenon: the band *Laibach* and the *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (NSK) movement in general. Hated by the nomenklatura and causing confusion among critical intellectuals, Laibach staged a brutal version of the most kitschy nationalist and totalitarian fantasies in the last years of actually existing socialism: "an aggressive inconsistent mixture of Stalinism, Nazism, and *Blut und Boden* ideology."[26]

[23] Homer, *Slavoj Žižek and Radical Politics*, p. 18.

[24] Žižek in Michael Benson's movie *Predictions of Fire* (1996).

[25] There is little to be found in Žižek concerning the distinction between different forms of ideology in contemporary discourses – Mostly he speaks about "ideology" without further qualification.

[26] Slavoj Žižek. "Why are Laibach and NSK Not Fascists?", *M'ARS* 3, no. 3–4 (1993). Quoted from https://nskstate.com/article/why-are-laibach-and-nsk-not-fascists/ (unpaginated).

Žižek's reading is based on a psychoanalytical difference: that between the ideal ego and the superego. We will make some remarks about the role of those psychoanalytical notions here, but first let's see them in action. He is arguing for a division of the field of the law (the existing social order) into the explicit rules, the explicit offers of identification and the like – the ideal ego – and the implicit, obscene transgressions of these rules – the superego. However, the crucial point is that those two do not form a contradiction, where the transgression would subvert the order; on the contrary, they share a common structure.

To understand this structure, we must introduce what is perhaps the most fundamental logic of Žižek's thinking – again, concepts from Lacanian psychoanalysis: the so-called "formulas of sexuation". In these formulas, Lacan outlines the relationships between two subjective positions, which he labels "male" and "female", to each other, but above all to fundamental fantasies such as the "phallus", to structures such as the "big Other", and so on. However, Lacan feels compelled to formulate this theoretical formation – which is initially of course only a systematization of and orientation in psychoanalytical practice – with recourse to the vocabulary, insights, and problems of logic. In this way, the terms becomes translatable into other contexts (with different semantics). They can speak of subjects, discourses, acts of thought, etc. Žižek will understand this logic as a most general, an ontological one.

Lacan juxtaposes two different structures: a ("masculine") logic of the all and a ("feminine") logic of the not-all. The most general approach leads through Russell's antinomy: If I speak of "everything" in a simple way, then problems arise. There is one culprit in particular: self-reference. The set that I would like to summarize with "all" is not only the set of "all things", but also the set of all sets. And within it lies the famous set of all sets that do not contain themselves. Naïve talk of "all" therefore produces a contradiction. If I want to speak consistently of "all", then I have to exclude something – Russell excludes the culprits via his theory of types, the modern ZFC set theory excludes them via the schema of specification. In general, consistent universality is based on exclusion. This is the logic of the all: the supposedly paradoxical conditional connection between an excluded element and universal validity.

The logic of not-all is the "reverse" case: nothing is excluded, but we cannot speak of "all". The introduction of the logical category of a "not-all" or a "not-wholeness" is perhaps the crux of Lacanian logic. It is the notion of a "set that is not a whole", as Russell puts it,[27] and therefore knows no outside. This can also be described as follows: "in" this set is indeterminacy (the late Lacan calls precisely this indeterminacy "objet petit a"). It is not completely determined in itself – although we can specify the set precisely, there is

[27] In the famous letter to Frege, he concludes from his formulation of what is now "Russell's paradox": "From this I conclude that under certain circumstances a definable set does not form a whole". Page three of his letter to Frege from 16.06.1902, which is accessible as a scan online via https://bayes.net/frege/.

nothing mysterious about it. We will return to this category, which plays a central role for Žižek in several respects, in his references to Marx: the proletariat, class struggle, surplus value – all these concepts are to be sharpened anew with the help of Lacan's logical instruments.

But we haven't lost our track. The two figures of the law form precisely the conditional relationship that exists between universality and the excluded element in the logic of the "all". A particular form of transgression of the law is not actually opposed to the law, but enables its universal validity. Žižek's example: the idyll of white American suburbia in the 1920s and the validity of the explicit law – it is supported by the violent excesses of the Ku Klux Klan, which not only everyone knows about and in which enough people participate, but which forms a second community of "shared guilt" under the explicit state and holds the first level together.

According to Žižek, such a relationship also characterizes the Yugoslavian order: the explicit social order is sustained by nationalist excesses and exclusions. It is this constitutive exclusion, this implicit vulgarity, with which Laibach identifies itself. Their identification is an excessive, inconsistent over-identification with the most abstruse excesses of nationalism. According to Žižek, this contrasts with the *Praxis* group: there, the identification is with the explicitly claimed concepts of self-government – with universality. Here, however, there is an over-identification with the implicitly enacted phantasies – with the excluded element: "It 'frustrates' the system (the ruling ideology) precisely insofar as it is not its ironic imitation, but over-identification with it – by bringing to light the obscene superego underside of the system, over-identification suspends its efficiency."[28] The one confronts power by invoking that which it must deny in order to function; the other affirms it, even if it criticizes its concrete form. Or, in a formula: explicit distancing is based on implicit identification with the ideology, while aggressive over-identification invalidates it.[29]

So, to conclude along the lines of Žižek: *Praxis* was at first attacked, even if they were harmless to the system, because the ruling ideologists operated within a mode of "cynical ideology", in which the stability is generated not through identification with explicit content (universality) but rather through implicit transgressions of it (excluded element). From this perspective, treating the explicit content seriously poses a threat.

[28] Žižek, "Why are Laibach and NSK Not Fascists?".

[29] One has to note here, of course, the different historical situations. Concerning Laibach, Žižek is talking about the mid-1980s to the 1990s and the process of democratization, which is supposedly sustained by nationalist excesses, while the *Praxis* group's pinnacle was the 1960s to early 1980s. It is unclear to me whether Žižek would also describe the self-management ideology of that time as sustained by brutal nationalism, and if so, in which concrete events he would localize that. It is clear, however, that some members of the *Praxis* group – like Marković – later turned to a quite explicit (Serbian) nationalism.

Psychoanalysis outside of the analyst's room?

We have already presented some elements of his theory of ideology. Before we turn to a systematic overview in the context of Marx's concept of ideology, let us make a few remarks on the role of psychoanalysis here. First, it must be noted that psychoanalysis enters this discussion via the notion of "identification". An ideological apparatus offers images for identification (just think of Hollywood stars and the huge apparatus that presents us their lives from 1,000 different angles).[30] Attuning to an ideology involves some kind of identification (with its cause, leader, heroes, etc.). Here, Žižek introduces psychoanalytical notions dealing with identification, specifically those concerning the Ego. Just as psychoanalysis distinguishes between the "ideal-ego" (the Hollywood star, the politician, the "decent" life of law and order) and the brutal "super-ego" (the imperative to enjoy[31] – manifested in nationalist chauvinisms, pogroms, beatings, or vivid war imagery; more alive now than ever by the *TikTok-ification* of war), so too does this division appear in politics.

But what does it mean? Does the use of psychoanalytic terms here imply that ideological processes are, strictly speaking, intrapsychological processes – nationalist fantasies, for example, compensating for individual traumas (like the proverbial fascist unloved in childhood)? This use of psychoanalysis can sometimes be found in Frankfurt School Freudo-Marxism and the Sexpol movement. Or is it an analogous use? That is, ideological processes function *like* psychoanalytic ones, so we can abstract a common logic (we are merely using the psychoanalytic *words* for these more general *notions*)? Or is an interpretation of psychoanalytic terms also explicated in this: even these are not about intrapsychological but social processes ("The unconscious is the discourse *of the Other*") – they just get there via individual experience?

Žižek seems to be aiming for a mixture of the second and third options when, on the one hand, he speaks of a "structural homology",[32] which characterizes the various instantiations of the Lacanian "logic" as such – political economy, science, psychoanalysis, etc. – and thus seems to refer to the second option. On the other hand, he speaks of discourse, which Lacanian psychoanalysis ultimately seeks to explicate, as a "social link"[33] –

[30] One of the favourite tropes of this apparatus is precisely the offer for identification: "Look, they are just like us!"

[31] This reading of the super-ego, which does run against some traditions in psychoanalysis like the form of analysis that Anna Freud established (where the super-ego is rather the instance of strict prohibition), is based on Lacan: "Nothing forces anyone to enjoy (*jouir*) except the superego. The superego is the imperative of jouissance – Enjoy!", Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality – The Limits of Love and Knowledge. The Seminar, Book XX, Encore* (New York/London: W.W. Norton, 1998), p. 3.

[32] Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void*, p. 151.

[33] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 165.

and thus refers to the third option. We could summarize his position as follows: Lacanian psychoanalysis formulates concepts that describe social relations in terms of how to intervene in the discourse to deal with individual crises. However, we can generalize these terms and thus examine discourses in general. Unfortunately, one finds no explicit reflections by Žižek on the epistemological status of this transposition of psychoanalytic terms into other contexts, leaving a certain vagueness between the social and the individual in Žižek's analyses.[34] This is what we will further explore to critique his lack of political economy.

Ideology in actu: Commodity fetishism and real abstraction

Finally, let's turn to Marx. One can distinguish Marxists by whether they distinguish between the younger and the older Marx. A line of tradition from *Diamat*[35] via Althusser to Badiou and Žižek makes this distinction, seeing an "epistemological break"[36] between a "humanist" and a "scientific" Marx, somewhere between 1845 (*Die Deutsche Ideologie*) and the failed revolution of 1848. A broad front against this difference, and in favour of the thesis that the thoughts of the young Marx are the key to his entire work, consists of the *Praxis* Group (and other critical intellectuals from Eastern and Central Europe, such as Kosík), as well as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and others who align themselves with the "young Lukács, K . Korsch, A . Gramsci, [and] the Frankfurt School".[37]

What can be said about Marx's concept of ideology in the light of this difference? First of all, one thing is striking: In *Das Kapital* (i.e. late Marx), the word "ideology" simply plays no role. It does not appear anywhere in volumes 2 and 3. In volume 1, Marx uses it en passant in connection with two things: firstly, bourgeois political economy – or the "ideological tongue-threshers"[38] of the agents of capital – and secondly, religion.

These are also the places where the ideological theory of Marx's early work is developed. This theory is not developed directly anywhere – in the manner of "Ideology

[34] This is, of course, not a problem restricted to Žižek; he is merely inheriting it from the very start of psychoanalysis itself: Freud never strictly stayed "in his field" – he talked about art, literature, and what is at stake here: sociological processes. His notion of "masses", at least, gives rise to the same problems faced here, just as much as Lacan's analyses, that often-troubled commentators as to the question of whether or not we have intra-psychological notions there – the "Other" in Lacan is a condition of the subject, not something composed of individual subjects, but he is also strictly against Jung's notion of a "collective unconscious". It would serve Žižek's political thought immensely to locate him in these problems.

[35] Also, Marković is describing the fight between the early *Praxis* members and the remnants of *Diamat* as a fight along this line.

[36] Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London/New York: Verso, 2005), p. 32.

[37] This is how it is described by *Nový*, which takes the side of the "humanists" in this battle. Lubomír Nový, "Der sozialkritische Marx und die Philosophie", *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. Řada filozofická (B16)*, no. 8 (1969), p. 29.

[38] Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 23 (Berlin: Dietz, 1984), p. 635.

is…" – but is rather shown in the functioning of Marx's critique. The strategy follows the path opened by Feuerbach's critique of Christianity: concepts and fantasies are explained based on their "human" content. For Feuerbach, this means "sensuality", the affective-emotional lifeworld of the individual. For Marx, this means political economy: "Feuerbach dissolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is not an abstraction inherent in the individual. In its reality, it is the ensemble of social relations."[39]

In the reading labelled "economistic" – for example by Plekhanov – this leads to the following constellation: there are economic conditions (property systems, production processes, etc.), which follow certain objective laws in their development. Then there are reflexes of these conditions in people's perceptions, with all kinds of distortions occurring in the course of this reflex arc. This "false consciousness" must be criticized with the insights of Marxian political economy – the "correct consciousness" (of the party, of course). We are back to *Diamat*. The *Praxis* group tried to deal with this by historicizing the "correct consciousness" itself. It must adapt to the "essential, human possibilities" that change with the historical constellation – not to the objective fact of historical development – and this adaptation can only come about through an entity external to the party: the working class. This is what Marx meant by "'revolutionary', practical-critical activity",[40] according to this tradition.

Žižek, in turn, asserts a third concept of ideology in the late Marx, using the only reference to Marx that runs systematically through his work: commodity fetishism – the only chapter in *Das Kapital* in which Marx offers something like a theory of ideology. Let us try to understand this "third way".

The *Praxis* group reads the concept of commodity fetishism in line with Marx's early work: what are actually *human* relations between people become relations between *things* through the ideological distortion of commodity fetishism. Commodities have value only within the structure of exchange and production in which they are incorporated (with all the social relations that this implies), but appear as though they have value in themselves; the relational property of "value" appears as an absolute – man is objectified, alienated in the commodities; the "laws of the market" decide for him.

Between all his polemics against "humanist" Marxism, Žižek agrees with this point at first. He locates the source of this distortion in our actual actions: it is not so much that we *think* ideologically; we *act* ideologically. First of all, it is our actions that harbour the illusion that we are not dealing with social relations when handling money. We act as if money expresses an intrinsic property of things. Žižek draws on Alfred Sohn-Rethel's concept of "real abstraction" for this purpose:[41] The abstraction from use value *really*

[39] Karl Marx, "Thesen über Feuerbach", in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Dietz, 1969), p. 534.

[40] Marx, "Thesen über Feuerbach", p. 533.

[41] Cf. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 11.

takes place – in our actions. Herein lies a connection between three of the strands of Marxian thought presented here, even if Žižek does not see it: Althusser, Kosík, and Žižek agree on this determination of the place of ideology.[42]

Žižek now insists on the *real* in "real abstraction". In a first step, we act *as if* the relations between people are relations between things. But then, in a second step, we see that this means that they *are* actually objectified. That is what he calls "fetishistic inversion":[43] If the fetishist only pretends that the slipper[44] is a real sexual partner (of course he knows that this is not the case), then that is exactly what he is.

However, the *Praxis* reading also doesn't want to say: "Well, we see things distorted, as things – but actually it is already unalienated underneath. There are really already 'full' human relationships." Here, too, deception has a certain reality! The difference to Žižek, however, can be seen in the relationship between knowledge and action. While for *Praxis* – and as Žižek notes in passing,[45] for Althusser – there are ultimately only these two poles, Žižek adds the third pole of externalized knowledge (and this is precisely the status of the "unconscious" in Lacan). This third pole mediates the relationship between knowledge and action in such a way that there is no longer a direct relationship: I can *know* very well that money is a mere piece of metal or that the self-management terms are just phrases – and still *act* as if I did not know. In the dual structure of knowledge-action, this case can only be thought of in terms of malevolence ("I know it's wrong and do it anyway!"), but not as an ideological effect. At most, one could say that the subject "doesn't really know", but what does that mean?

Žižek offers the Lacanian concept of the unconscious as a third element: "The things out there, they believe in ideology for me, while of course I know it's all rubbish." What supports this externalized knowledge is an unconscious fantasy – this is the "dark

[42] For Althusser and Kosík, this was shown by Petr Kužel, "The World of the Pseudoconcrete, Ideology and the Theory of the Subject (Kosík and Althusser)", in *Karel Kosík and the Dialectics of the Concrete*, ed. Joseph G. Feinberg, Ivan Landa, Jan Mervart (Leiden: Brill, 2022), pp. 262–280. By the way, it is precisely on this point that Žižek was accused of Stalinism by Robinson and Tormey: Is not the notion of an objective meaning of my acts, no matter what I think about them, exactly the notion used in the Stalinist trials? And to make things worse, Žižek seems to be aware of this. Taking Tibetan prayer wheels as an illustration of what this "ideology in acting" means: you can think whatever you want; "it does not matter because – to use a good old Stalinist expression – whatever I am thinking, *objectively* I am praying". Whether or not this notion of ideology makes you a Stalinist and leads to unprogressive terror when acted upon, we do not have the space to discuss here. We just wanted to note that if this is a problem for Žižek, so it is for Althusser (well, easy, who can take him very seriously anyway?) *and Kosík* (a "humanist" Marxist! That is quite something else to deal with). Cf. Tormey Robinson, "Žižek's Marx: 'Sublime Object' or a 'Plague of Fantasies'?", p. 161.

[43] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 30.

[44] An example out of Lacan, of course. Jacques Lacan, "Das Symbolische, das Imaginäre und das Reale", in *Namen-des-Vaters*, transl. Hans-Dieter Gondek, (Wien: Turia+Kant, 2013), p. 23.

[45] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 14.

underside" of the order, the constitutive point of exception: the nationalist fantasies with which Laibach over-identifies. And the true revolutionary subject emerges out of this identification with the excluded element. That is what *Praxis*, according to Žižek, is unable to see, and we can even put it in Marković's terms: The shortcomings of self-management are not merely an external limitation – not being serious enough in realizing its inner essence – but an internal one. The discourse of self-management *itself* relies on nationalist fantasies and vulgarities.

In its theory of ideology, the *Praxis* group faces the following problem: If the economistic reading were true, why are we still so obviously entangled in all kinds of ideological distortions in a society without capital? They find the generally human "measure rod" by which socialist and capitalist societies can of course both be measured. But then the problem of insufficient identification arises: the problem is supposed to be that we no longer *really* believe in self-government – we identify therefore with a supposed core, the essential content of the explicit message, and become harmless.

Alternatively, we might subsequently reject any identification as dangerously proto-totalitarian – the "post-ideological" age in which grand narratives have lost their impact. Here, Žižek is faced with the problem that ideologies are apparently not broken even when people no longer believe in them. By introducing the unconscious and Lacanian logic, he believes he can explain both, as we have seen – at least in outline: why identification with a supposed core fails and why knowledge/belief and action do not have to align. In other words: why asserting a non- or post-ideological position is itself ideological (because it leaves the unconscious fantasy intact at a cynical distance: we are *acting* ideologically after all).

But what then is a *critique* of ideology if the assertion of a non-ideological position belongs to the field of ideology? Like ideology itself, critique must be sought in action. But a new form of action, a critique of ideology in a certain *practice*, instead of just thinking – isn't that the whole idea of a "humanist" critique of ideology? There is perhaps a difference in how Žižek defines this action: in an over-identification with the excluded (symptom) in the field of the political, as Laibach does in the field of art. The really serious difference, however, lies in a thesis that was foreshadowed in Marković's notion – though betrayed by him – of dialectics as dealing with internal limitations: alienation is essential and cannot be cancelled in any possible ideology-critical practice. Žižek here also claims to liberate Marx himself from the remnants of the "early Marx": "Here, I think, we should – with the help of Freud and Lacan – correct Marx: […] We need more alienation!"[46]

So what does this "essential alienation" mean? One cannot avoid the simple question here: What is the unalienated in relation to which we call something "alienated" – What

[46] Slavoj Žižek, "What Does It Mean to Be a Great Thinker Today?", Lecture at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, 05.05.2015, online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MoLdQA7aSg.

is the "real" in relation to which we call something "ideology"? And what is therefore the proper critical act? In attempting to find an answer, we must turn to his ontology at a last step.

Ontology alone is not enough: The repression of political economy

We must now reiterate what we've already mentioned several times: There is a *formalization* at play in Žižek's thought. The structure of commodity fetishism shall be formalized into a "matrix"[47] of ideology as such, covering many more phenomena than solely our dealing with commodities and direct economical exchange. The notions of psychoanalysis shall be applied far from the epistemologically safe harbour in which they were crafted – the analyst's room. Debenjak's anthropological notion of the subject of revolution as pure negativity shall be used for an ontology (although Žižek, to my knowledge, never explicitly mentions him) – and so on, and so forth.

The resulting vocabulary is, to a certain extent, a meta-theoretical one. Just as the concepts of system theory enable the formation of theories in the most diverse areas, with the most diverse content, we have a number of concepts here that are intended to be applicable to the most diverse areas. The majority of these terms are drawn from Lacanian psychoanalysis – of which Lacan's logic (i.e. the "formulas of sexuation"), together with the triad symbolic-imaginary-real, is perhaps the most fundamental part.

This circumstance certainly entitles one to use a word for the most diverse things – if one can make the notion comprehensible, that is. So, what does Žižek mean by the word "real"? A small selection of its uses: the basic social antagonism of capital; a fundamental sexual antagonism; a fundamental antagonism; the status of the reality of the fictional/virtual (as opposed to "reality"); and the "object a" as the cause of desire. What is the concept of the real in these usages – what is his ontology?

Let's return to Lacan's logic. The logic, in terms of quantifiers, that we developed above has consequences for the logics of notions: A notion is only consistent if it is based on an exclusion. In other words, it presupposes a range of application, or, in Strawson's words, an "incompatibility-range"[48] ("red" and "blue" share such an incompatibility-range, but not "red" and "embargo" – the latter is excluded into the undetermined field in which the predicate "red" or its negation "non-red" simply cannot be applied). Žižek's concept of the real can now be defined quite simply in the first approach: the real is that which lies "before" this exclusion – the inconsistent (antagonistic) realm of the not-all.[49] In

[47] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology,* p. 9.

[48] Peter F. Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory* (London: Methuen & Co., 1952), p. 6.

[49] This gets more complicated when, more recently, Žižek persists "in the failure of every ontology" and uses a third term next to "All" and "Non-All", which is the "barred One". I do not see yet if – and if so, how – this effects the present line of thought concerning the repressed political economy. Slavoj Žižek, *Sex and the Failed Absolute* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), p. 144.

this way, logic is read as ontology (a statement about the real), and the basic outline is quite classical: The real is that which is presupposed but not touched by the notion.

This move from logical to ontological – which Žižek usually frames as the "shift from Kant to Hegel" – is in fact quite simple: It plainly means to take seriously what one has discovered about the necessary incompleteness of notions. By saying "How the world is 'behind' the exclusions implied in my notions is simply not graspable for me" (treating this logic not as ontology but epistemology), one does use the notion of a "complete" (all) world in a strict (unbound) way, which one has found senseless.[50] The only conclusion is: There *is* nothing external, no hidden content behind the notion – because the notion is *really* not-all. This means that for the enunciating subject, there is no "outside perspective"; we are necessarily included in the picture: "In a concrete situation, its universal truth can only be articulated from a thoroughly partisan position; truth is by definition one-sided".[51] And any notion hides its incompleteness through the use of an "empty signifier", the material existence of the excluded element. If I list what falls under the notion, there will necessarily be an element which "sticks out" and does not quite add up – paradigmatically the unspecified option of "Other" that I can choose from in any good multiple-choice test.

Since an ontology is, by definition, applicable (and the crux is, of course, what exactly "applying" means here) to any field,[52] let us apply this concept to the field of politics. This implies that every universal order (any field of law – a state, an international organization, a party, etc.) necessarily contains a part that does not add up, a part that must be excluded to maintain the order's "consistency". And it is covered up by an "empty signifier" that is filled with a fantasy (a "symptom" in Lacanese): the "nation", supplemented by fantasies of purity; the *core* of "self-government", supplemented by fantasies of "reunion", of a reconciliation of alienation. And this fantasy is producing real effects in our acts. That's Žižek's notion of ideology.

Now we see why Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism serves as the inspiration (if not the "matrix" – Lacan's logic undeniably plays this role). It recognizes the point of self-inclusion – the part that does not add up in the field of commodities – the one commodity that is not like the others: money, symbolizing the genus "(value bearing) commodity" as such. In the field of commodity-exchange, this exception is located in the one commodity that does not behave like others when bought: the workforce. And we see why over-identification with the excluded element should be a better critique

[50] Cf. Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 60.

[51] Slavoj Žižek, "A Plea for Leninist Intolerance", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 28 (2) (2002), p. 550.

[52] To show that this does not align with the immediate reply, "But aren't you saying that something is applicable to anything, whether that 'something' be 'ontology' or not – that is, using an all-quantifier without restrictions?" – and to explain what this proof means for the act of "applying" used here – would require a lot more space. We do believe this to be possible, but here we have to condition everything that follows on "If such an application is even possible…".

of ideology than identification with some core of the explicit order: it brings out the excluded element and thereby cuts the knot that holds together the order – like how Russell bringing out the inconsistent element destroyed "naive set theory" and gave rise to Zermelo–Fraenkel set theory. It unties the apparently consistent All into the inconsistent Non-All – or, by definition, it touches the *real*.

So, concerning our question of what the real is against which we call something "ideology" – Žižek tells us that this real is either the act of the critique of ideology itself or the field of Non-All of which we cannot speak in order to distinguish it from ideology without turning it into All (that is, ideology)? Is this a valid way to distinguish ideology and non-ideology at all? Žižek can point back to the practical dimension of this critique of ideology that is the real and say something like: If such an act actually manages to intervene into the order and fundamentally destabilize it, then its identification of an excluded element must have been correct, they were right about something, while the order was false – it was ideology. And that act will have touched the real. At times, Žižek famously describes this act as the "purely negative act" of Bartleby's "I'd prefer not to" – whose authenticity can only be seen retrospectively.

But if this theoretical line does not offer us *anything* for determining the "excluded element" or for determining *what* to do, it is not only useless – it is even worse: it assumes the external position of a mere observer, offering a formal analysis of any possible situation *without participating in it*. If Žižek's ontology is indeed situated on this level of merely offering the notions of any possible political analysis as such, while any concrete truth can only be determined retrospectively – then this ontology is speaking from a position of non-involvement, refraining from an involved engagement in the form of "*This* is true and I'll fight for it!" *By its own claims, that is ideology par excellence*.[53]

Žižek does seem to see this point, though, and is offering various attempts of an analysis that determines the "symptom" of our order: sometimes the act of (over-) identifying with the symptom is called the "proletarian experience"[54] (in a rebranding of Debenjak's notion of the purely negative proletarian position) and the symptom from which the subject of a practical critique of ideology emerges is called simply the "proletariat". Sometimes it's the slum-population[55] (more of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*, that is) as the part of our order which is not really a part. And sometimes he does seem to defend something like the old notion of a "main contradiction", the capitalist antagonism involving the proletariat as its critical subject that "cuts across social reality".[56]

[53] In this I totally agree with Jason Goldfarb, who wrote by far the best *immanent* critique of Žižek I know of. Cf. Jason Goldfarb, "Politics After Finitude: Žižek's Redoubling of the Real and its Implications for The Left", *International Journal of Žižek Studies* 2, no. 10 (2016), pp. 51–82.

[54] Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London/New York: Verso, 2008), p. 428.

[55] Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, p. 427.

[56] Žižek, *Sex and the Failed Absolute*, p. 246.

While none of this is a problem in itself – it may turn out to be correct – the problem is rather that Žižek is not really able to give any reasons for that being the case, except the formal claim that there must be such a structure according to ontology – in which case, the notions like "proletariat" become mere *names* for Lacan's logical notions. While the polemics of rather classical Marxist against Žižek[57] are not nearly reaching his philosophical stringency, they are nonetheless brilliant in showing how Žižek does not at all apply any identifiable political-economical notions – his analysis of what "capital" is, how "exploitation" works, what "classes" are, is shifting between reproducing the worst Marxist clichés (overcome in many ways in Marxist discussion ever since) and simply not denoting anything at all except the purely logical notions themselves.

The question implied here is simple: Why isn't my struggle against fossil fuels grounded in the same antagonistic negativity that aligns, for instance, with the alt-right's struggle against the "corrupted state of left-green morons"? He does from time to time respond in Badiou's vocabulary: the "real" event (act) is true in that it connects to the situation in a specific way, in which the "false" event does not (the alt-right): it identifies with its excluded part, with its symptom, and is therefore able to actually intervene into the very core of the situation.[58] But how do we know that? We are back at the start.

So the problem becomes this: If Žižek is unable to offer anything *based in his notions* that allows us to determine the symptom, allows us to *take sides* for something a bit more concrete than "the struggle for emancipation" – which would mean a "political economy of the Non-All" with quite a sophisticated epistemology – then the Žižekian act might just as well touch or not touch the real as does a critical *Praxis* or an Althusserian orthodox party.

Closing remarks

In the absence of a definition of the precise political-economic content of Lacan's logical concepts, Žižek understands political struggle like a psychoanalysis: it is about (over-)identifying with the symptom, with the political act functioning like an analyst's intervention and so on. In this, he does not understand it from the perspective of an engaged *actor*. What it is missing is not only economics, but the element that makes it political: the engaged position and *strategic* elements. These include identifying notions of possible allies, formulating (transitional) demands, exploiting weak points in the system, planning tactical manoeuvres, and so on.

In this sense, he is as far from Marx as one could imagine. However, he remains quite a Marxist in terms of his strategy of being "more Marx than Marx" – picking out certain notions that Marx was on the brink of formulating but could not quite and

[57] Cf. Robinson; Tormey, "Žižek's Marx: 'Sublime Object' or a 'Plague of Fantasies'?"

[58] Cf. the chapter "The Politics of Truth, or, Alain Badiou as a Reader of St Paul", in Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, pp. 127–170.

trying to develop them to propel the whole theory in new directions. That *is* how Marx reads Smith or Ricardo. And I do believe his Lacanian logic does indeed formalize the logic of Marxian critique and offer an ontology for it – which is, in fact, the main theoretical contribution of "psychoanalysis" for this branch of critical theory: the logic that Lacan develops. But this formalization does remain a "bad" one if it is not grounded in a political economy.

That is not to say that his critique of *Praxis s*hould have involved insights into Tito's specific model of self-management, data on the effects of specific policies, the dynamics between self-managed cooperations and Western investments, or strategic conclusions drawn from these. But it is to say that his determination of the excluded element(s) in different fields of 1980s Yugoslavia, needed for this critique, should involve that. To say that Žižek is not Marxist due to his lack of political economy is not an "economistical" claim, suggesting Žižek's thought is merely abstract philosophy or interpretation, while it should focus on concrete political acts and change. The project of an explicit logic and ontology is perfectly sound and a simple demand of reason. The problem is rather that his ontology does not stand up to its own standards without a proper political economy. He does take sides, though; he does engage politically – but not in any way that would be *grounded in his theory* in a more than very loose way. "I'm much more of a Hegelian than a Marxist", Žižek said against Peterson. He is indeed not Marxist. And his philosophical project is endangered by it.

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TRANSLATION

KAREL TEIGE'S "INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PAINTING" AND ZÁVIŠ KALANDRA'S "THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ANDRÉ BRETON"

introduced by Jana Ndiaye Berankova

Abstract

This section features translations of Karel Teige's lecture "Introduction to Modern Painting" (1935) and Záviš Kalandra's review of André Breton's Communicating Vessels, *titled "The Achievement of André Breton" (1935). The texts are introduced by Jana Ndiaye Beránková, who presents Teige and Kalandra as thinkers who engage with surrealism's embracing of Marxism as a springboard for their ideas. They treat the exploration of dreams, analysis of the unconscious, and critique of art as tools for understanding human existence in its lived concreteness and for analyzing how the communist revolution shapes the subject. By invoking Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's dictum "We should dream!" and by rejecting the conservative cultural politics of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Teige and Kalandra reflect upon the truly revolutionary forms of subjective and aesthetic expression.*

Keywords

Czechoslovak avant-garde, Marxism, Teige, Kalandra, Surrealism, psychoanalysis, dreams, aesthetics, Stalinism, pleasure principle

"WE SHOULD DREAM!"

Karel Teige and Závis Kalandra's Realms of Freedom

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"'Transform the world,' said Marx. 'Change life,' said Rimbaud; for us, those two commands are one."
André Breton, 1935

In "Introduction to Modern Painting" (1935) and "The Achievement of André Breton" (1935), two prominent theoretical voices of the left-wing Czechoslovak interwar avant-garde, Karel Teige and Záviš Kalandra, respond, in their own distinct manners, to surrealism's embrace of Marxism. They combine Freudian psychoanalysis with dialectical materialism as if, facing the rise of fascism, it became increasingly urgent to understand the truly revolutionary modes of subjectivity and, in the words of Kalandra, "to observe the *social* individual in his practical activity".[1] Both thinkers dream of Marx's "realm of freedom", which "really begins only where labour determined by necessity and external expediency ends" and which "lies by its very nature beyond the sphere of material production proper".[2] By analyzing human being not as an abstract scheme but in all the concreteness of its lived experience, which includes its dreams, desires, and phantasies, Teige and Kalandra claim to follow Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's dictum: "We should dream!".[3] These two thinkers are convinced that the dialectical contradictions between man and nature, the conscious and the unconscious spheres of the mind, the

[1] Záviš Kalandra, "The Achievement of André Breton. Notes on the Czech Publication of Breton's *Communicating Vessels*", in the present issue of *Contradictions*, p. 146–154.

[2] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. III*, trans. David Fernbach (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 958–959.

[3] "'We should dream!' I wrote these words and became alarmed. [...] I imagined myself sitting at a 'unity conference' and opposite me were the Rabocheye Dyelo editors and contributors. Comrade Martynov rises and, turning to me, says sternly: 'Permit me to ask you, has an autonomous editorial board the right to dream without first soliciting the opinion of the Party committees? He

repressive organization of society and the all-embracing *eros*, the principle of reality and the principle of pleasure need to be overcome in order to achieve a truly revolutionary transformation of man. The communist revolution will necessarily transform men's dreams, desires, and the various manifestations of the unconscious. Therefore, their rich and diverse theoretical essays are underlined by broader questions such as: how is a truly revolutionary subjectivity constituted and what are its adequate aesthetic forms of expression? How does the revolution affect art or the human psyche and vice versa? Can we hasten the day of the revolution by transforming the subject's consciousness or by creating new, "progressive" avant-garde art and architecture? Is it possible to prefigure the event within the material expression of structures or within the human mind?[4] Kalandra writes that "a certain being conditions, always and everywhere, a certain consciousness and not vice versa: this fundamental thesis of their teaching was proved by Marx and Engels against all varieties of idealism too thoroughly for it to be necessary to attach anything to their argument; but it still remains to be ascertained how being passes away from consciousness; that is, to finally fulfill Marx's demand: 'an end to phrases about consciousness, real knowledge must take their place'".[5] In other

is followed by Comrade Krichevsky, who [...] continues even more sternly: 'I go further. I ask, has a Marxist any right at all to dream, knowing that according to Marx mankind always sets itself the tasks it can solve and that tactics is a process of the growth of Party tasks which grow together with the Party?' [...] There are rifts and rifts,' wrote Pisarev of the rift between dreams and reality. 'My dream may run ahead of the natural march of events or may fly off at a tangent in a direction in which no natural march of events will ever proceed. In the first case my dream will not cause any harm; it may even support and augment the energy of the working men [...]. There is nothing in such dreams that would distort or paralyse labour-power. [...] The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if he attentively observes life, compares his observations with his castles in the air, and if, generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well.'" Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", in *Collected Works, Vol. 5, May 1901–February 1902* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960), pp. 509–510.

[4] Teige develops the concept of "prefiguration" ("*předobraz*") in his early 1925 essay "Images and Prefigurations", in which he claimed that the task of art and of all intellectual activity is to create "prefigurations" of a new world. Karel Teige, "Obrazy a předobrazy", *Musaion*, no. 2 (1921), pp. 52–58. In his manifesto of Constructivism, Alexei Gan proclaims "Long live the communist expression of material structures!" Alekseĭ Gan, *Constructivism*, trans. Christina Lodder (Barcelona: Tenov, 2013), p. 5. For the notion of "prefiguration", see my article "Karel Teige: Prefigurations, Anticipations, and the Liquidation of Form", in Karel Teige, *The Marketplace of Art, Commentary, Vol. 2*, ed. Sezgin Boynik and Joseph Grim Feinberg (Helsinki, Prague: Rab Rab Press, Contradictions, 2022), pp. 67–76.

[5] "That a particular being determines, always and everywhere, a particular consciousness, and not vice versa: this fundamental thesis of their theory was too thoroughly demonstrated by Marx and Engels against all forms of idealism for there to be any need to add to their arguments; it still remains however to ascertain *how* being determines consciousness; that is, to finally fulfill Marx's demand for the end of 'empty talk about consciousness' as 'real knowledge has to take its place.'" Kalandra, "The Achievement of André Breton", p. 147.

words, the question is not *if* the revolution changes the subject but *how*. How does this transformation happen? Teige and Kalandra believe that surrealism and psychoanalysis could help answer these questions, yet they can accept the postulates of André Breton or Sigmund Freud only as long as they can be reconciled with dialectical materialism.

Karel Teige was a prominent critic of art and architecture, a major book designer, and more generally, the leading theoretical voice of the Czechoslovak avant-garde movement. He was the founding member of the *Devětsil* group and perhaps its most visible organizer.[6] Echoing the constructivist rejection of easel painting, Teige defined poetism as an art dissolved into life, an anti-romantic epicurean approach turning life "into grand entertainment", into "an eccentric carnival, a harlequinade of emotions and ideas, a series of intoxicating film sequences, a miraculous kaleidoscope".[7] Poetism, in Teige's view, was a dialectical antipode of constructivism, which he defined as a method of all types of productive work, a scientific principle conditioning the very existence of the modern world whose manifestations included modern architecture and modern mass-produced technology. Teige affirmed that "poetism is the crown of life; constructivism is its basis", that "each calculation rationalizes irrationality merely by several decimal points" and that "the calculus of each machine has its pi".[8]

However, in the 1930s, a decade marked by the social and economic crisis linked to the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the rise of fascism, Teige's "harlequinades" and "eccentric carnivals" could hardly be perceived as adequate *modus vivendi*. In this period, his thinking gained in complexity while taking perhaps a darker turn. In the first half of the 1930s, Teige focused primarily on criticism and theory of architecture while developing his "scientific" interpretation of architecture, proposing his own vision of the minimum dwelling and interpreting the typology of the collective house (*koldům*) as a prefiguration of the new socialist mode of living.[9] However, under the

[6] The *Devětsil* group was founded on October 5, 1920, in the Union coffee house in Prague. Its membership fluctuated but included the writer Vladislav Vančura, the poets Artuš Černík, Jaroslav Seifert, and Ivan Suk, poet and painter Adolf Hoffmeister, theater director Jindřich Honzl, musicologist Josef Löwenbach, painter Ladislav Süss, and architects Josef Havlíček and Alois Wachsmann. Its early artistic orientation was inspired by proletarian art and the Soviet Proletkult. In 1922, after Teige met the poet Vítězslav Nezval, the group embraced *poetism*, an art and life movement inspired by popular culture (circus, music hall, modern film) which they tried to endow with new socialist content to put forth uplifting visions to the working class.

[7] Karel Teige, "Poetism (1924)", trans. Alexandra Büchler, in *Karel Teige, 1900–1951: L'Enfant Terrible of the Czech Modernist Avant-Garde*, ed. Eric Dluhosch and Rostislav Švácha (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999), p. 68.

[8] Teige, "Poetism", p. 67.

[9] In 1930, Teige lectured at Bauhaus on the sociology of architecture. As a theorist of architecture, he defended a scientific notion of architecture as "construction", contesting Le Corbusier's reliance on "composition". He was friends with Hannes Meyer and other members of the group

influence of surrealism, he significantly developed his interest in the links between art, psychoanalysis, and dialectical materialism.

Although Záviš Kalandra belonged to the same generation, he never joined the *Devětsil* group. In the early 1920s, he worked on his dissertation on the philosophy of Parmenides, and in 1928 he became an editor of *Rudý večerník* ("Red Evening Newspaper"), thus choosing a career path of a left-wing political journalist. In his writings, Kalandra frequently examined the links between surrealism, psychoanalysis, avant-garde art, and international politics. He attempted to liberate Marxism from all lifeless abstract schemes. In the 1930s, Kalandra was an ardent opponent of the Stalinist orientation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party; in 1936, the year of the trial with the supposed Trotskyists Grigory Yevseyevich Zinoviev and Lev Borisovich Kamenev in the USSR, Kalandra was expelled from the Communist Party and dismissed from its weekly journal *Tvorba*, where he had worked as editor. Yet, he never ceased to believe in the possible rise of a proletarian Leninist movement that would oppose the Stalinist turn within the party. He self-published the tracts "On Spanish Revolution" (1936) and, together with Josef Guttmann, "The Revealed Secret of the Moscow Trial" (1936) and "The Second Moscow Trial" (1937) and faced harsh criticism in the official communist press. In 1939, he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Teige's and Kalandra's dreams of creating a symbiosis of avant-garde art, new modes of subjectivity, and dialectical materialism never materialized. It is a sad irony of history that following the 1948 communist takeover of Czechoslovakia, both authors became targets of various Stalinist denunciation campaigns. Kalandra did not have enough time to finish his major study and polemic on Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) titled "The Reality of Dream"; in November 1949, he was arrested, and in a political trial, he was branded a Trotskyist and part of a plot to overthrow the Communist regime; in June 1950, he was executed by hanging. Likewise, his friend Teige never finished his magnum opus *The Phenomenology of Art*, whose goal was to redefine the methodology of the history of art in light of dialectical materialism. Teige

of architects linked to the Basel journal *ABC, Beiträge zum Bauen*. The second International Congress on Modern Architecture, whose topic was "The Dwelling for Minimal Existence", took place in Frankfurt in 1929. Karel Teige's book *The Minimum Dwelling* was a polemical response to the concept of "Existenzminimum" promoted by architects such as Walter Gropius at this congress. On Teige's activities as theorist of architecture, see: Karel Teige, *Modern Architecture in Czechoslovakia and Other Writings*, trans. Irena Žantovská Murray and David Britt (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2000); Karel Teige, *The Minimum Dwelling*, trans. Eric Dluhosch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Rostislav Švácha, Dita Robová, and Mirko Baum, *Forma Sleduje Vědu/ Form Follows Science* (Prague: Galerie Jaroslava Fragnera, 2000), and my essay "Architecture as a Monument or Instrument?: The Mundaneum Project and the Polemic between Karel Teige and Le Corbusier", *Shift*, no. 7 (2014), pp. 1–19, accessible from: http://shiftjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/02_Berankova.pdf.

was subjected to police persecution and multiple public denunciation campaigns and, in 1951, he died of a heart attack.[10]

It is hard to tell what the intellectual history of Marxism would look like had these two authors been given sufficient time and space to fully develop their ideas. The two essays published for the first time in English in the present issue of *Contradictions/ Kontradikce* can at least give some hints about the originality of their theoretical considerations. The thinking of both Teige and Kalandra is grounded in the then less orthodox writings of Karl Marx such as "Introduction to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy" (1857), *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845). In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Marx writes that "the transcendence of private property is therefore the complete *emancipation* of all human senses and attributes; but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become, subjectively and objectively, *human*. The eye has become a *human* eye, just as its *object* has become a social, *human* object – an object emanating from man for man".[11] For Teige, this must have seemed to confirm an intuition he had already expressed in "Constructivism and the Liquidation of 'Art'" (1925), where he affirmed that "*man is the measure of all things*", and in the second "Poetist Manifesto" (1928), where he described poetism as a "total and universal poetry, this synthesis for all the senses".[12] After the revolution, that which had been a utopia or a "prefiguration" expressed only in the work of avant-garde artists, outcasts of bourgeois society, and *poètes maudits*, will become a new poetic reality.

The Czechoslovak Surrealist Group was established in March 1934, almost a decade after Breton's publication of *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924).[13] The Czechoslovak art scene had its own idiosyncratic doctrines such as "poetism" or "artificialism", which often intersected on a conceptual level with surrealism and may have created a fertile

[10] Following Teige's death, the literary critic Mojmír Grygar published a denunciation essay in three parts titled „Teigism – the Trotskyist Agency in Our Culture". Mojmír Grygar, "Teigovština – Trockistická agentura v naší kultuře", *Tvorba* 20, no. 42, 43, 44 (1951), pp. 1008–1010, pp. 1036–1038, pp. 1060–1061.

[11] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Martin Milligan (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), p. 107.

[12] Karel Teige, "Constructivism and the Liquidation of Art'", in *Modern Architecture in Czechoslovakia and Other Writings*, trans. Irena Žantovská Murray and David Britt (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2000), p. 335; Karel Teige, "Excerpts from 'Poetism Manifesto' (1928)", in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 598.

[13] The Czechoslovak Surrealist Group was established on March 21, 1934, by publishing the manifesto "Surrealism in the Czechoslovak Republic", which opened with a quote from Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto*. Its early members included the poet Vítězslav Nezval, the painters Jindřich Štyrský, Toyen, the sculptor Vincenc Makovský, the theater director Jindřich Honzl, the poet Konstantin Biebl, the composer Jaroslav Ježek, and the theorist of psychoanalysis

ground for its recognition but which were ultimately the reason why Czechoslovak artists were in no haste to get in line behind André Breton and the French group.[14] The first seeds of surrealism can be traced to the journal *Zvěrokruh* ("Zodiac") published by Vítězslav Nezval in 1930 and the exhibition *Poesie 1932* at Mánes gallery. The 1932 exhibition included the artworks of Jindřich Štyrský, Toyen, Josef Šíma, Jean Arp, Salvador Dalí, Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, Yves Tanguy, and a number of anonymous African sculptures; it was perhaps the largest display of surrealist art to that day. In general, Czechoslovak avant-garde artists, writers, and intellectuals were hesitant to embrace surrealism until its affiliation with dialectical materialism became indisputable. Although the first political proclamation of the French surrealist movement can be traced to the 1925 tract "The Revolution First and Always!", Breton's affirmation in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1930) that the laws of poetic determinism "cannot be promulgated, as against that of dialectical materialism" made the surrealist orientation somehow more palatable for Czechoslovak artists and thinkers.[15]

Overcoming his initial reservations against surrealism, Teige soon became one of its most loyal advocates. He wrote "Introduction to Modern Painting" on the occasion of the First Exhibition of the Czechoslovak Surrealist Group, which took place in the Mánes gallery from January 15 to February 17, 1935. A few weeks later, on March 27, 1935, André Breton arrived in Prague accompanied by his spouse Jacqueline Lamba, the poet Paul Éluard, and the painter Josef Šíma. In Czechoslovakia, Breton delivered the lectures "The Surrealist Situation of the Object", "Political Position of Today's Art", and "What is Surrealism?", which were published in a 1937 volume whose cover was designed by Teige. In "What is Surrealism?", first presented in Brussels, Breton claims that "the *liberation of the mind*, the express aim of surrealism, demands as a primary condition, in the opinion of the surrealists, the *liberation of man*, which implies that we must struggle against our fetters with all the energy of despair; that today more than ever the surrealists rely entirely, for the bringing about of human liberation, on the proletarian revolution".[16] He insists that surrealism overcame absolute idealism

Bohuslav Brouk. Teige joined the group in May 1934. For the narrative history of the Czechoslovak Surrealist group and of the Prague avant-garde, see: Derek Sayer, *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century: A Surrealist History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[14] In the "Manifesto of Artificialism" (1928), Toyen and Štyrský called for the abandonment of reality in favor of the "maximum and imagination" and for an "identification of the painter and the poet"; in the "Second Poetist Manifesto" (1928), Teige defended the notion of *ars una*, of a poetry for all the senses. Toyen and Jindřich Štyrský, "Artificielisme", *ReD* 1, no. 1 (1927), p. 28; Teige, "Excerpts from 'Poetism Manifesto' (1928)".

[15] André Breton, "Second Manifesto of Surrealism (1930)", trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), pp. 155–156.

[16] André Breton, "What Is Surrealism? (1935)", trans. David Gascoyne, in *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Monad, 1978), p. 115.

and embraced dialectical materialism, thus copying the movement of modern thought which "came *normally* to Marx through Hegel, just as it had come *normally* to Hegel through Berkeley and Hume".[17] Likewise, in "Political Position of Today's Art", Breton states that surrealists follow Marx's dictum "More awareness!" and that their goal is "more awareness of the social always, but also more awareness of the psychological".[18] He cites Nikolai Bukharin's unorthodox conception of socialist realism encompassing the poems of Alexander Blok, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and even of the nineteenth-century revolutionary romantics. In the speech "Poetry, Poetics and the Problems of Poetry in the USSR", delivered at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, Bukharin claimed that "the new man that is being born and the whole world of his emotions, including even 'new erotics,' is a province of socialist art and that lyric verse does not stand in opposition to socialist realism as long as the poets are not seeking a 'world beyond' but giving shape to 'the spiritual experiences of the socialist man who is now coming into being' with all its complexities and contradictions".[19]

The same quotation of Bukharin also appears in the concluding paragraph of Teige's "Introduction to Modern Painting". Here, he writes that "art and poetry are a reflection of human desire and identified only with states of freedom" and that "since the goal of Surrealist art is the dazzling 'realm of freedom' and the sovereign liberty of man, this art is an integrally revolutionary manifestation in a world where man is bound by the straitjacket of morals, conventions, and social enslavement".[20] Teige's teleology of art as a movement towards increasing the freedom of the human species needs to be interpreted on two different levels: on the formal level, it denotes a movement from the naturalistic depiction of reality through abstraction to a deeper "inner reality"; on the socio-political level, it is the ability of art to prefigure new modes of revolutionary subjectivity. The intertwining of these two levels constitutes perhaps the most problematic aspect of Teige's theory. Like Hegel, from whom he adopts the idea of the end of art and the supremacy of poetry, Teige proposes an unabashedly partisan vision of art and tends to bend historical facts in order to fit a teleological narrative because his

[17] Breton, "What Is Surrealism?", p. 117.

[18] André Breton, "Political Position of Today's Art (1935)", trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), p. 229.

[19] Nikolai Bukharin, "Poetry, Poetics and the Problems of Poetry in the U.S.S.R.", in *Problems of Soviet Literature: Reports and Speeches at the First Soviet Writer's Congress* (Leningrad: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1935), p. 254. Bukharin's doctrine of socialist realism never predominated in the USSR. In 1938, he was condemned to death and executed as an alleged member of the "Bloc of Rightists and Trotskyites".

[20] Karel Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting. On the Exhibit of the Group of Czech Surrealists in the Mánes Exhibition Hall, Prague, January–February 1935", in the present issue of *Contradictions*, p. 129–145.

ultimate goal is to prove that art history can be a tool of social emancipation.[21] However, it is important not to judge Teige's postulates too harshly and to interpret them rather as a proof of courage in a specific socio-historical situation, as a polemical tool against the conservative cultural politics of the Communist party.

In relation to the shift from realism to abstraction, Teige writes in the second "Poetist Manifesto" (1928) that although painting came into existence as a representational service, its entire history "is one of an emancipatory struggle for the freedom and autonomy of non-utilitarian aesthetic values which gradually emerged and gained strength as the craft evolved".[22] Likewise, in "Introduction to Modern Painting", Teige addresses the problem of paintings without content, noting that "people of realistic-naturalistic habits of prejudice do not yet know that *imitation is not art*".[23] Following cubism and Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), art reached a point zero. Yet, figuration began to reappear in a different, symbolic and hieroglyphic form within surrealist art, which leads us "to the extremities of dreams, seismographically recording internal tremors and underground movements, drawing waking dreams, illusions projected into reality, and providing graphic and colorful transcriptions of deep, essential forces, unprecedented psychograms".[24] If there is figuration in surrealist art, what does it *figure* or *prefigure*? In the 1940s, Teige proposes a clear answer to this question, writing that unlike the realist painting that depicts surface reality or the "external model", surrealist painting depicts the "inner model". He will define the "inner model" as an "irrational, poetic, internal image" which "is concretized and shaped by the effects of those forces of the mental apparatus whose magnetic fields it traverses until it becomes what it is, until it crystalizes from the mist of desires, from instinctual tendencies, and from the uncertainty of the repressed traces of memories actualized by haphazard experiences into an image appearing to the artist's inner sight from the darkness of the unconscious".[25] Teige will interpret the dialectical tension within surrealist modes of expression as

[21] Vratislav Effenberger criticizes Teige's mixing of social and psychological facts and his belief in progress in his major book, Vratislav Effenberger, *Realita a poesie. K vývojové dialektice moderního umění* [Reality and poetry. On the developmental dialectics of modern art] (Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1969).

[22] Teige, "Excerpts from 'Poetism Manifesto' (1928)", p. 595.

[23] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 130.

[24] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 133.

[25] In his essay "Jan Zrzavý – předchůdce" [Jan Zrzavý – predecessor] (1941), Teige defines the inner model as: an „irrational, poetic, internal idea" which is „concrete and shaped by the action of those forces of the mental system, through whose magnetic field it passes before it becomes what it is, than from the mist of desires and instinctive tendencies, from the indeterminacy of memories buried traces, updated by random experiences, crystallizes into an image that appears to the artist's inner vision from the darkness of the unconscious." Karel Teige, "Jan

a conflict between abstraction and realism, as the fact that "on the one side, the inner model is transcribed by an abstract symbol, a kind of shorthand sign or graph that automatically registers the interior pressure, whereas on the other side, the images of the inner world and of dreams are consolidated in a realistic manner".[26] However, in "Introduction to Modern Painting", Teige does not yet use the notion of the "inner model" but relies mostly on psychoanalytical concepts, thus viewing art through the lens of the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious spheres of the human psyche, between the principle of reality and the principle of pleasure. Teige notes that "according to psychoanalytic theories, the libido (sexual desire) receives only incomplete satisfaction, and therefore turns away from external interests and becomes introverted. The dream provides the possibility of escape into an imaginary world. Art and poetry, unlike dreams, sublimate the libido which thereby, through the path of sublimation, returns to the real world."[27] Teige's ideas echo Wilhelm Reich's theory of sexual repression elaborated in the essay "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis" (1929, 1934), whose Czech translation was published in a volume "Marxism and Freudism" cited by Teige in "Introduction to Modern Painting". Reich admits that "the definition of the reality principle as a social demand remains formalistic unless it makes full allowance for the fact that the reality principle as it exists today is only the principle of *our* society"; in a similar manner, Teige sees the "flight" of art away from reality as an expression of the revolt of human desires and drives against an unacceptable world.[28]

At this point, Teige's reasoning touches upon the second level mentioned here, that of the socially emancipatory function of avant-garde art. He believes that by breaking the chains of reality, by extending the sphere of the pleasure principle, true art can play a subversive role of revolt within society. This justifies Teige's interest in the poetry of revolutionary romantics, in *poètes maudits* and the other bohemians. In an earlier essay, "Poem, World, Man" (1928), he wrote that "romantic revolt, l'art-pour-l'artism, symbolism, bohemians from Montmartre and Montparnasse, dadaist rebellion and surrealist revolution are an expression of the opposition against the ruling class and an awareness of the separation of art from life and from public affairs; it may be the case that they are a protest against the conditions that the modern division of labor

Zrzavý – Předchůdce", in *Dílo Jana Zrzavého, 1906–1940*, ed. Karel Šourek (Prague: Umělecká beseda a Družstevní práce, 1941), p. 57.

[26] *Mezinárodní Surrealismus* (Prague: Topičův salon, 1947).

[27] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 135.

[28] Wilhelm Reich, "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis (1929, 1934)", in *Sex-Pol Essays, 1929-1934* (New York: Verso, 2012), p. 19. Both Reich and Teige follow the ideas about the disappearance of the family organization within the proletariat that Engels elaborated in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). Reich writes that: "The Oedipus complex must disappear in a socialist society because its social basis – the patriarchal family – will itself disappear, having lost its raison d'être" (Reich, "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis", p. 47). Teige uses Engels's ideas to elaborate his notion of the collective house and minimum dwelling.

imposed on artistic creation and on the social role of the artists".[29] In Teige's view, these art forms contain the "first seeds of new poetic qualities as well as the first steps towards overcoming the antagonism between art and society, between the 'ideals of beauty' and concrete realities".[30] Revolutions are often "de facto forays into new life forms at a time when social development has barely taken the first steps towards them".[31] Art serves the revolution by embracing the subversive role of joy and pleasure, by bringing nearer the dreamt future in which the principle of pleasure and the principle of reality would not contradict each other and man would be reconciled with his nature. The "revolutionary" role of art does not consist in social reportages or in "*littérature engagé*" but in art's ability to free the human imagination, to give material form to miraculous phantasies that become "an indictment of a barren social reality".[32] The revolutionary character of creative imagination consists "in making the institutions and realities of the social order deeply suspect, because it gives a person the inkling that freedom lives in the imaginary world, expelled from the despotic social reality, and that it is necessary to make the real world the realm of this freedom through revolutionary transformation".[33]

Teige's conviction that "in the future of the classless world, the pleasure principle will probably merge or synthesize with the opposing reality principle: art, governed simultaneously by the pleasure principle and the reality principle, will then become leavening in the dough of life" has also been shared by Kalandra, who addressed it explicitly in his essays "Surreality in Surrealism" (1934) and "Principle of Pleasure and Principle of Reality in Art" (1935).[34] In his "Introduction to Modern Painting", Teige cites Kalandra's "Surreality in Surrealism" when he affirms that "the harmonious development of the human personality presupposes the dialectical resolution of the antinomy between the unconscious system and the conscious system, the arrangement of feasible connecting paths between both systems, and the easy possibility of becoming aware of the unconscious".[35] He adds that "if the principle of human imagination is a fruitful principle of 'dissatisfaction of the real individual with the real world,' i.e., the principle of non-adjustment to social reality, the task of revolutionary art in the class world will be to deepen this dissatisfaction, thus freeing fantasy".[36] Kalandra's essay was includ-

[29] Teige, "Báseň, svět, člověk", *Zvěrokruh* 1, no. 1 (1930), p. 10.

[30] Teige, "Báseň, svět, člověk", p. 10.

[31] Teige, "Báseň, svět, člověk", p. 10.

[32] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 140.

[33] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 140.

[34] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 140; Záviš Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu", in *Surrealismus v Diskusi*, ed. Karel Teige and Ladislav Štoll (Prague: Levá fronta, 1934), pp. 84–93; Záviš Kalandra, "Princip slasti a princip reality v umění", *Volné Směry* 32, no. 3–4 (1935), pp. 116–120.

[35] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 140.

[36] Teige, "Introduction to Modern Painting", p. 140.

ed in the volume *Surrealism under Discussion*, edited by Teige and Ladislav Štoll; the author's main objective was to contest André Breton's claim that "there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions".[37] Asking where can such a point could be located, Kalandra writes that it should be traced to "the pure emotional sphere, where the individual escapes the shackles of the real world in a subjective illusion and throws off the reins of all the rules of objective knowledge".[38] He criticizes the surrealist method of the study of the subject as too narrow, noting that this approach can be valid only in connection with dialectical materialism. Kalandra insists that the surreal is always immanent to the real, that it cannot be hypostatized, that "it is not something that would exist independently on its own, it is neither a supernaturalistic transcendence nor an unknowable 'thing in itself'".[39] However, the surreal can be located within the subject, it is a creative expression of a human being that consciously gives free rein to his or her unconscious activity in order to examine and study it for that purpose. The reason why surrealism intersects with psychoanalysis is that both try to achieve "a subjective knowledge of the subject, a rigorously and even experimentally analyzed inner experience".[40]

In "The Achievement of André Breton", a review of Breton's *Communicating Vessels* (1932), Kalandra defends Breton's book against the criticism of journalists such as Kurt Konrád.[41] Kalandra grounds his argumentation in a letter from Friedrich Engels to Conrad Schmidt dated October 27, 1890, in which Engels admits that it would "be pedantic to seek economic causes" for what he describes as "primitive idiocy", namely "religion, philosophy, etc."[42] Kalandra argues that Engels's claim can legitimate the surrealist mode of enquiry and open up the possibility to explore dreams and their intersections with the "primitive idiocies", which are not related to the economic basis. He calls for seeing man not as an abstraction but as a real and complicated human being while admitting that "the *formal* side of the emergence, transformations, and disappearance of ideological ideas remained unexplored *in its universality* by the founders and in the classics of historical materialism".[43] In his view, it is important "to examine man not only inside of all his social relations but also *outside of them*".[44] He writes that the

[37] Breton, "Second Manifesto of Surrealism (1930)", p. 123.

[38] Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu", p. 89.

[39] Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu", p. 86.

[40] Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu", p. 87.

[41] Kurt Konrád, "Socialistický realismus v ČSR", in *Socialistický realismus* (Prague: Levá Fronta, 1935), pp. 77–119.

[42] Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, "Letter of Friedrich Engels to Conrad Schmidt, October 27, 1890", in *Collected Works, Vol. 49* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), p. 57.

[43] Kalandra, "The Achievement of André Breton", p. 146.

[44] Kalandra, "The Achievement of André Breton", p. 149.

core of this problem is rooted in the sixth of the *Theses on Feuerbach* in which Marx emphasizes that although the human essence "is the ensemble of the social relations" it is "no abstraction inherent in each single individual".[45] Kalandra insists that Marx and Engels shattered the abstract, idealist vision of man into pieces, that they dissolved the notion of the "eternally human" "into the historical process of the transformation of the real, living, social individual, and that they demonstrated the mechanism of this process".[46] Nevertheless, such a notion can have a certain legitimacy as long as we reduce its meaning only to the biological, physiological being of man, to the fact that man is also a part of nature. If man was nothing but "the ensemble of social relations", it would be impossible to explain why ancient Greek art, although it is "associated with certain forms of social development", can still be a strong source of aesthetic pleasure today and we would not be able to understand the importance of childhood in human life.[47] According to Kalandra, this physiological, natural part of our being validates surrealist methods. The exploration of dreams, the analysis of the unconscious, the criticism of art: these different approaches can enable us to understand humanity in its lived concreteness. Breton calls for the complete examination of human nature, including the exploration of "the kingdom of the night" and reevaluating the role of pleasure. Through a concrete analysis of a subjective experience, he helps us to understand how being determines consciousness. Kalandra notes that the relevance of surrealism consists in its ability to connect the study of the real man with the analysis of class division. In other words, its main asset is its capacity to study the borderlines of the abstract and the concrete, the finite and the infinite, as well as the fleeting and the timeless aspects of human existence. Surrealism's efficacy is its capacity, which is perhaps proper to all great art, to endow individual and particular expressions of the human unconscious with universal validity.

Teige and Kalandra believed that surrealism could become a springboard for revisiting the relationship between art and politics, between the subject and his or her liberation from repressive social structures. Their unorthodox rethinking of Marxism relies on a teleology of progress and on the belief that art and psychoanalysis could contribute to human emancipation. For these thinkers, any revolution transforms the sphere of culture; politics is always already intertwined with aesthetics. They believe

[45] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach (1845)", in *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 172. Étienne Balibar has explained that the sixth thesis, which has been a topic of many polemics, has inspired two major streams of reading Marx, one oriented towards the notion of praxis, and the other towards structuralism. See Étienne Balibar, "Antropologie philosophique ou ontologie de la relation? Que faire de 'La VIe Thèse sur Feuerbach'? (2014)", in *La Philosophie de Marx*, Nouv. éd, Repères 124 (Paris: Découverte, 2001).

[46] Kalandra, "The Achievement of André Breton", p. 150.

[47] Marx evokes this idea in "Introduction to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy" (1857), a rough draft that was published for the first time in *Die Neue Zeit* only in 1903.; Kalandra, "The Achievement of André Breton", p. 151.

that by acting within fields as diverse as architecture, art, typography, criticism, and history, or perhaps even by dreaming in a different manner, they are helping to change the world, bringing it closer to its revolutionary transformation. Nevertheless, they are also aware of the fact that such action cannot in itself be sufficient without being supported by a consequent Marxist analysis of social structures. Their writings, which are miles away from "the culture wars" of the present and the pessimism of the "end of history", give us spare but precious hints of what the cultural politics of Communism could have looked like without the historical tragedy of Stalinism; they incite the reader *to dream* about the forgotten possibilities and potentialities of the present and the past.

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INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PAINTING*

On the exhibit of the group of Czech Surrealists in the Mánes exhibition hall, Prague, January–February 1935

Karel Teige

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.7

The questions of those baffled viewers, whose academic aesthetic education has inoculated them with a great many prejudices, conventions, and false ideas about the functions of painting and artistic and poetic creation in general, and who ask, in front of modern paintings and sculptures, what this or that painting or this or that sculpture is supposed to represent, can hardly obtain the kind of answers that would satisfy their "common sense"; that is, the heap of prejudices and habits piled onto them by schools, which they value as their sophistication and intelligence. These people, confused by modern art, ask questions altogether in vain: questions about what this or that painting is supposed to represent and mean have been asked of critics and art theorists and of artists themselves by the public for perhaps a hundred years; many hundreds of thousands and millions of people have asked such questions. All of those who look at Cubist, abstract, or Surrealist paintings with utter incomprehension are fairly familiar with Impressionist paintings today and can hardly believe that sixty or seventy years ago people stood before Manet's and Monet's canvases in Paris, and perhaps only thirty years ago in front of Slavíček's paintings here, and they didn't want to believe that this or that painting was supposed to be a depiction of the Rue de Berne in Paris (Manet), the banks of the Seine at Argenteuil (Monet), or a panorama of Prague or the tree-lined avenue in Luhačovice (Antonín Slavíček). Could it be any consolation to today's queriers that perhaps in twenty, thirty years people will be unable to understand how they, today's pitiful beholders, have been so stubbornly and bravely unable to understand?...

Impressionist paintings were incomprehensible for their contemporary audience. Although we do not know what derision the paintings that first introduced perspective consistently into their representation were greeted with centuries ago, we still remember the uproar made by the bourgeois public when Cézanne, Gauguin, Derain, and then, more resolutely, the Cubists entirely abandoned perspectival representation in painting. Eugène Delacroix, whose contemporaries claimed that his pictures are painted with a drunken broom, was held up to the Impressionists after a short time as a model. Soon afterward, the Neo-Impressionists, Fauves, and Expressionists were bludgeoned with

the Impressionists, and later, the public demanded that the Cubists paint at least as "comprehensibly" as the Fauves, or like van Gogh, Gauguin, Signac, and Matisse, in whose paintings the things or persons depicted can still be recognized. And today, a certain section of the public and the backwards critics, if they have taken the pains to decipher Cubist pictures as though they were some kind of rebuses or hidden-word puzzles, and have learned to identify the obligatory guitar, bottle, cluster of grapes, pipes, herrings, newspapers, etc., stands before Surrealist pictures and – again understand nothing! In an article on "French Surrealism"[1] J. Fried writes that "besides Surrealism, he finds Cubism earthly and corporeal," because, he says, "in Cubism the process of detachment from life that went so far in Surrealism has not been completed, and even some Dadaist creations are as immediate and concrete as a two-fingered whistle when compared with Surrealism". This nonsensical judgement is proof that a certain part of leftist, supposedly Marxist art criticism is blinded by academicism, just as the bourgeois public is consistently several decades behind the development of art and poetic thought. By the time Cubism produced its first mature works, Plekhanov had reached the point where he was beginning (with certain reservations) to understand and appreciate the Impressionists, whereas he treated Cubism with philistine (see Plekhanov: Art and Social Life [*Umění a život společenský*]).[2] Today's Plekhanovs are willing to partially forgive the derided Cubists in order to irrevocably curse the Surrealists.

Many of our peer viewers who reject post-Cubist art with apodictic gestures, are evidently too proud of their eyes, through which, after all, they have not even learned to look at the world on their own without the aid of the spectacles of realistic-naturalistic painting, and they demand that painting should provide a more or less faithful transcript of optical impressions and create the illusion of reality. All academic theories of painting understand painting as an imitation of actual reality, and yet painting has never been exclusively a copy of nature and of the real. People of realistic-naturalistic habits of prejudice do not yet know that *imitation is not art*, whether it is imitation of a real model or imitation of another (say, Renaissance) work of art, and they demand that art imitates either nature and reality or classics and old masters, or that artists today imitate reality the same way that the masters of the Renaissance or the masters of bourgeois realism and academicism did in the 19th century. The conservative public reproaches art which does not want to sink to this copying and imitation, saying that it lacks form, while what it lacks is a uniform: we are all people, but our bodies are not the same, and only a uniform can make them the same, no matter which fashion's uniform it is.[3]

[1] Jan Fried, "Francouzských surrealismus" [French Surrealism], *Středisko* 4, no. 3 (1934), pp. 96–98.

[2] Georgij Valentinovich Plechanov, *Art and Social Life*, trans. A. Fineberg (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1953). (Editor's note)

[3] Herwarth Walden, *Erster deutscher Herbstalon* [First German Autumn Salon] (Berlin: Verlag der Sturm, 1913).

Despite the volleys of ridicule and outbursts of anger that are the usual accompaniment whenever a new artistic *-ism*, outlook, and direction makes it first public appearance, it is necessary to tell the audience which does not know which way to approach modern avant-garde art that since the invention of photography painting has considered itself to have been freed from the tasks of realistic and veristic depiction and in general from all the representational and documentary functions that photography has taken over; that henceforth it can in no way be the painter's task to paint the kind of pictures which, if they were set into a window frame in our dwelling, would be indistinguishable from a view of the landscape.

The Impressionists, particularly Georges Seurat and Paul Cézanne, dared to distance the picture from the actual subject, from the so-called true or probable depiction of reality, much more than had ever happened before in the history of European art, and they did it consciously and programmatically. This is why it is necessary for viewers who want to gain more insight into avant-garde art to realize, above all, the cardinal and structural difference between the painting of previous centuries; between the painting canonized by the academies (from the Renaissance up to and including the classicism and realism of the 19th century) and the nature of today's painting. The heroic struggle of avant-garde *-isms* from Monet and Renoir to Cézanne, Seurat, and Matisse to Picasso and Braque is an effort to liberate and negate the old concept of painting inherited from the Renaissance, and to prepare the way for new pictorial structures. The real break with the existing manners of painting takes place in *Cubism*: the break between yesterday and today does not take place between two generations, but rather happens in one generation, and often in one person: *Picasso* stands, as it were, at the focal point between two epochs.[4] His life's work has a dual aspect: some pictures concentrate all the living content of past centuries, while others take flight into fantasy and form the beginning of a new era of painting. In Picasso's case, we could perhaps say that the critical reassessment of historical heritage was accomplished through a creative act. Such a productive reassessment of historical legacy not only assimilates the past, but contains within itself the germs of the future. Cézanne gave himself permission to distance himself from nature and its realistic transcription. Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger, Robert Delaunay, Louis Marcoussis, B. Kubišta and Emil Filla, the sculptors Archipenko, Lipchitz, Brancusi, Gutfreund, and others – dared to move even further away than Cézanne had, and they created artworks that were completely independent from natural phenomenal reality. Cézanne reduced nature to a mere repertoire of forms and colors. Cubism arose out of this repertoire.[5] There is no doubt that at the end of his life Cézanne already sensed the possibility of a completely themeless, "objectless painting": his last watercolors clearly testify to this. However, it was only in Cubism that the idea of the *themeless picture*, of the picture conceived as a

[4] Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Produktion Paris 1930* (Zurich: Kunstsalon Wolfsberg, 1930).

[5] Amédée Ozenfant, *Art* (Paris: Jean Budry & Cte, 1928).

harmony of colored forms, was brought forth in a distinct way; a conception that mature in Orphism (Kupka, Delaunay, Kandinsky) and in abstraction (Malevich, Lissitzky, Rodchenko, Mondrian, Moholy-Nagy, etc.) Cubism allowed painters to cross the Rubicon; namely, to definitively negate the usual and hitherto academically-accepted concept of painting as the depiction of reality or illustration of story in the style of verisimilitude, and to eliminate the concept of painting as "biography" and "iconography". Picasso said at the time that the *epoch of painting* (i.e., of representation) *could be considered over!* With Cubism, a new epoch begins, the epoch of the avant-garde, an epoch of painting that produces, using any kind of materials (from the Cubists' pasting papers to photomontages and collage engravings), pictures of an entirely new structure and nature. The epoch of Orphism has begun, which has brought painting closer to the conditions of music and taught us to look at painting as we listen to music: we do not demand from a musical work any communication or interpretation of any external plots, and therefore painting must also be granted the right to renounce all representation. The epoch of abstraction, Futurism, Dada, Suprematism and Neo-plasticism is beginning, an epoch in which the image becomes its own composition of colored forms, *an image for itself*, and no longer represents either figures, landscape, or still lifes, but only represents itself, a colorful poem, colorful music, colorful harmony. Cubism and above all, the protean work of Pablo Picasso, which also fertilized Surrealism, is the most significant moment in the development of art in the immediately preceding years, and it has become the starting point for all further experiments, searches, and solutions. Post-Cubist art, rebellious and not very conciliatory toward academic prejudices, has led us directly into new areas of vision, poetry, imagination, and spirit.[6] Beginning with Cubism, painting consistently and fundamentally placed itself on a different front and a different platform than the sphere of academic, conventional, realistic-naturalistic descriptive painting. Post-Cubist art as a whole represents a set of values and experiments that have not yet been catalogued by art history. Those who want to approach the conception of this new art (to which Vincenc Kramář's *Kubismus*[7] provides a useful key) must renounce attempts to solve Cubist pictures like rebuses, considering abstract painting as mere decoration or ornamentation, and looking only for literary symbolism or allegory in Surrealist painting.

After the peak of Cubism and so-called abstract art, the face of painting and of sculpture is changing again, right before our eyes. Meanwhile, the forms of Cubist and Suprematist canvases have descended into the streets and significantly fertilized new typography, advertising graphics, posters, photography, and here and there also film, sometimes even descending into decoration of haberdashery. Painting that went through a period of

[6] Carola Giedion-Welcker, "Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts" [The Art of the 20th Century], *Das Kunstblatt* 14, no. 3 (1930).

[7] Vincenc Kramář, *Kubismus* [Cubism] (Brno: Moravsko-slezská revue, 1921). (Editor's note.)

abstraction and geometric discipline, a period in which it broke away from the illusionist representation of reality through optical tricks and gave free rein to a lyricism of colors, to fantasy that is unbounded in its flight, no prohibitions and orders from academism. This painting today tries to be not just painting, not just "pure painting", about itself and for itself, but wants to act beyond and above its color harmonies. Cubism and abstraction, in their strict formalism, purged painting and sculpture's old, essentially Renaissance "contents"; at the same time, painting conceived as a self-sufficient harmony of colors and geometric forms, must become *painting for its own sake*; the means, before it was recognized as a means, must be understood as an end. If today there is a turning point from the abstract formalism in which painting eventually reached its limit to Malevich's "zero point," it is because the imagination of today's painters is once again outgrowing the means of painting and moving away from painting that does not satisfy the painful human need for hallucinatory expressions. Cubism's theoretical and critical comrades in arms in arms therefore accuse Surrealist painting of having lost a balance that had been painstakingly worked out for objective and rule-bound pictorial composition; they claim that formal order is neglected and denied in Surrealist paintings, and that Surrealist painting is nothing but a literary misunderstanding, like the Symbolist painting of yore; and that Surrealism is, simply put, a non-painterly deviation. On the other hand, those for whom Surrealist works are not mute have the feeling that Surrealism returned the primordial function painting and sculpture had before it became an academic art, when its signs, symbols, runes, and abstract charts were generally *humanly* comprehensible despite not being copies of phenomenal reality.[8] Surrealist painting takes us to the extremities of dreams, seismographically recording internal tremors and underground movements, drawing waking dreams, illusions projected into reality, and providing graphic and colorful transcriptions of deep, essential forces, unprecedented psychograms. In Surrealist painting, the painterly, purely painterly values that Cubism freed from the naturalistic servitude of interpreting conventional reality, again become a *means* to an end, a means in the service of human expression…

Because Surrealism is not just a school of art, but a human attitude that engages human beings in their totality, it cannot be limited merely to the realm of art.[9] And that is also why Surrealist painting does not limit itself to the framework that both academics and Cubists consider to be the inner sphere of the painter's work. It is a characteristic and inner necessity of Surrealism to break apart all conventional frameworks: Surrealism produces works – for example Breton's *Communicating Vessels*[10] – that transcend the limits of art through the limits of science, if we may paraphrase Apollinaire's famous sentence from the prose book *The Heresiarch and Co.*, where he speaks of the limits of

[8] Ozenfant, *Art*.

[9] Guy Mangeot, *Histoire du surréalisme* [History of Surrealism] (Bruxelles 1934).

[10] André Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Marry Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln and London: University Nebraska Press 1990). (Editor's note)

life at the far reaches of art. Surrealist activity is not limited to artistic creation, but is at the same time an experimental activity, akin to experimental science, and a critical and revolutionary activity which is akin to a political revolutionary movement. And so Surrealist painting is not only painting, but *at the same time it is an experiment and critique in the revolutionary sense*. Jindřich Štyrský's montages of engravings are a revolutionary verdict on the filth of bourgeois humanity, a critique that causes more profound shocks than Georg Grosz's caricatures or John Heartfield's political montages. Political cartoonists, caricaturists, or the so-called tendentious writers limit themselves to attacking the social effects of certain social instances and institutions, such as marriage, the family, the church, morality, and the civil code, whereas Surrealists hear the cry of humanity, enslaved and deformed by these institutions, and they see how their straitjacket keeps humanity in abject spiritual misery, they condemn the class world not only for economic-political oppression, but also for humiliating human desire, affects, and instincts, masked by conventional and sentimental hypocrisy.[11] It is understandable that the strong realization of human desire and does not allow Surrealist images to subordinate their subversive content to the dictate of form and "purely artistic considerations" and integral tendentiousness, poeticism, or works cannot help but break down the framework of "pure painting" that was stretched on its frame in the studios of Cubists and abstract painters.

Surrealist painting owes its definitive break with imitative representation to Cubism. However, it is impossible to conflate Surrealist painting with Cubism and with post-Cubist movements, despite that almost all of today's Surrealists went through this school of modern painting (with the exception of the painter Salvador Dali, who came to Surrealism from the opposite side, by way of Böcklin, Millet, and Meissonier, and from conventional folk color-printing) – and despite the fact that many Cubist painters, especially Picasso and, here, Emil Filla, came within a step of Surrealism. It would be rather tricky to look for the ancestors and predecessors of Surrealism in the past. However, Salvador Dali speaks of "surréalisme à travers les âges" (about Surrealism in all centuries) and in his first manifesto of Surrealism, André Breton lists a number of poets, philosophers, and painters' past efforts which are demonstrably related to Surrealism. Perhaps it would be possible to trace a genealogy of Surrealist painting from the grotesque and primitive old Flemish masters, from Hieronymus Bosch, or from Odilon Redon, Gustave Moreau, James Ensor, or Marc Chagall; in short, from all the painters whose work lived not by the rational discipline of classical construction, but by the non-formal intensity of fantasy. However, Surrealism does not need to point to a gallery of ancestors: it is itself rather the predecessor and origin of a new era, in which art will be replaced by new ways of manifesting human desire and will take on a truly human expression.

[11] Mangeot, *Histoire du surréalisme*.

If we are faced with Surrealist works today, let us not decode and interpret them as old allegories. Let us remember that modern psychology distinguishes two continuous and yet distinct systems in the human psyche: the *system of consciousness*, which is governed by the *reality principle* and which includes logical thinking, reasoning, the concepts of causality and identity; that is, scientific and practical thinking, and the *system of the unconscious*, which many people attempt to make inaccessible to themselves, and to close off. The system of the unconscious is connected to powerful organic needs, is governed by the *pleasure principle*: subconscious thinking is prelogical, proceeds through associations, condenses, substitutes, and confuses things or persons, or gives them a symbolic image. It is poetic thinking. (It is not the task of this article to deal with the question of whether the theories of Freud or other psychoanalysts are correct or not, and what can be considered from these theories, as of the present, to be verified by exact experience.)[12] According to psychoanalytic theories, the libido (sexual desire) receives only incomplete satisfaction, and therefore turns away from external interests and becomes introverted. The dream provides the possibility of escape into an imaginary world. Art and poetry, unlike dreams, sublimate the libido which thereby, through the path of sublimation, returns to the real world. How is an artist different from a child, a primitive, a dreamer, or a schizophrenic? Here, introversion is general and held in common. The dreamer and the schizophrenic are completely detached from the world and live only in their subjective imaginations, yet the imagery and images of the dream have their origin in reality. The mystic projects his subjective phantoms into his visions, prophecies, and revelations, yet some people accept them, share them, believe them. The artist and the child at play, unlike the dreamer, mystic, and madman, do not mistake their fictions for reality. The artist, who, like the citizen, intervenes in political reality, gives his "play" an additional social task, which is to engage other people. If the artist's "play," the artwork, is to have an effect on a viewer or reader, we are faced with the problem of its *comprehensibility*, or, rather, the problem of its *communicability* [*sdělitelnost*]. We call the problem "communicability" and not "comprehensibility" [*srozumitelnost*]: we comprehend [*rozumět*] science, we communicate ourselves [*sdílet se*] with art. The two spheres of our mind, the system of consciousness and the system of the unconscious, which are not completely separated from each other by an impenetrable wall, correspond to a dual type of mental activity, which naturally also is not divided in half by a precise line of demarcation: namely, science and art. These two types of intellectual production have a common origin; however, gradually, over the centuries, they have moved apart, so that science became increasingly more objective, while art became increasingly subjective.[13] Here, too, we mustn't forget that art cannot

[12] Wilhelm Reich, Michel Sapir, and Vladimir Jurinec, *Marxismus a freudismus* [Marxism and Freudism] (Praha: Levá fronta, 1933).

[13] Jean Frois-Wittmann, "L'Art moderne et le principe du plaisir", *Minotaure* 1, no. 3–4 (1933), pp. 79–80.

be precisely demarcated from other spheres of human activity, and that Surrealism brings art, directly or indirectly, into the realm of science and into the realm of practical social-revolutionary activity. And the dialectical-materialist future opens before us a hitherto undermined perspective of synthetic forms of "science" and "art", of forms of universalism and such spiritual creation where the general subjectivity of art will be integrated into the objectivity of science.

The problem of comprehensibility, or, better stated: of the communicability of art and especially of Surrealist creation, is primarily posed in the unconscious. You know that it has always been the artist's desire to dive expression to the "ineffable". The "ineffable" can be made communicable even through the words of a poem, but never "comprehensible". But how is it possible to communicate to a viewer something that in a Surrealist picture or poem is an expression of the artist's subconscious, subjective phantasms, driven by the pleasure principle? Attention to life's most mundane events, incidents, and coincidences, attention to sleep and semi-dreaming, and attention to erotic facts can show us that the unconscious of two persons, the silence of lovers whose contact is through emotions and the body, or even the unconscious minds of several people are mutually communicable and can be mutually understood. However, is the expression of subconscious phantasms communicable in the realm of art, in the realm of what is called the esthetic?

Classical art had an interpreter who mediated between the artist and the viewer: this mediator was precisely the imitation of external reality, or, in works of an unreal and allegorical nature, it was the use of conventional symbolic signs. Beginning with Cubism, however, modern art excluded this mediating factor and rejected both the imitation of reality and the florid language of symbolic signs because it understood that the imitation of reality and the information about events that used to be one of the tasks of art, is today the task of cinema, photography, and journalism, and that it is necessary to return to what is the specificity and characteristic of art, which is *expression*. The direct expression of the author's mental life, the expression of his unconscious ideas, his unconscious lyricism. And here, we often hear the objection that Charles Baudoin openly formulated in his book *Psychoanalysis of Art* [Psychanalyse de l'art], in which he attempted, albeit regrettably in an incorrect manner, to lead a psychoanalytic probe into a little-explored theory of art theory. Namely, the objection that the viewer cannot react to the artist's subjective and individual complexes to share and understand their expression; and that art, it is said, in order to be communicable, must return to reality through primitive and fundamental complexes. Art can be communicable only in the case that it is the expression not of individual, but general primitive complexes, which are thus collective complexes, and therefore by means of general expressive symbols (actually allegory!) it can supposedly speak to its audience.[14] An objection like this must be answered by saying art which uses general expressive symbols (allegories!)

[14] Charles Baudoin, *Psychanalyse de l'art* [Psychoanalysis of Art] (Paris: F. Alcan 1929).

is communicable and comprehensible in the intellectual and conscious sphere. By using general symbols we are in fact remaining with academic allegory and we do not transcend the area of classical normative aesthetics, if we justify the objective validity of "beauty" by pointing to those primitive and general complexes. However, the problem of communicability in the sphere of the unconscious is not yet solved by pointing out the generality of the fundamental complexes. When it comes to examining the communicability of personal complexes, it is necessary to reduce the importance of those primitive complexes which dominate Freud, Rank, Pfister, Baudoin, and other psychoanalysts and which force us to look for the Oedipus or Diana complex in every work of art; it is necessary to examine *how* the artist plays on the theme of these fundamental complexes. If we move from general complexes to individual complexes, we recognize that even these personal complexes as special constellations are more general than is usually thought.

In traditional painting, the expression of the unconscious and its complexes, fundamental or personal, was shrouded in imitation of reality and aesthetic conventions: it was an indirect expression. In modern art, particularly in Surrealist works, this expression is as exposed as possible, it is as direct as possible. Yes, this "incomprehensible" art is not obscure, but rather expresses the unconscious too clearly. Just as Cubism too clearly presented the principle of pictorial construction to the viewer, its compositional balance and color harmony, which was hidden under realistic depiction in old art, so that artistically uninitiated viewers could not find it under the scene or under the landscape – so Surrealism too clearly gives expression to the unconscious, general, or personal complexes which previously the viewer did not even suspect and sometimes did not even sense underneath the themes depicted in traditional painting. If art today renounces the rational conventions of expression, this does not mean that it is spiritualist, decadent, morbid, or even insane. An artist is not a madman, and the old classical parallels between art and madness should be left alone. The artist as a person, as a citizen, is adapted to reality by necessity and as a revolutionary he is adapted to the reality in which he wants to change the existing reality. We claimed that the artist does not mistake his fantasies for reality, does not confuse subjective experience and illusion for objective reality, and differentiates between poetic knowledge and interpretation of reality and rational and practical knowledge and interpretation. However, the subjective principle of human fantasy is the very same principle of poetic creation;[15] it is the principle of art's "escape" from reality, the "principle of dissatisfaction of the real individual with the real world,"[16] an expression of the revolt of human individual tendencies and instincts against an unacceptable world: yes, rather than an "escape,"

[15] Frois-Wittmann, "L'Art moderne et le principe du plaisir".

[16] Záviš Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu" [The Surreality in Surrealism], in *Surrealismus v diskusi* [Surrealism under Discussion], ed. Ladislav Štoll and Karel Teige (Praha: Levá fronta 1934), p. 90.

here is a *revolt* against the oppression and censorship of the world of ossified authorities, fetishes, institutions, and superstitions which oppress the human personality's freedom of development.

If we emphasize the personal, subjective (generally subjective) principle of artistic creation and if we ask for the communicability of its expression of individual mental complexes, we must, by contrast with most psychoanalytic research to date, which has been limited mainly to the psychology of the creator and creation, also look at the psychology of the viewer, the psychology of contemplation. We have to see the work of art and the viewer in a dialectical relationship, we have to see creation and contemplation as dialectical opposites, and we have to look for the actual, real, living poem in the synthesis of both opposites. If it were said that a poem, even unread, remains a poem, it is necessary to supplement this potentiality with the Mallarméan point that the poem is completed and re-poemed [*dobásňována*] only in the mind of the reader. Every art, every poetry is fully realized only through the dialectical unity of creation and contemplation, the synthesis of the poet and the reader, the synthesis of the book with its reading, of the picture with the viewer. Only a read book is a book realized and brought to life: through reading, a poem changes *from a thing in itself to a thing for us*, it transforms from a closed treasure chest into our own wealth. Through the mutual penetration of the dialectical opposites of creation and contemplation, what is called "artistic and cultural life" arises, which is communication between people through the poetic word or pictorial visions. Paintings and poems ask the viewer and reader to be their co-creator and completer, because they can only attain their full realization in the mind of the viewer and reader, because they are only able to come to life in his contemplations and in how they affect the viewer's psychism and the viewer overall, and how they liberate the human being within the viewer, transform him, and incite him to action. In the synthesis, in the meeting of subjective forces of the author with the subjective forces of the reader, the validity and effect of the work of art is objectified. Art can act on the viewer like a magnet on iron; that is, by gradually communicating its charge, or it can be a fuse that ignites gunpowder in the viewer's psyche. Some art does not allow the viewer any other associations than its own phantasms: with its unveiled expression it exposes its "content" to the viewer. Other art tends more to suggest and imply, evokes rather than attacks, and can thus play out the viewer's psychism in all shades and positions, allowing the viewer to complete the "dream" of the painting with his own "dream". In contrast to the views of Charles Baudoin, who argued that art can only be the expression of general primitive complexes using general symbols, the activity and work of the Surrealists thus far provides evidence of the general validity of the subjective principle of artistic creation; i.e., evidence that the expression of the artist's subjective complexes resonates with the viewer. The association of ideas in unconscious thought is not arbitrary, but subject to laws, the chain of associations can be analyzed, its mechanism and necessity revealed: the determination of associations is latent, but it exists. The meaning of a certain lyrical image in a poem or a painting,

even if it is provided by a subjective idea, illusion, or hallucination, is as strong as the strength of its instinctive and erotic determinant. Where this determinant is weak, the picture does not excite the viewer and reader. A picture that cannot be analyzed down to its deep erotic sources, or a picture that does not come out of such sources does not arouse a feeling of pleasure in the viewer, or, as was said in professorial aesthetics, a feeling of aesthetic pleasure.

What is the social function of art that, like Surrealism, so vigorously emphasizes its subjective principle? An art that wants to serve the interests of society directly would, of course, have to submit to what psychology calls the reality principle, and here the freedom of its imagination and the limit of its departure from the imitation of nature would be determined by the sympathy that the artist's license to imitate reality has in the class where the artist wants to serve directly.[17] Today, however, we do not live in an era when art can be the handmaid of society, another form of journalism, if it wants to remain art and not abandon the richness of its own resources. We have seen that the narrow conception of art as a weapon and clarion call to action, temporarily and unconditionally necessary under certain circumstances justified and necessary, leads "ultimately to the impoverishment of poetic expression and human response, even though the goal of the service which art has imposed upon itself is higher, nobler, and more revolutionary".[18] Art can and must serve life, serve revolution. It is Surrealism that rejects the bloodless art-for-art's-sake and sees artistic creation as a means, not an end. It is of course necessary for art to serve revolution in a different way than the one imagined and called for by promoters of servile, labor, agitation, and tendentious art. Revolutionary art differs from the various products of fascists, nationalists, and clerics precisely in that it sees its social task in influencing, revolutionizing, and enriching the viewer's not only conscious but also unconscious mind, that it goes directly after *human truth*.[19] We do not want man to become forever a rational-pragmatic automaton, incapable of revolt, a mechanism for utilitarian values, paralyzed by capitalist civilization and yoked to capitalist and accursed "work". In order to prevent the complete suppression of the real living person, the authentic human and therefore revolutionary individual, we must realize that the area of the unconscious and its impulses and affects are too important for this "real human individual" and for his full, free development, for biological and psychological balance and instinctive certainty of man, for them to be forbidden entry into life and allowed to manifest only in sleep. This is why we need the kind of art that would be a manifestation of unconscious affects and ripples; it would be a reflection, and image, and a record of all the human forces that practical life cannot

[17] Nikolai Mikhailovich Shchekotov, "Pravda v iskusstve" [Truth in Art], *Iskusstvo* 2, no. 3 (1934).

[18] André Gide, "Silná a vítězná literatura" [Strong and Victorious Literature], *Tvorba* 9, no. 26 (1934), p. 406.

[19] Gide, "Silná a vítězná literatura".

use and absorb. If we do not want a person to become a machine or an accounting ledger it is necessary that even in an adult individual the unconscious infantile relations to reality do not die and wither so that even for an adult person and adult humanity their childhood retains that "eternal charm" (the way Marx speaks about it at the very end of "Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy")[20] and is a regenerator of his spiritual powers. The harmonious development of the human personality presupposes the dialectical resolution of the antinomy between the unconscious system and the conscious system, the arrangement of feasible connecting paths between both systems, and the easy possibility of becoming aware of the unconscious. If the principle of human imagination is a fruitful principle of "dissatisfaction of the real individual with the real world,"[21] i.e., the principle of non-adjustment to social reality, the task of revolutionary art in the class world will be to deepen this dissatisfaction, thus freeing fantasy. Imagination and fantasy clearly have a subversive role in Surrealism, realizing the most improbable things without it being possible to deny them: the wonders of fantasy are an effective indictment of a barren social reality, and their revolutionary character consists in making the institutions and realities of the social order deeply suspect, because it gives a person the inkling that freedom lives in the imaginary world, expelled from the despotic social reality, and that it is necessary to make the real world the realm of this freedom through revolutionary transformation. If a classless society demands man's harmonious adaptation to reality, a synthesis of the individual's "satisfaction and dissatisfaction" with the world, the lesson from modern psychology is that the safest psychological health, man's best adaptation to reality, can occur when the pleasure principle can be fully admitted wherever the reality principle is not indispensable,[22] and that, on the other hand, no conception and no social arrangement is reliable if it is contrary to man's instinctive interests. In the future of the classless world, the pleasure principle will probably merge or synthesize with the opposing reality principle: then art, governed simultaneously by the pleasure principle and the reality principle, will become leavening in the dough of life.

The misunderstanding between the viewer and modern art, the public's resistance to Surrealist poetry, whether in its painted or book form, is the result of the viewer's and reader's inhibitions, because the work of art awakens in a viewer brought up in a bourgeois school, family, and morality, that which the viewer attempts to suppress in himself, following the order of social morality throughout his life. Not that such viewers do not respond to Surrealist works: they even seem to "understand" these works, yet they forbid themselves from understanding them. Many people consciously suppress within themselves what we could call "Surrealist psychology" and remain willing slaves

[20] Karl Marx, "Introduction, Economic Manuscripts of 1857–58", in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 28 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), p. 48. (Editor's note)

[21] Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu".

[22] Frois-Wittmann, "L'Art moderne et le principe du plaisir".

of conventions and morality imposed on them by capitalist society, which forbids poetry as sin and madness. A work of art loosens the viewer's inhibitions, opening the person's floodgates to streams of instinctual impulses and human inclinations, thus making them freer. The reality principle and the pleasure principle are alienated from each other precisely because of the influence of morality and its prohibitions: after all, moral consciousness has an indirect relationship to reality, and a change in the social concept of good and evil can also influence an individual's character and psychological balance. Socialist society replaces reactionary Christian-bourgeois morality and subconscious formation with a technique of life and a goal of life which are based not on the interests of domination, but on scientific knowledge of the relationships between the human being and reality, the person and the community, and which will not hinder the free development of the personality and stifle man's instinctive powers. Socialist unwritten laws will therefore be "a reflection of the essential in the movement of the universe" (Lenin on Hegel), whereas bourgeois morality is a reflection of interests which are in sharp conflict with this movement of the universe and with the movement of history and which try in vain to control and hinder this movement.[23]

"Understanding" of a Surrealist poem or painting takes place, as we have said, without a rational mediator between the work and the viewer. This concerns communication, not comprehension. There is no need for the viewer to "comprehend" the artist's intentions: he certainly will not understand them if he views the work of art through the glasses of convention and inadequate old normative aesthetics. To the question of how it is possible for a work of art to be communicable outside the sphere of general primitive complexes and their general allegories, and how it is possible for the viewer to respond to the artist's individual, private complexes, we answer that art is not about individual traumas, but rather about the tendencies from which these traumas arise, and these tendencies are common to a large number of persons, perhaps to most people.[24] The stronger the hidden, latent drive-based meaning in the work of art, the stronger the viewer's emotion. If, in a Surrealist painting, in contrast to a Cubist still life, the objects are not maintained in an objective order of logical and conventional belonging (table, bottle, plate, book, bowl of fruit, violin), but are there without any external congruity, outside a conventional connection, according to the order of imaginative combination and chance, if the Surrealist image is not only "incalculable in the selection and use of means of expression" (Štyrský),[25] but equally incalculably groups diverse and distant objects whose encounter is "beautiful as the chance encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on an operating table" (Lautréamont), amazing poetic metaphors and unexpected correspondences can arise from the encounter, which can captivate

[23] Frois-Wittmann, "L'Art moderne et le principe du plaisir".

[24] Frois-Wittmann, "L'Art moderne et le principe du plaisir".

[25] Jindřich Štyrský, "Surrealistické malířství (Několik poznámek)" [Surrealist Painting (A Few Notes)], in *Texty*, ed. Lenka Bydžovská and Karel Srp (Praha: Argo, 2007), p. 129. (Editor's note)

the viewer's unconscious psyche, even if he "doesn't understand" them. Yes, the "the darkest images sometimes have the most light" (Nezval),[26] if they covertly affect the viewer in such a way that they awaken unconscious deep movements of instincts in him. Certain concrete and abstract images, which can perhaps awaken personal, subjective ideas, feelings, or memories in each perceptive viewer, are generally, and therefore "objectively" compelling, they create a common ground of understanding between the reader and the poet, a terrain where even the reader feels at home, in his own poetry of ideas, memories, and inner life. Certain images, shapes, metaphors, and objects appeal to the imagination of the poet as well as the reader, the viewer, as well as the painter, *without being general symbols* as understood by psychoanalysis. The Christian morality of slaves, in order to ensure that the supposedly free people did not rebel, forced aesthetics to set out lofty abstract and ascetic ideals of beauty and to deny that the images of painting, sculpture, theater, and poetry are not merely the fruits of aesthetic speculation and idealization, but that they have a deep, latent drive-based sense that they are an incarnation of erotic desire, which they objectify through substitution or metaphor, and that poetry is born from the process of metaphorical realization of this desire. That the most diverse elements, which are not connected by logic in a picture or poem, are connected through vital, instinctive relationships: that truly "painting is the marriage and the adultery of colors" (J. K. Huysmans).[27]

We do not believe that poetry can be neutered and that pictures can be viewed "purely aesthetically" without the deep excitement of the human being and his instinctive forces and erogenous zones. Neither the Capitoline Venus nor Venus in Furs arose from "purely aesthetic" speculation. Moments of eroticism are decisive in the impression a work of art makes on us, even if we are not consciouss of it at all. "Sex love in particular has undergone a development and won a place during the last eight hundred years which has made it a compulsory pivotal point of all poetry during this period" (Engels).[28] André Breton comments on this (in *Point du jour*), that "since Rimbaud and Lautréamont, the concept of poetry has of course been expanded, yet love conceals the heavens in flowers".[29]

[26] Vítězslav Nezval, "Pozdrav sjezdu" [Greeting to the Congress], in *Manifesty, eseje a kritické projevy z let 1931–1941, Vítězslav Nezval Dílo, vol. 25*, ed. Milan Blahynka (Praha: Československý spisovatel,1974), p. 103. (Editor's note)

[27] Joris Karl Huysmans, "L'Exposition des Indépendants en 1880" [The Exhibition of the Independents in 1880], in *L'art moderne* [Modern Art] (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1883), p. 135. (Editor's note)

[28] Friedrich Engels, "Feuerbach and End of Classical German Philosophy", in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 26 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990) p. 375. (Editor's note)

[29] Cf. André Breton, "Lyubovnaya lodka razbilas o byt" [Love's boat has smashed against the daily grind], in *Break of day*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press ,1999), p. 60. (Editor's note)

The language of Surrealist images, which cannot be interpreted by the grammar of academic aesthetics, is a direct manifestation of unconscious thinking, mainly in the form of dreams, thinking, in which the pleasure principle wants to take over the world. It is unguided thinking or perhaps we can call it unthinking thinking, a thinking that is lived, heard, seen, felt, in which the sun of eroticism transforms moral and aesthetic ideas with the blaze of its temperature, changing the repulsive into the pleasant, sensitivity and tenderness into cruelty, and vice versa, as in ecstasy and in sleep. For the viewer, the key to understanding Surrealist paintings may be their own imaginative ideas. The viewer who examines a painting through the glasses of academicism and asks what the painting depicts prevents the possibility that he will be moved and enchanted by the painting. If viewers are primarily interested in what the painting portrays; i.e., its rational, anecdotal content, they ignore the emotions, ideas, and dreams that the painting evokes in them. The intrinsic nerve of Surrealist painting cannot be grasped by the aesthetics of the past: only psychoanalysis could reach it. But for perception, for contemplation, rational interpretation is of little use and even the painters themselves often could not say why they painted a picture one way or another. Inspired by subconscious mental life, a work of poetry or painting can appear just as "incomprehensible" to its author as to the reader and viewer. Surrealist paintings and poems ask the viewer and reader to perceive them as a poet; in the silence of contemplation, in which we hear the stirrings of the subconscious, such images cause strings to resonate within the viewer, who forgets their music in his daily life, or he has forbidden it to himself. These images provoke the interplay of memories and associations; born from flashes of imagination and fantasy, tender or cruel, quiet or furious, melodic or destructive, they awaken imaginative currents in the viewer's psyche. For the Constructivists, beauty was mechanical and geometric. For the Surrealists (defined by André Breton) "*beauty will be convulsive – or will not be at all*":[30] it is therefore beauty that serves the tendencies of passion and love, beauty that is "veiled erotic and explosive," the beauty of poetry that nourishes us and multiplies feelings of love and revolt. Let us answer the question of how we should understand Surrealist paintings with Rimbaud's words: "*Littéralement et dans tous les sens*!" (Literally and in all senses.)

The possibility of understanding a work of art, just like the possibility and ability to create a work of art, can be acquired by special training, assuming certain innate or acquired mental dispositions, so-called talent. This is perhaps inherent in all normal people and manifests in all of them in the paradisiacal poetry of childhood, only to then be suffocated by the bourgeois family and school and social upbringing, social oppression and concern for daily bread. It seems that all people have enough of that power called "talent" within their unconscious psyche; however, they do not have the

[30] Cf. André Breton, *Mad love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 19. (Editor's note)

possibility and the courage to admit its manifestations. The disposition we are talking about here, which is man's ability to listen to his unconscious, read the tendencies of his instinctive powers and drives and to express, through the filter of his personality, general human desires, which are the basis of people's mutual trust and the brotherhood of the revolutionary class.

"[...] *Just as only music awakens a person's sense for music, as even the most beautiful music has no effect on the unmusical ear* [...]"[31] art is a force that gives voice to unconscious tendencies in the viewer, and therefore the ability to understand a work of art, which is the ability to listen to one's own unconscious, is awakened and cultivated precisely through the influence and study of works of art. Only art and poetry can lead the viewer and reader to an ever deeper and more intense understanding of art, "[...] Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form – in short, *senses* capable of human gratification, senses affirming themselves as essential powers of *man*. For not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses, the practical senses (will, love, etc.), in a word, *human* sense, the human nature of the senses, comes to be by virtue of *its* object, by virtue of *humanised* nature".[32] The sense for poetry arises and develops in the human being only through the effect of its subject, namely poetry, on the human psyche. And as "*the dealer in minerals sees only the commercial value but not the beauty and the specific character of the mineral: he has no mineralogical sense*",[33] such a rational, pragmatic, and positivist spirit, who sees in a painting only its rational validity, only its realistic message, only a landscape, a similar likeness, Oldřich and Božena, "Má vlast"[34] or three applies on a table, accordingly what the picture depicts, he does not perceive its "beauty and specific character" because he lacks artistic sense, because he is incapable of reacting within the drive-based realm of his psychism and he is unable to loosen its inhibitions. Indeed, it is necessary to "*to make man's sense human,* [...] *to create the human sense corresponding to the entire wealth of human and*

[31] Karl Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem jahre 1844" [Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844], in *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe Teil: Abt. 1. / Bd. 3., Die heilige Familie und Schriften von Marx von Anfang 1844*, ed. David Riazanov (Frankfurt am Main: Marx-Engels-Archiv Verlag, 1932), p. 120. (The English translation is adopted from Karl Marx , *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan and Dirk J. Struikl (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 95 – Editor's note.)

[32] Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem jahre 1844", p. 120. (The English translation: Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 95–96.) (Editor's note)

[33] Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem jahre 1844", p. 120. (The English translation: Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 96. – Editor's note)

[34] [Teige refers here to the Czech legend of Oldřich and Božena, and to Bedřich Smetana's set of patriotic symphonic poems *Má vlast* (My Fatherland), which celebrates Czech national identity. – Translator's note.]

natural substance".[35] Art fulfills its social function and its revolutionary function not only by serving daily slogans and interests, but because it "humanizes the senses of man," who is daily stripped of his humanity by the monstrosity of the capitalist World. It does this through speaking to his most human affective forces, to the forces of *revolt* and *love*, giving him the opportunity to release prosaic inhibitions and develop poetic receptivity and imagination, thereby awakening the ability to "understand all the richness of man and nature," and to develop "the entire cosmos of emotions including a new eroticism" (Bukharin);[36] it gives the viewer the rapture of desire and hope that makes the meaning of life supremely intense. Art is indeed not a "disinterested play" but rather a *play with the fire of life*, it is not a luxury but an important sphere of human joy, freeing the ground for a rebirth of the human being, creating new vents for a new expression of vital forces. Art and poetry are a reflection of human desire and identified only with states of freedom: since the goal of Surrealist art is the dazzling "realm of freedom" and the sovereign liberty of man, this art is an integrally revolutionary manifestation in a world where man is bound by the straitjacket of morals, conventions, and social enslavement.

Translated by Melinda Reidinger

[35] Marx, "Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem jahre 1844", p. 120. (The English translation: Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 96. – Editor's note)

[36] Cf. Nikolai Bukharin, "Poetry, Poetics, and the Problems of Poetry in the USSR", in *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The debate on socialist realism and modernism in the Soviet Union*, ed. H. G. Scott (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), p. 255. (Editor's note)

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ANDRÉ BRETON*

Notes on the Czech Publication of Breton's *Communicating Vessels*

Záviš Kalandra

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.8

We have already been able to read in the revolutionary-oriented Czech press some number of opinions regarding André Breton's book *Les Vases communicants*, which was recently published in Czech translation thanks to the Czechoslovak Surrealist Group. (The French original, *Les vases communicants*, was published in 1932,[1] the Czech translation was published in the autumn of 1934 by the Mánes publishing house.[2]) The fact that the left-wing press had already been discussing this book even before the Czech translation was published illustrates the well-deserved attention that Breton's work aroused in the ranks of revolutionary intellectuals. To be truthful, however, it must be stated that whether the reviews of *Communicating Vessels* were published by *Tvorba*, *Středisko*, or other journals, giving this or that impression – all the reviews published so far have one common characteristic: they overlook the real importance of Breton's book for the further development of Marxist-Leninist theory. The critics of *Communicating Vessels* clung to details, sinking their teeth into some of Breton's formulations which to them *seemed* to reek of idealism, they were unable in this regard to get rid of a certain narrow-minded prejudice that sometimes led them to make downright ridiculous errors, and nowhere did they even come close to getting to the bottom of *Communicating Vessels*. They cannot understand, that is to say, that this wonderful *poetic* book of Surrealism is a *scientific* achievement: namely, the substantively *correct posing of a problem* whose central importance for the further building of the system of Marxist-Leninist theory should be evident to true Marxists.

The *formal* side of the emergence, transformations, and disappearance of ideological ideas remained unexplored *in its universality* by the founders and in the classics of historical materialism. Friedrich Engels emphasizes this many times in his letters, drawing "attention to this point for the future," to this "mistake" (as he explicitly states!)

* Záviš Kalandra, "Čin André Bretona. Poznámky k českému vydání Bretonovy knihy Spojité nádoby". *Doba* 1, no. 15–16 (1935), pp. 218–222.

[1] André Breton, *Les Vases Communicants* (Paris: les Cahiers Libres, 1932). (Editor's note)

[2] André Breton, *Spojité nádoby*, trans. Vítězslav Nezval and Jindřich Honzl (Praha: Spolek výtvarných umělců Mánes, 1934). (Editor's note)

and underscoring the necessity of subjecting to scientific analysis what was "neglected at first".[3] That a particular being determines, always and everywhere, a particular consciousness, and not vice versa: this fundamental thesis of their theory was too thoroughly demonstrated by Marx and Engels against all forms of idealism for there to be any need to add to their arguments; it still remains however to ascertain *how* being determines consciousness; that is, to finally fulfill Marx's demand for the end of "empty talk about consciousness" as "real knowledge has to take its place".[4]

To do this it is necessary to start, as Karl Marx demands, from "real living individuals" and to consider "consciousness solely as their consciousness".[5] It is therefore necessary to study the living *psychophysical* individual, the individual who (in Engels's words) "with flesh, blood, and brain, belong[s] to nature, and exist[s] in its midst":[6] otherwise, our method would have nothing in common with *materialism.* It is additionally necessary to observe the *social* individual in his practical activity; otherwise we would find ourselves outside the method of *historical materialism.* Finally, we must see the *historical* individual in his socially reciprocal, changing relations: otherwise we will abandon the ground of *dialectical materialism.* In short, we must comprehend being in its *concrete totality;* and in that same concrete totality we must also study *consciousness.* And here André Breton has it a thousand times right when he says: "How can we even believe ourselves capable of seeing, of hearing, of touching anything if we take no account of these innumerable possibilities, which, for most people, cease to be available at the first sounds of the milkman."[7]

Put otherwise, the *dream*, whether it be a nighttime dream of "normal people" or the waking dream of poets, is very much integral to human consciousness. Breton takes great pains to show that all the elements of the dream stem from reality and from reality alone, that there is not even a trace of the perfumes of some "other world" in them; although this observation is fully self-evident, we are nevertheless glad that the author gives it such emphasis: by it, he up front refutes any reproaches of "idealism".[8]

[3] Friedrich Engels, "Engels to Mehring; 14 July, 1893", in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Correspondence 1846–1895. A Selection with Commentary and Notes*, trans. Dona Torr (New York: International Publishers, 1935), p. 512. (Editor's note)

[4] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, trans. Clemens Dutt, W. Lough and C. P. Magill (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 38. (Editor's note)

[5] Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 38. (Editor's note)

[6] Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature,* trans. Clemens Dutt (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 180. (Editor's note)

[7] André Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Marry Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln and London: University Nebraska Press 1990), p. 168. (Editor's note)

[8] Unfortunately, it would appear that this clear emphasis was not, in the end, sufficient; at least not, we can say with certainty, for Kurt Konrad, who in his polemic against the Surrealists (published in *Tvorba* Nos. 28-31 [Kurt Konrad, "Doslov k diskusi o socialistickém realismu", *Tvorba* 11, no. 28 (1934), pp. 436–438, *Tvorba* 11, no. 29 (1934), pp. 452–453 and Kurt Konrad, "Realismus

Breton is even convinced that he could not understand man if he did not "essentially restore him to that fundamental faculty which is to sleep – that is to say, to plunge again, each time it is necessary – in the very bosom of that overabundantly peopled night in which all beings and all objects are himself, are obliged to participate in his eternal being, falling with the stone, flying with the bird".[9] Marxist critics, to the extent they are unable to have at least some understanding of the poetic diction that is, besides, very precise in its imagery, once again sense subjective idealism. It seems that these

a romantismus, Doslov k diskusi o socialistickém realismu", *Tvorba* 11, no. 31 (1934), pp. 483–485. Editor's note.]) succumbed to a truly incomprehensible error. He quotes Breton as saying that "the entire materialistic philosophy, backed up by the natural sciences, bears witness to the fact that human life, conceived *outside* its strict limits of birth and death, is to real life only what the dream of one night is to the day that was just lived." (Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 115. [Editor's note]) According to K. Konrad, Breton allegedly "does not, we can be certain, consider this comparison to be a play on words, but considers *human* life as a universal concept, as an essence as opposed to its embodiment in particular, real life; with the first he brings a dream closer, with the second a waking activity. But here we have the dream as a universal principle, as the essence of activity and then finally as the creator and determiner of objective reality: the particular, one of the possibilities of the dream principle, is waking activity. A dream is superior to objective reality, it is the essence and universal principle of wakefulness, a state of fully dialectical, conscious knowledge." (Konrad, "Doslov k diskusi o socialistickém realismu", p. 452–453. [Editor's note]) Why doesn't K. Konrad present the next sentence from Breton's text to his readers? He would have spared both himself and his readers from a mistake and an unnecessary falsehood. In this next sentence, Breton writes: "In the apology of the dream as a means of escape and in the appeal to a supernatural life, only a totally platonic will to change is expressed, from which at the same time it withdraws." (Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 115. [Editor's note]). Perhaps this is not sufficiently clear to some and needs to be spelled out; but it seems to me that this is no more mysterious than *Marx's* quite analogous statement: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." (Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, Sao Paulo, Delhi: Cambridge University Press 1970), p. 131. [Editor's note]). For if André Breton is saying in the passage quoted by Kurt Konrad that the dream is an analogy of the longing after an eternal life and a "better" world (for that is how these sentences must be understood), he is saying, with different words, the *same thing* as K. Marx. It also remains a complete mystery where and how Kurt Konrad could read from Breton that "a dream is *superior* to objective reality": when, after all, we read in Breton's book that any so-called afterlife "is *only* what the dream of one night is to the day". (Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 115. [Editor's note]). In short, the passage cited and the misunderstanding of which Kurt Konrad has become the victim is proof that *today's* André Breton – and here there is already a considerable difference from the André Breton who wrote the surrealist manifestos of 1924 and 1929 – is much closer to a correctly understood Marxism than are some of his Marxist critics. This can be further underscored by a very Marxist sentence by Breton, in which he returns (Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, pp. 141–142) to the same fact: "As Marx showed, furthermore, in his fourth thesis on Feuerbach, the fact of the division of the temporal basis of the religious world into its antagonistic parts could have meaning only if it could be established that 'God' is not the totally abstract creation of humans and the conditions of existence ascribed to him, not the reflection of human conditions of existence."

[9] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 138. (Editor's note)

critics have forgotten Engels' letter (to Konrad Schmidt, October 27, 1890), in which the co-creator of dialectical materialism confesses that he too would not be able to understand man and his ideological activity if he did not perceive "all this primitive nonsense"[10] which, according to him, is a prehistoric stage of religion, philosophy, etc., and which even today still haunts "the very bosom of that overabundantly peopled night"[11] that Breton speaks of, *in a dream*.

According to Friedrich Engels (in the same passage), it would be "altogether pedantic to seek economic causes for all this primitive nonsense"; to the contrary, Engels thinks that it has, as its "basis, in the main, negative economic grounds".[12] How could Breton be reproached if he wanted man to be, in theoretical matters, "snatched from the social melee"[13] when he was to put the present residue of that primitive "nonsense" under the microscope of scientific analysis?

It is precisely this that André Breton is trying to do as rigorously as possible. He is with full justification convinced that "nothing would seem more essential, in this respect, than to examine in depth the process of the formation of images in dream, using, moreover, whatever we can find out about the way poems are worked out"[14]: for here lies a dual-unified entrance into the netherworld of the human psyche. In the first part of the book, Breton therefore wants to investigate the mechanism of the dream by using the methodology of psychoanalysis, corrected by Marxist criticism (in which, however, Breton still does not go far enough); and he wants, in the second part, to continue in his analysis where similar conditions are given in rough outline that, as in a dream, to at least some degree tear man from the "objective connection of beings and existence"[15]: he investigates, in his own concrete case, the being and consciousness of an individual who has been torn away from his usual connections to reality by an insatiable desire for a woman he deeply loves.

You might ask: Isn't Breton inevitably heading into the void with all this? Is it at all possible, permissible, and sensible to examine man not only inside of all his social relations but also *outside of them*? Doesn't the researcher instantly find himself out of touch with actual reality?

The answer to this question assumes up front that we should answer a different, immensely important question: Is real, concrete human being a concept that is *only* historical and *only* sociological? It may be noted that Marx's answer to this question is actually contained in the sixth thesis of Feuerbach, where he states that the human

[10] Friedrich Engels, "A Letter to Conrad Schmidt. October 27, 1890", trans. Sidney Hook, *New International* 1, no.3 (1934), p. 82, translation modified. (Editor's note)

[11] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 138. (Editor's note)

[12] Engels, "A Letter to Conrad Schmidt. October 27, 1890", p. 82, translation modified. (Editor's note)

[13] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 139. (Editor's note)

[14] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 141.

[15] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, pp. 147–148.

individual "in reality [...] is the ensemble of the social relations".[16] – Well then, can this thesis, in the present day, be considered the *last word* of Marxism?

I believe and consider it evident that *it is not*, and this for the simple reason that this aphoristic formulation of Marx's is, in its exclusivity, conditioned only *historically,* and especially only *polemically.*

The polemical conditionality of Marx's assertion is already indicated in the context of the eleven theses on Feuerbach. In the sentence immediately preceding the statement quoted above, it is polemically stated against Feuerbachian humanism that "the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual"[17] – which is not only absolutely correct, but also indicates the direction in which Marx in his time (1845) had to deflect false conceptions of man. For Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, and for the whole of official German philosophy of that time, an abstractly and idealistically conceived man was the foundation on which and from which they built their arch-false systems. And something of this abstract conception remained in the teachings of L. Feuerbach, who was otherwise, in so many respects, the great teacher of both of the founders of historical materialism. It will remain the historic achievement of Marx and Engels that they once and for all shattered the dangerous fantasy of "Man," that that which was idealistically postulated as "eternally human" they dissolved into the historical process of the transformation of the real, living, social individual, and that they demonstrated the mechanism of this process.

None of this means, however, that Marx and Engels rule out *everything* "eternally human" in a different, *correct*, and quite precisely defined sense of the term: in the straightforward sense where we understand by this term the *biological* and *physiological* being of man. Certainly, man is a *zóon politikon,* a "social animal", as Aristotle defined him; but this also means that he is not only a *social* animal, but also a social *animal* – (that it is not only the adjective that must be emphasized here, but that it is sometimes necessary to shift the emphasis to the noun, to the natural and animal components of the political creature). We must not forget the fact that a social creature, man, is also a product of nature, and a *materialistic* examination of him cannot separate the observation of the human individual from the animal, natural, sensuous side of him that is *generically* common to people of all periods.

Marx and Engels did not fail to emphasize this aspect of the matter, even if they did not have time to elaborate on it in detail. All the more reason then for *today's* Marxist-Leninists to devote more attention of a practical nature to the words of Marx and Engel where (in the principal article, "Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks", of the first volume of *Die Deutsche Ideologie*) they put forth a methodological demand:

[16] Karl Marx, "Theses On Feuerbach", trans. Don Cuckson and Cyril Smith, Marxists Internet Archive, accessed October 8, 2024, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/ (Editor's note)

[17] Marx, "Theses On Feuerbach". (Editor's note)

"The first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature."[18]

Naturally, neither does the bodily organization of the species "homo sapiens" defy *all* changes; but the changes to which it is subjected are of a *long-term* nature, and for the duration of the history of human society they have on the whole remained essentially nil. Put differently, the biological component of human being and the relationship of the individual to the external world, in so far as this relationship is *specifically* determined *by it*, is *practically constant* for us: and it is *only in this sense* that André Breton speaks of the "*eternal human*".[19] To this physiological form of being that is common to all people (evincing, of course, racial and individual variations, fixed laws of heredity, and the like), there also corresponds in the same measure, and common to all people, a definite *form of consciousness*. And just as physiological human being is a *pre*-social and *pre*-historical being, alone constituting just their first presupposition – so certain specific forms of consciousness also correspond to this human being; this important fact is noted by Breton when he speaks of "man's need for some adequation to life" that is "impossible to situate in time".[20]

It is not, of course, sufficient to merely observe this; it is necessary to at least indicate the *basic character* of that form of consciousness. The leader of surrealism does this in some great formulations. He speaks here above all about the "*general essence of subjectivity*"[21] and of the "*absolute power of universal subjectivity, which is the royalty of night*"[22]: what does it matter if some of his "Marxist" critics are not able to understand that these wonderful terms are dictated by the same precise imagination with which Marx once formulated the characteristics of the opium of religion! After all, only in the *generality of* human subjectivity and in its specificity, from which a dream is born, is there a quite plain answer to the many questions of practical life and its ideological froth, which would otherwise remain a mystery. It was precisely in this regard that Karl Marx sought a solution to the problem of how it comes to be that even to *us today* ancient Greek art still provides a high level of artistic enjoyment, notwithstanding that it was "are associated with certain forms of social development".[23] In his *Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* from 1857, he speaks directly in this context about the "eternal charm" (please take note, comrades K. Konrad and company: the word "*eternal*" in the mouth of Karl Marx! And not only here!) of the artistic creations of the

[18] Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 31. (Editor's note)

[19] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 123. (Editor's note)

[20] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 140, translation modified. (Editor's note)

[21] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 142. (Editor's note)

[22] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 144. (Editor's note)

[23] Karl Marx, "Introduction [to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy]", in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. S. W. Ryazanskaya (New York: International Publishers 1970), p. 217. (Editor's note)

"historical childhood of humanity"[24]: the *childhood* of humanity – the theory of *infantile* elements in the *most emotional* art has as its most renowned precursor the founder of dialectical materialism! But infantilism, as modern psychoanalysis understands it, is nothing more than the perhaps somewhat desperate effort of the adult individual to permanently preserve "the absolute power of universal subjectivity"[25] of which Breton writes, or much of the "primitive nonsense" that Engels finds at the infantile stage of human society and its "negative economy".[26] – And as to the foundations of *practical* life, I have already attempted to show elsewhere that "there would be no class struggle if there were such an ideal state of affairs for the bourgeoisie, that the proletarians were not people, real people with hearts and nerves, but robots without feeling, without the ability to differentiate between pain and pleasure, who had no desires and who were completely indifferent whether they go into the stamping mill of death today, tomorrow, or in a thousand years".[27]

Can there be doubts under these circumstances as to whether Breton *correctly* calls for "an investigation of the whole of individual nature in the sense of its *totality*",[28] and that he therefore *correctly* wants to investigate the real human individual even where he returns again and again to "the royalty of night"[29], during the reign of the principle of pleasure, that even in "the clamor of crumbling walls, among the songs of gladness that rise from the towns already reconstructed, at the top of the torrent that cries the perpetual return of the forms unceasingly afflicted with change, upon the quivering wing of affections, of the passions alternately raising and letting fall both beings and things, above the bonfires in which whole civilizations conflagrate, beyond the confusion of tongues and customs", that André Breton sees "man, what remains of him, forever unmoving in the center of the whirlwind"?[30]

It is certain that the Marxist critics who condemn Surrealism and reject the most mature product of Surrealism, namely Breton's *Communicating Vessels*, would be correct, despite all their misunderstandings and misconceptions of the subject, which we have already pointed out, if André Breton, in his study, had perhaps separated the human individual in his "eternal" subjectivity from the historically and class-conditioned individual in their process of continuous social transformation. Breton, however, never made this mistake. Just the opposite: *Communicating Vessels* – in this is the *basic thesis*

[24] Marx, "Introduction [to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy]". (Editor's note)

[25] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 144. (Editor's note)

[26] Engels, "A Letter to Conrad Schmidt. October 27, 1890", p. 82, translation modified. (Editor's note)

[27] Záviš Kalandra, "Nadskutečno v surrealismu" [The Surreality in Surrealism], in *Surrealismus v diskusi* [Surrealism under Discussion], ed. Ladislav Štoll and Karel Teige (Praha: Levá fronta 1934), pp. 87.

[28] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 42, translation modified. (Editor's note)

[29] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 144. (Editor's note)

[30] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 138. (Editor's note)

of the book, in this is also its *scientific achievement.* Why is it not seen that *this is precisely* the meaning of his overcoming the "depressing idea of the irreparable divorce between action and dream"?[31] If this is not clear enough to somebody, they will find a more concrete interpretation of the same idea elsewhere in Breton's book:

"It has seemed to me, and still seems to me" (that is everything that this book professes), "that in closely examining the content of the most unreflective activity of the mind, if you go beyond the extraordinary and disturbing surface ebullition, it is possible to bring forth to the light of day a *capillary tissue* without which it would be useless to try to imagine any mental circulation. The role of this tissue is, as we have seen, to guarantee the constant exchange in thought that must exist between the exterior and interior worlds, an exchange that requires the continuous interpenetration of the activity of waking and that of sleeping. [...] There it is that the permanent exchange of satisfied and unsatisfied needs is put in play for the human being; there it is that the spiritual thirst, which must be calmed and not assuaged, is exalted."[32] There cannot be the slightest doubt – in *this* respect it is the only thing that can be found to give a correct answer to the "*how*" of the problem of the origin and change of ideological ideas, whose investigation Engels has given as a task to all of his successors in the study of historical materialism. We must not forget that, in Engels's own words,"[o]f itself *economics* produces no effects here directly; but it determines the *kind of change* and development the already existing intellectual material receives" – to which in the historical last instance belongs (again, according to Engels) "from pre-historical days an already discovered and traditionally accepted fund of – what we would today call nonsense [...] various mistaken ideas of nature, of the very creation of man, of spirits, magical forces, etc."[33] – in short, everything that would still want to "be considered as a magical relationship" today, as André Breton says, even if it draws "all its elements from reality".[34]

In the sentences quoted above about the "capillary tissues" between the real individual and the real class world of people, between being and the consciousness of man, there is the *vanishing point* of the surrealist conceptions of André Breton, and with that the *sum* of what his book *Communicating Vessels* contributes to the repayment of that debt that we owe Engels, of which we have already spoken many times in this article. This contribution *is not small*; it is, to the contrary, *quite large*, if we recall that this is a matter of the correct *positioning* of the problem. All the more so because, in the beautiful words of Breton, it is the "crowning testimony" of the *poet* who, among other things, helps to shed light on one of the, to date, most obscure spheres of human

[31] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 146. (Editor's note)

[32] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 139. (Editor's note)

[33] Engels, "A Letter to Conrad Schmidt. October 27, 1890", p. 82, translation modified. (Editor's note)

[34] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 115, translation modified. (Editor's note)

activity: poetic activity.[35] To this point in time, Nietzsche's statement that "poets lie too much"[36] held true: now the surrealist poet wants to try to penetrate the very fabric of poetic lies, which is the true element of poets, toward the truth about their own creative activity, which is at the same time one of the keys to the psychic mechanisms of *every* true individual! "They will hold together, whatever the cost, these two terms of human relationship upon whose destruction the most precious conquests would become instantly redundant: the objective consciousness of realities and their interior development."[37]

The achievement of André Breton was to *clarify a problem* whose importance is unfortunately overlooked by Marxists to this day. Here is where we find the book's *apex* – and here is also where we find its *limitation:* moreover, the limitation is perfectly self-evident. Of course, it will still have to be overcome: by trying to find out *how* these *Communicating Vessels* communicate in the concrete historical development of human society, i.e., above all, *how* the influence of the "general essence of subjectivity"[38] and its "universal power"[39] is manifested in the content of ideological ideas.

It is the very authority of Friedrich Engels that testifies to the fact, I believe, that it is precisely *here* that the *main* task of those who want to help develop Marxist-Leninist theory to its universal totality lies today. And that is why we must be very grateful to André Breton for his achievement, the truly far-reaching significance of which cannot in any way be weakened by the pettiness of some of his critics.

Translated by Greg Evans

[35] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 147.

[36] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra. A Book for All and None*, trans. Thomas Common (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1960), pp. 100, 151, 152. (Editor's note)

[37] Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, p. 147. (Editor's note)

[38] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 142. (Editor's note)

[39] Breton, *Communicating Vessels,* p. 144. (Editor's note)

IN MEMORIAM

VÁCLAV ČERNÝ'S PARRHESIA

Peter Steiner, introduced by Roman Kanda

Abstract

This essay is one of the final works of Professor Petr Steiner (1946–2024), a Czech-American literary theorist and historian of literary-critical thought. In it, he examines Václav Černý, a key figure in 20th-century Czech culture. Steiner traces Černý's conception of literary criticism, which centered on the notions of personality and truth. Steiner notes that many of Černý's statements, claims, and definitions are mutually contradictory, and thus questions whether Černý's positions can be described coherently. He finds inspiration in the concept of "parrhesia" (παρρησία), which Michel Foucault understands not merely as a discursive technique, but as a term pertaining to the ethical foundation of truth. Parrhesia is the sincere expression of absolute loyalty to the truth, where the truth-telling personality is what it says it is. The statements may be contradictory, but the plane of coherence is anchored to the subject, who truthfully expresses their opinions. This leads to a fusion of consciousness and conscience, and a transcendence of the realm of language into the realm of ethical action (the practice of freedom).

Keywords

literary criticism, Václav Černý, parrhesia, Michel Foucault, personality, truth

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.9

INTRODUCTION

Roman Kanda

In autumn of 2024, we were struck by the sad news that Professor Peter Steiner had unexpectedly passed away. This occurred on November 26th, during his stay in Chengdu, China, a city he had visited frequently in his later years.

Peter Steiner was born on May 7, 1946, and belonged to a generation shaped by the culture of the 1960s. For the people of Central Europe, the 1960s represented both a revival of seemingly interrupted continuities and the release of new creative potential. Steiner studied at Charles University in Prague until 1968. At the age of twenty-two, he first left for Austria and then the United States. From 1970 to 1976, he was a student at Yale University, where he defended his dissertation – a comparative study of Russian Formalism and Prague Structuralism. From 1978 onwards, he taught at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he continued as an emeritus professor in his later years. It is also worth remembering that Peter Steiner was, among other roles, a member of the international advisory board of our journal.

As a scholar, Steiner devoted his career to the history of theoretical thinking on literature, focusing particularly on Russian Formalism and Prague Structuralism. A distinctive feature of his approach was the analysis of the rhetorical aspects of theoretical texts and the exploration of the complex relationships between theory and ideology. In this respect, he was probably influenced by some of the deconstructive approaches, such as the work of Jacques Derrida or Paul de Man. His perhaps most well-known work is *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics* (1984, Czech translation 2011), which was thematically linked to his dissertation. This was followed by *The Deserts of Bohemia: Czech Fiction and Its Social Context* (2000, Czech translation 2002), a collection of essays on Jaroslav Hašek, Karel Čapek, Julius Fučík, Rudolf Slánský, Václav Havel, and Milan Kundera. In *Contradictions* (2018, issue 2), he published the essay "Václav Havel and the Invasion of Iraq (with Constant Reference to the Soviet-led Occupation of Czechoslovakia 1968)".

The essay on Václav Černý, which we are publishing here, is one of Steiner's final works. This text also aligns with the aforementioned features of Steiner's scholarly approach: it investigates a theoretical problem through a rhetorical concept (with explicit reference to Michel Foucault).

We publish this essay with the kind permission of Professor Steiner's son, Emil Steiner.

VÁCLAV ČERNÝ'S PARRHESIA

Peter Steiner

Being asked what was the most beautiful thing in the world,
he replied, 'parrhesia.'
Diogenes of Sinope, according to Diogenes Laertius,
Lives of Eminent Philosophers

Václav Černý (1905–1987) was a remarkably outré participant in the 20th-century Czech intellectual life who "could not be fitted into a simple dictionary entry or a template".[1] "Just dropping [his] name" wryly observed one of his friends, "didn't leave anybody tranquil."[2] This was in part due to his combative temperament, described by a sympathetic commentator in the following manner:

> Václav Černý was a sharply defined personality, deliberately striving to be such from his first encounters with literature. The stylistic brilliance of his essays is unequaled in our modern criticism. He didn't dodge controversies; on the contrary, he sought them when he recognized the possibility of eliminating widespread prejudice or erroneous thinking through them. He was not afraid of conflict and was a programmatic gadfly, only rarely stunned in awe by an artistic miracle or an intellectual achievement. His opponents were plenty, and frankly, he knew how to create them. His intellectual world was always crammed with tensions and challenges, skirmishes and duels, not knowing an armistice because he always strove for a deep and clear expression of knowledge with the passion of a truth-seeker. Nothing was more alien to this critic by birth than an indifferent reporting. He hated mediocrity, hounded pettiness, and despised idolatry. He wanted to be unique under any circumstances and his own at any cost. In his creative pride, not to be obliged to anyone, an individualist concentrated only on his life mission.[3]

[1] Václav Klaus, "Předmluva", in *Sto let narození Václava Černého: Sborník textů*, ed. Marek Loužek (Prague: CEP, 2005), p. 8.

[2] Karel Pecka, "Tvůrce epochy české kultury", *Literární noviny* 1, no. 1 (1990), p. 4.

[3] Milan Jungmann, "Úvodem", in *Václav Černý (26. 5. 1905 – 2. 7. 1987): Sborník z konference konané 4. 11. 1993 na Dobříši*, ed. Marie Langerová (Prague: Český spisovatel), pp. 7–8. It must be stressed that not everybody who knew him viewed Černý's oxymoronic personality so hospitably. The tone of Zdeněk Urbánek's recollection of his departed comrade-in-arms from Charter 77, for instance, is much more sobering: "The self-irony, or self-control in general, was not the forte of this inconsistent erudite, one of the most splendid and, yet, inadvertently, the most premonitory

Besides the eristic style, the way Černý theorized raised many eyebrows, too. The intellectual liberty with which he handled ideas provoked. He reveled in contradictions, combining notions that seemed incompatible. The same is true about his literary tastes, starting at Dijon Lyceum, which Černý attended as a teenager, where the just-acquired appreciation for Corneille and Racine did not preclude his infatuation with Dostoevsky. Not to mention his puzzling ideological commitments: this inveterate individualist steadfastly called himself a socialist.

Who is Václav Černý, and what makes him tick, asked his biographer in the opening chapter of this unorthodox figure's rich portrait: "A rationalist or an intuitivist? Classicism or romanticism and baroque? The radiance of reason or a message from dark depths. A classicist or a Bergsonian?"[4] Unsurprisingly, this question defies a simple either/or answer. In tackling it, I will argue that Černý's behavioral patterns and attitudes toward his life and society closely correspond to a discursive strategy with broad perlocutionary ramifications percolating through the Greco-Roman philosophy since more than two millennia ago.

Černý was foremost a literary critic, so I will open my discussion with a brief overview of how he understood this discipline. The brochure he authored, *What Is Criticism, What Isn't, and What Is Its Purpose in the World?,* does not leave any elephant in the room. Diachronically speaking, he articulates this field into three developmental stages, "from Renaissance to Boileau (the Classicist doctrine), from Boileau to Herder, and from Romanticism to our time".[5] Insofar as contemporary criticism is concerned Černý recognizes four distinct approaches to a literary work: "the biographic-psychological," "the sociological," "the formalistic," and finally "the impressionist or moralistic (tendentious)".[6] Practical criticism, Černý stresses, has always been an eclectic combination of these heterogeneous methodologies but this was not the root cause of his dissatisfaction with the discipline's sore state.

From among these four strains of criticism, Černý was most disposed to the biographic-psychological trend pioneered by the French man of letters, Charles Augustine Sainte-Beuve (1804–69), whose selected works Černý translated (Sainte-Beuve 1936). In the Czech criticism, Černý credited his teacher, F. X. Šalda (1867–1937), with performing an analogous role.[7] Yet, with all due respect to their respective merits, not even these

or even eerie in the Czech twentieth century [...] The brave Václav Černý used his erudition and energy to defend and promote the privileged position of Václav Černý in the Czech literary and social scene [...] Despite all, Václav Černý is significant as an example of an endeavor and as a warning. As an appeal for a higher humanism, he is a miserable disappointment" – Zdeněk Urbánek, "O Václavovi Černém", *Literární noviny* 1, no. 2 (1990), p. 4.

[4] Július Vanovič, *Osobnosť Václava Černého: Personalistický portrét* (Bratislava: Kaligram, 1999), p. 42.

[5] Václav Černý, *Co je kritika, co není a k čemu je na světě* (Brno: Blok, 1968), p. 9.

[6] Černý, *Co je kritika*, p. 15.

[7] Václav Černý, *Paměti II (1945–1972): Křik Koruny české* (Brno: Atlantis, 1992), p. 16.

congenial critics were able to avoid the fallacies that made, in Černý's eyes, the entire critical endeavor unsound. To wit: its practitioners, on the one hand, strove to account for the work's genesis (via the author's psychology, the social milieu that spawned it, the formative influences of the prior literary texts, etc.). Even if quite revealing, all these insights were deficient in one respect. They could not, Černý maintained, account for the work's artistic effect, i.e., its value. And those critics who, on the other hand, did judge the work based on its impact (the pleasure evoked, the mental or emotional enrichment, boosting a social and moral cause) unwittingly relied on criteria that were either hopelessly subjective or ideologically skewed. None of this could placate Černý, for whom "criticism was a scholarly discipline [*věda*] ... the critical judgment *the case of a scholarly assertion* [emphasis V. Č.] ... obligatory, verifiable ... that must be proven to pass muster".[8]

Černý's postulate that criticism should be scholarly separated him, as he pointed out on several occasions, from Šalda, who considered such pursuit a form of art. Černý's attitude toward his teacher was complex. Some commentators even wonder whether his aloofness from Šalda was not just a rhetorical gesture, an instantiation of the Bloomian "anxiety of influence" – the psychological struggle of an aspiring author to overplay a distance from his all too apparent master.[9] Be it as it may, the quest to define an objective artistic value preoccupied another of Černý's professor at Charles University, Otakar Zich (1879–1934), whose lectures on aesthetics he considered to be "the fruit of genuine and original thinking full of astute and farsighted *aperçus*" but who himself, unlike Šalda, "*ne brilliant pas de sa personne*".[10] Zich's elaborate study "Aesthetic and Artistic Evaluations" will provide me with a convenient background for discussing the peculiarities of Černý's forays into artistic axiology with the caveat that I will deal with it only selectively, leaving aside some points irrelevant to my discussion.

The Czech aesthetician's article distinguished natural phenomena (and their likes) from artworks. The former are unintended objects, and the delight (*libost*) we derive from them is primarily emotional and purely subjective. They carry what Zich calls the aesthetic worth (*cena*). In contrast, the works of art are intentional, authored products that we grasp through an (often only intuitive) comprehension (*chápání*) specific to art. They are vehicles of artistic value (*hodnota*), which, Zich affirms, are general and objective. But why? He found the clue in the author's personality. A psychologically oriented

[8] Černý, *Co je kritika*, p. 55.

[9] See e.g. Michael Špirit, "'Šaldův následník'", *Česká literatura* 49, no. 5 (2001), pp. 451–482.

[10] Václav Černý, *Paměti* (Toronto: 68 Publishers, 1982), p. 108. Černý was well aware of the generational kinship between Šalda and Zich – both belonging to the cohort of thinkers reacting against the Herbartian formalism – a dominant trend in Czech aesthetics throughout the 2nd half of the 19th century. The latter's method, he opined, "combined the regard for the form with the attention to the artist's psychology" – Václav Černý, "Moje poznámky k formalismu-strukturalismu", *Kritický sborník* 13, no. 3 (1993), p. 57.

scholar, Zich dwelt on the mental makeup of the artist, juxtaposing static individuality (comprised of the inborn and acquired dispositions) with dynamic, creative one – the individuality in action capable of projecting its uniqueness into artistic qualities. The stronger (more original) such a personality is, the more pronounced its impact in the artistic domain. And since "the work of art is *an artist's creation*, the objective and obligatory evaluation is inferred from the *artist's* attitude toward it" [emphasis O. Z.].[11]

To sum up, according to Zich, "in art '*the personality value*' [hodnota osobnostní] plays the salient, decisive role [and] can be designated as *artistic value* par excellence [emphasis O. Z.]".[12] Its ultimate utility stems from "the comprehension of great, strong individuals immensely enriches – extensively and intensively – our own 'I' by the new unsuspected or merely just suspected sensations. In this way, we learn how to nuance, in the subtlest way, the mental states we know only approximately".[13]

In Černý's mind, as is apparent at first glance, Zich was committing the "affective fallacy" – the flaw for which he chastised some previous critics – and, therefore, his understanding of the obligatory artistic value was markedly different. However, comparing the two approaches in some detail will yield valuable material for my future discussion. The personality [*osobnost*] is a crucial concept for both art students. In a manner resembling Zich's, Černý differentiates between a "person" (*osoba* or *individuum*), "a mere premise, an infrastructure of a personality",[14] "the sum of accidental and natural phenomena, talents and flaws that an individual acquires effortlessly"[15] and personality (*osobnost*), "a creative being, who through its struggle with the world, and the work on oneself, that is often the work against oneself, created oneself, provided oneself with meaning, and became an independent source of a deed, thinking, judgment, and purpose".[16] "The work of art" then, "is nothing but the mirror of the personality".[17] And our "effort to penetrate the mystery of personality is not an act [...] whose ultimate and valid conclusion, figuring out [*určení*] the personality, can be reached through a rational analysis alone, but also involves the talent of *intuition* [*Einfühlung*, *vcítění se*]" [emphasis V. Č.].[18]

But at this point, the parallel with Zich ends. Černý's critic "must put oneself into author's shoes, merge with him, through love assume his inner habitus, to become him".[19]

[11] Otakar Zich, "Hodnocení estetické a umělecké", *Česká mysl* 16, nos. 3 & 4 (1916), p. 145.

[12] Zich, "Hodnocení estetické a umělecké", p. 157.

[13] Zich, "Hodnocení estetické a umělecké", p. 153.

[14] Černý, "Moje poznámky k formalismu-strukturalismu", p. 67.

[15] Václav Černý, *Boje a směry socialistické kultury* (Prague: Fr. Borový, 1946), p. 112.

[16] Černý, "Moje poznámky k formalismu-strukturalismu", p. 68.

[17] Václav Černý, *Úvod do literární historie* (Prague: SPN, 1993), p. 63.

[18] Černý, *Úvod do literární historie*, p. 68.

[19] Černý, *Úvod do literární historie*, p. 68.

However, this is for Černý, only the steppingstone to evaluation proper. For evaluation, more than empathy is required. Černý 's critic is a beast altogether different from Zich's audience – a passive soundboard revibrating with the author's impulses informing the work. Such beholders absorb the work as is, including all the infelicities it might contain. Unlike in science, Zich reasons, the artwork's autonomy is inviolable, "a critical correction of Goethe's *Farbenlehre* improves this work *scientifically* but rectifying the 'improprieties' in his autobiographical *Wahrheit und Dichtung* spoils an *artistic* work [emphasis O. Z.]".[20] The critics' role, Černý avers, is incomparably more proactive, for their job is to gauge how well artists fulfilled the objectives they set for themselves in their works, filling in what is missing and calling them to task, if necessary. Let me explain.

The primary goal of critical judgment, according to Černý, is to assess how truthful the work is to itself. This is possible, he believes, because every artwork "delivers a hidden *scheme of requirements* pertinent to it [...] a full system of criteria according to which it must be evaluated [...] the critic's judgment is objective [because it is] based on the regularity [*řád*] the work under consideration contains".[21] After grasping it, the critic "stands in front of the poet [...] and says to him [...] Behold, this is what you wanted and should have said, and said or did not say. In this respect, you did justice to reality and truth, and in that one, you missed it or even lied [...] the critic repeats, and it even completes the concrete life intuition stored in the work... it relives [poet's] experience and supplements it".[22] To be up to this duty, the critic must be a poet's equal if not a superior, a personality in and of itself.

But what does it mean to be a personality? Zich's treatment of this entity is surprisingly flatfooted. Among the attributes he ascribes to a strong individuality are "originality" or "an ability to act independently". "When facing a genius, *irresistibility* [emphasis O. Z.] is the distinctive feature of our impression."[23] But he rests his case at this and does not probe such categories any deeper. Not so Černý, whose oeuvre is brimming with discussions of this notion from as many angles as possible. Cutting through this thick web, a personality, *à la* Černý, is comprised of the following three indispensable traits:

Freedom: "Personality as a fulfillment of the meaning and the possibilities of life, given in a single, individual focal point, in the highest freedom for a free creation."[24]
Character: "An individual becomes a personality only through his character, i.e.,

[20] Zich, "Hodnocení estetické a umělecké", p. 156.

[21] Černý, *Co je kritika*, p. 63.

[22] Černý, *Co je kritika*, p. 60.

[23] Zich, "Hodnocení estetické a umělecké", p. 152.

[24] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 29.

> by parlaying his life experience, earned through suffering and struggle, and his self-assurance gained through the same strife, into a single firm conception of life and its meaning, making it into the only source of original and free creative deeds."[25]
> The Transcendence of Being: "Though I am nothing but my life, being identical with it, I am not, on the other hand, at all reducible just to it [...] What transcends it in me is the need for an impossible perfection of oneself, the drive toward personality, or better, the awareness of the impossible that has governed and determined throughout my life the form of possible, i.e., my very deeds [...] My finality cannot be felt as tragic if I postulate first the individual's right to infinity, eternity."[26]

But how did Černý, an epistemologist might wonder, arrive at these personality-defining qualities? Empirically, as it were, through exposure to individuals exhibiting them? Here, Šalda, whom Černý more than once called a "heroic personality", comes to mind.[27] Among the authors he knew primarily through reading, the foremost exhibit would be André Gide, Černý's self-avowed "companion" in the incessant drive to shape his own personality.[28] Yet, his copious probings into the concept of personality suggested a different source of knowledge that could be classified as an introspection, a self-scrutiny. Černý implied persistently that traits of personality postulated by him were his own, baked, so to speak, into his DNA. This claim is, most likely, related to his concept of character – being truthful to oneself – for Černý a true personality's requisite property. Though his encounters with other "personalities", direct or oblique, were helpful, he conceded, they were not decisive whatsoever. They merely facilitated bringing to the fore pre-existing facets of his authentic personality, which he was unaware of. Bluntly speaking, he, Vaclav Černý himself, is a personality. Let me back this claim with a few quotes directly from the horse's mouth.

> Freedom: "Freedom as the kernel of my self-consciousness, freedom as an existential [bytostný] need, freedom as a requirement, an unrestrained personal willfulness at the edge of sin itself, all this was *my very sense of life* [emphasis V. Č.] [...] In a word, freedom was, undoubtedly, the natal matter of my being [bytost]."[29]

[25] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 11.

[26] Václav Černý, *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu* (Prague: Mladá fronta, 1992), p. 69.

[27] See e.g. Václav Černý, "Myšlenka hrdinské osobnosti u F. X. Šaldy a otázka jeho duchovní podstaty", *Kritický měsíčník* 1, no. 4 (1938), pp. 145–156.

[28] Václav Černý, *Paměti* (Toronto: 68 Publishers, 1982), p. 321. – According to Černy's student, Jiří Pistorius, Gide "was one of a very few in front of whom [Černý's] awe led him to exalted adoration" (Jiří Pistorius, "Nade vše drahý učitel: Povaha celoživotního vztahu Václava Černého k André Gideovi", in *Václav Černý: Život a dílo*, ed. Věra Brožová [Prague: Ústav pro českou literaturu Akademie věd, 1996], p. 47), deriving a good deal of his conception of personalism from this author.

[29] Černý, *Paměti*, p. 132.

> Character: "I was keenly aware of role models' commanding influence and contagiousness. Throughout my life, I yearned for someone to look up to, not just to imitate and mimic, but to strengthen my self-assurance through their example, thereby becoming more authentic. And sometimes, it felt like my models reflected me."[30]
> The Transcendence of Being: "Why the personality – if knowing that it *must* [emphasis V. Č.] die – could not appropriate his own death? [...] To die by my own death calls and invites the basic and objective fact that my death is something nobody can do on my behalf."[31] And elsewhere on a meaningful death: "I love the condottiere's morality. It's heartfelt. Life is to be risked, bravely and for things worthy of it, and if there is no other way, to be gracefully terminated for them."[32]

Being a personality cannot but affect individuals endowed with such uncommon qualities at the core of their existence. It forces them to assume a peculiar attitude toward their lives and others, to speak and act in quite a specific manner.

The quotes with which I opened my discussion indicate how baffling a figure Černý cut for even his admirers. But is there any way to describe such a particular frame of mind coherently and cogently? The Greek concept of "parrhesia" (παρρησία) seems well fit for this task. Though in its narrow sense, it appears a mere discursive technique – "boldness or freedom of speech" – the pragmatic uptakes of parrhesia go far beyond language. Let me approach it via Michel Foucault's treatment of this term, focusing on "the ethical foundation of truth-telling".[33] And disregarding the large variety of its applications by a diverse group of Greco-Roman thinkers (richly illustrated by Foucault), I will use it restrictively, in a political sense (the relation of truth [*logos*] to law [*nomos*]) and in a philosophical one (relation of *logos* to life [*bios*]).

Parrhesia, as an unrestrained and honest expression of personal beliefs and absolute loyalty to truth regardless of consequences, exhibits several markers Foucault lists. First is frankness, a seamless bond between the speaker and what he says. Eschewing any sophistry, the *parrhesiastes* "himself is the subject of the opinion to which he refers", and his "enunciation thus takes the form 'I am the one who thinks this or that'".[34] The truthtellers are what they say, and they say what they are. Černý casts such a merge in terms of a fusion of consciousness with conscience:

> The unity of *consciousness and conscience* is the factual reality of the creator's [*tvůrce*] soul. His attitude toward the world is not determined by anything more

[30] Václav Černý, *Paměti III (1945–1972)* (Brno: Atlantis, 1992), p. 385.

[31] Černý, *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*, p. 73.

[32] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 128.

[33] Michel Foucault, "Parrēsia", *Critical Inquiry* 41, no. 2 (2015), p. 221.

[34] Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), p. 13.

> basic [...] We require that he guarantees his book or work. We accept this guarantee only if we feel at every moment that the creator is in his work and for it *risks the very himself*. That he would speak the same way even if his tongue were cut out, that he cannot speak mendaciously [emphasis V. Č.].[35]

However, such a personal commitment is total, in Černý's case, exceeding the bounds of language. The pretense he knows not, for besides his words, whatever he does, all his endeavors, are just epitomes of his genuine being simultaneously manifesting and shaping it. Simply put, he is what he does, and *vice versa*.

> [...] a free deed is not without reason or cause. It's simply a deed, the reason for which is *I*, it's *my* deed. The more it springs from my personally unique originality, the more faithful my untransferable expression, the freer, allrounder, and more profound it becomes. The more it has from me, the more precisely, tightly, and wholeheartedly I can avow its nature and reasons. The more it resembles me, the more it could be only I who brought it to the world, the more I will endorse it: this is *my* deed, I accept all responsibility for guaranteeing it and not allowing anybody to take it away [emphasis V. Č.].[36]

> Absolutely every project is also the project of myself, of the *subject*, it's a *self-project* [...] This means nothing more than that every act, deed, or even just intention of mine which express me – and there are no others – creates and recreates me even if such recreation was not one of my deed's sole end or the end at all. [emphasis V. Č.].[37]

Moving along, "the second characteristic of parrhesia," Foucault states, "is that there is always an exact coincidence between belief and truth."[38] This prerequisite needs some unpacking because since Descartes the Western epistemology tends to understand the truth in terms of correspondence, the conformity of thoughts with its objects. Leaving the latter out of the equation would be viewed today with a wary eye. The Greeks, Foucault explains, were considerably more sanguine about the veracity of *parrhesiastes*' claims. The reason for this was the speaker's status: high moral qualities and courage (more about this later). Likewise, Černý didn't harbor any doubts about his intimate relationship with truth. Its source was secure – his very self – and his unyielding character prevented any backsliding. As he put it: "After all, since my childhood, seeking

[35] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 39–40.

[36] Černý, *Paměti*, p. 89.

[37] Černý, *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*, p. 67.

[38] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 14.

the truth solely in myself [v sám sobě] was my most inveterate habit."[39] And elsewhere: "After mastering my worldview through the struggle for myself, I discovered it as an inner truth and meaning of my being. I have personalized objectivity."[40]

Earlier, I mentioned that courage is one feature that is *sine qua non* for bonified truthtellers, assuring the listeners that they face the real thing and not an imposter. This is so because, as Foucault elucidates, "the *parrhesiastes* is someone who takes a risk".[41] The truth-telling game can be dangerous for its ultimate function "is not to demonstrate the truth to someone else [but that] of criticism".[42] And if leveled at those in positions of power, which is the usual case, who regard their station as sacrosanct, the price the whistleblower might pay for not holding back could be high. But the faultfinders' badge of honor is to speak their minds freely despite the apparent danger.

Following the time-honored parrhesiastic tradition, Černý's diatribes against the Communist regime were truly vitriolic, no holds barred. This is exemplified by the reasoning why he stayed in his homeland after the coup d'etat in 1948: "If I had to drop dead starving, I will [not emigrate] so that I could corroborate, even mute and only through my eyes, how far the cynical betrayal of humanity can go in Czechia. Sometimes, the prime duty – and often the hardest – is to see and not close your eyes in horror and disgust."[43] And his clarification of why he could not collaborate with the Communist regime is even more splenetic: "Never, *with you, never*! You've *fucked up* [*zkurvit*] humanity, turning it into an abomination from which the last trace of human *dignity* has vanished. You can't win the fight for the world; death is better than joining you" [emphasis V. Č.].[44]

The quote continues with Černý's explicitly stating that the suffering incurred by not mincing his words about the hostile system might not be redeemed, however unfair this fact is. Yet, it cannot be dodged, for it is an integral part of the truth-telling game, preordained by its genre. "Another essential feature of genuine learning [*vzdělanost*]," declared Černý, famously unfazed by showing off his erudition, "has always been the *readiness for tragedy* [emphasis V. Č.]. Whether it led to the burning at stake, or [...] to the noose, or whether it meant a slow dragging to death by a mob of helots, among whom the strangled one has for years begged for a sudden end as God's mercy."[45] The litany of the travails he had to endure in just four years following the Communist takeover is a telling testimony that persecution was an indelible part of Černý's fate. He was "forced to take a 'scholarly' leave, prohibited to lecture, kicked out of the university

[39] Černý, *Paměti III (1945–1972)*, p. 585.

[40] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 56.

[41] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 16.

[42] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 17.

[43] Václav Černý, *Paměti IV.* (Toronto: 68 Publishers, 1983), p. 222.

[44] Černý, *Paměti III (1945–1972)*, p. 487.

[45] Černý, *Paměti III (1945–1972)*, p. 602.

for 'promulgating and admiring Nazi (!) philosophers, an extreme individualism and anti-Marxism'. [This was] followed then by an attempt to assign [him] to manual labor, and all ended with [his] arrest and imprisonment."[46] The list of harassments, petty and not so, could go on.

The readiness to trade punishment for the fearless speech, though an indispensable feature of the true *parrhesiastes*, would, of itself, be an insufficient qualification to claim this mantle. Explains Foucault, for the critique to have gravitas at the Athen assembly, the speaker had "to be one of the *best* [emphasis M. F.] among the citizens, possessing those specific personal, moral, and social qualities which grant one the privilege to speak".[47] And this social capital came in handy especially if what was said contradicted the *doxa*. Yet, this high ground propels the truthtellers to persevere in their public crusades rather than remain sheepishly silent. To call a spade a spade is not a gratuitous gesture but an obligation.

"In our civilization," Černý asserts from his perspective, parrhesiastic duties rest with a small elite group with which he identified, whose high public standing stems from learning: "An erudite [*vzdělanec*] is, by definition, someone who *doesn't go with the flow*. He is, above all, a highly developed personal and social *consciousness*. He might not know production statistics, but he knows what is a *human being* and what is human. He is imbued with the certitude about *the human soul's inviolability and irreplaceability* [emphasis V. Č.]."[48] Černý's own sense of responsibility is genuinely ecumenical, without bounds. "Well, there is no way out of it," he ponders his destiny, "I must find the courage in myself to be a lawgiver of all humankind and the world."[49] And a few pages later, in polemics with Sartre, Černý restricts the concept of the metaphysical guilt – the feeling of shame for a human being as such – that the French philosopher laid on every subject, to highly rarefied individuals like himself. Such guilt can "be felt only by the subject *transforming itself into a personality* [*zosobňující se*] because *only* personality carries in itself also the entire species, *everybody else*, not as something to be rejected but as something to be in unity with, for which, therefore, he is, responsible [emphasis V. Č.]".[50]

The parrhesiastic endeavor, however, doesn't stop short of telling the truth about others and society but also the speaker oneself. The autognosis, the Delphic imperative "know thyself", is the precondition for doing so. This is what Foucault terms eponymically,

[46] Černý, "Moje poznámky k formalismu-strukturalismu", p. 56.

[47] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 18.

[48] Černý, *Paměti III (1945–1972)*, p. 601. In passing, it might be noticed that in several dialogues, Plato calls Socrates "*mousikos aner*". As Foucault explains, "in Greek culture," this phrase "denotes a person who is devoted to the Muses – a cultured person of the liberal arts" – Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 100.

[49] Černý, *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*, p. 55.

[50] Černý, *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*, p. 72.

after its most famous practitioner, "Socratic-philosophical game [in which] *parrhesia* is opposed to self-ignorance and the false teachings of the sophists".[51] The subject's full self-recognition separating the wheat from the chaff – intrinsic from epiphenomenal – is for Černý the *desideratum* of the uneasy quest of becoming a personality. And in pursuing this task he "realized immediately that to be truly oneself isn't something evident but a problem. That of all human problems it's the utmost, [he] added later".[52]

Exposing the world's deceits, Černý sees as the obverse what the *parrhesiastes* must practice on him/herself. "For sure, the personality never gives up its right to conflict with others [but] the beautiful antipode of this struggle with society is the personality's inner strife with itself. The personality is an ongoing fight with the untruthfulness of one's own subject."[53] Purging oneself of all self-delusions, however precious those might be, is Černý's categorical imperative. "Accompanied by Gide starting from his juvenilia," he describes this inner strife, "I passed through all stages of the process of self-creation and self-realization. It was a journey of becoming a personality [*zosobňování*]. Throughout my life, I assiduously studied myself 'tel quel,' and ultimately, I *accepted* myself with all my weaknesses, sins, and vices in all my anomalies, scandals, and inner contradictions. *To be what I'm*, absolutely, the most sincerely and the most shamefully [emphasis V. Č.]."[54]

This way, parrhesia turns into its practitioner's personal attitude, "the establishment of a specific relationship to oneself – a relationship of self-possession and self-sovereignty".[55] Equipped with the innermost knowledge of his/her true self, unfathomable by anybody else, a *parrhesiastes* shrugs off the unfavorable judgments of him/her by others as uninformed, if not outright malevolent. Writes Černý about his indomitability:

> There are very few creatures so inconveniently and harmfully inaccessible to the opinion of others – warnings included – to be intimidated by their reputation and rumors, to yield to a false view about them. What is said about me I regarded as totally irrelevant. Intransigency? Self-sufficiency? Self-assurance? Alas, probably also something else, simultaneously worse and better, an innate gift to disdain stupidity and wrongdoing.[56]

Černý could put his hard-shell equanimity to good use in 1970 when, after the Soviet-led invasion, a "documentary" aired by Czechoslovak State TV, "The Testimony from the

[51] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 102.

[52] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 48.

[53] Černý, *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*, p. 71.

[54] Černý, *Paměti*, p. 321.

[55] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 144.

[56] Černý, *Paměti*, p. 122.

Seine", made his name a synonym for "the counter-revolutionary in chief" and turned him overnight into a social leper.[57] In his hyperthymestic memoirs, Černý speculated about the Secret Police's motives behind this negative publicity stunt and explained how he dealt with the stigma:

> They wanted my friends to drop me, people to avoid me and to be afraid associating with me [...]. And, indeed, they almost accomplished this [...] jans patočkas [*jani patočkové*] darted away from me into all hideouts strewn with the fluff and the shits [*sračky*] of a sanctimonious safety. And what next? [...] But I wish and need to be alone by myself. Not because of self-love, in fact, I don't love myself much [...] my solitude is the place where I'm free and gather strength [...] Solitude and disdain, take my advice, are the only *valid* [emphasis V. Č.] reactions of an intellectual in the world given us to live in, if he isn't to lose his mind and hope.[58]

The conclusion of the quote brings forth the therapeutic function of parrhesia, its role in maintaining Černý's mental health, or, to put it broadly, in helping him take care of himself. If political parrhesia, as discussed above, is concerned with the relation between truth (*logos*) and law (*nomos*), its Socratic version enriches this game by yet another dimension – the relation of *logos* to life (*bios*). The eponymic Greek philosopher, Foucault insists, "constitutes himself as someone who has to know the truth through *mathesis*, and how this relation to truth is ontologically and ethically manifest in his own life".[59] From this perspective, life is not something given but created by the *parrhesiastes* who project the freedom of *logos* into the choice of *bios*, a lifestyle consonant with who he/she is. In one of his interviews, Foucault posed a provocative question: "But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?".[60] The parrhesiastic taking care of oneself as a practice

[57] The Černý sequel of this document is available on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/HnqGwaGKstQ?si=XGXYqFZNmzgzi3M4. The "testimony" in the title is a reference to the name of an anti-Communist journal published by the Czechoslovak emigres in Paris, *Svědectví* [*Testimony*] and subsidized by the CIA (Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War: The CIA-Funded Secret Western Book Distribution Program Behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), p. 87), whose editor Černý visited in 1968. TV viewers were presented with an illegally obtained tape of Černý 's recollection of this meeting crudely lip-synced with his face appearing on the screen. For more information about other measures the Secret Police took against Černý, see, e.g., Rudolf Vévoda, "Václav Černý jako 'nepřátelská osoba'". In *Václav Černý: Život a dílo*, pp. 328–338.

[58] Černý, *Paměti III (1945–1972)*, p. 639–40.

[59] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 102.

[60] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress", in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 350.

of freedom is the "aesthetics of life" – the cultivation of one's existence in the art-like terms of autonomy, self-regulation, and self-justification.[61]

Managing the self, i.e., transforming an amorphous person into an integral personality concerning freedom, character, and transcendence of one's being, is a reoccurring issue in Černý's thought. The success of such a metamorphosis, he insists, cannot be measured in terms of published volumes but only through perusing the outcome of an existential struggle through which individual authors realize their authentic being. While Paul Verlaine's oeuvre, Černý points out, might be highly regarded, "the history of [his] life was the history of pusillanimity".[62] He did not cut the mustard as a personality for sure. On the other hand, there are individuals who, without leaving behind a tangible legacy, achieve this goal. This is so, Černý strongly believes, because the authors' respective outputs are only tangentially linked to their biographies. The two are divergent categories and should be treated separately. "The history of the human spirit," he argues, "requires that the history of works is supplemented with its counterpart, the history of personalities."[63] And, if compared, the latter seems more substantial than the former. Why so? Černý's frenemy, Šalda, eloquently answers this question: "A great work of art, even the greatest, is only a chip that has flown away from the chisels of the genius, from that beautiful inner sculpture, that a great spirit carves in the dark out of himself and for himself."[64]

From this vantage point, the text is merely a pretext, an opportunity for personalities to engage with themselves anew, and, as such, it is but a byproduct of this encounter. In Černý's words, "Perhaps the creator's [*tvůrce*] most significant experience is not his work. It is, it can be ... *he alone* [emphasis V. Č.] [...] at the moment [our works] are finished, ripened, they split from us to lead their own life, separate, independent, and alien."[65] And to bolster his argument that creation of personality is above all the subject's inner endeavor, he invokes the emblematic *parrhesiastes*, "Socrates, a man without an oeuvre, but, conversely, endowed with a personality that is virtually a moral paradigm for every spiritual candor of all times. Its foundations he laid in himself, undoubtedly, on his own, but he revealed it to his contemporaries by criticizing the tired lies of his times".[66]

[61] For a more in-depth discussion of this topic with references to both Socrates and Foucault, see, e.g., Wilhelm Schmid, *Philosophie der Lebenskunst: Eine Grundlegung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1998) or Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000).

[62] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 80.

[63] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 90.

[64] F. X. Šalda, "Osobnost a dílo", in *Boje o zítřek: Meditace a rapsodie: Soubor díla F. X. Šaldy, vol. 1*, 6th ed. (Prague: Melantrich, 1948), p. 35.

[65] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 71.

[66] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 79.

Thus, Černý's ultimate parresiastic goal of caring for his soul is to make a personality of himself (*zosobnit se*). "My human soul wishes for solitude," he exclaims.

> Alone among all. It feels, time and again, the painful desire to present itself fully to self alone [...] Behold it as it separates itself from its objective works, suddenly paying attention just to the silent inner task creatively informing the matter inseparable from the individual, his soul, and spirit, inherent character, feeling, instinct, will, and intellect bringing them through the labor as arduous and creative as was the other [objectifying] one into an original relationship, a peculiar new expression whose name is personality.[67]

And the life-transforming value of this intensive soul-searching cannot be underestimated, Černý believes, for "like every creative work, personality is emancipation, a spiritual liberation. But not because it severs the bonds between life and oneself but because it completes life as a transtemporal value that integrates it while simultaneously raises it to a higher level and sublates it."[68]

Yet, despite their seeming ephemerality, such "zosobnění" results are destined to stay. Asserts Černý, "Like artworks, the personalities that created themselves into transtemporal normative paradigms of humanity last [trvat] in an extra-historical super-space [nadprostor] of an eternal simultaneity of the present."[69] To explain why Černý thought so, let me turn to the last role the truth-teller might assume: that "of the *basanos* [touchstone] of other people's lives".[70] As mentioned before, Socrates' words seamlessly fit his deeds. This personal quality empowered him to perform a *basanic* role for others, "to determine the true nature of the relation between the *logos* and *bios* of those who came in contact with him".[71] But his parrheastic game involved more than being just a passive touchstone against which others could assay their respective virtues. Socrates' aim was aspirational, "to lead the interlocutor to the choice of that kind of life (*bios*) that will be in [...] harmonic accord with *logos*".[72]

Černý's personalities are very much Socrates-like, loadstars stimulating others to follow their lead. But not just by words, he adds. They

> don't compel by an argument, but seduce by the exemplary life. *Their name isn't Advice nor even a Duty but an Appeal, a Calling.* They intimate to me the moral

[67] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 72.
[68] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 93–4.
[69] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 79.
[70] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 99.
[71] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 97–8.
[72] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 101.

> upsurge of their life and contaminate me with it. They ravish my life capture my love, not my reason or logic. It's sufficient for them to live before me without opening their mouth. Their *lives* are their *proof* [emphasis and capitalization V. Č.].[73]

However, the significance of creative personalities, on this point, Černý's parrhesia might be called post-Socratic, goes beyond informing individual lives alone. Instead, they morph into "transtemporal moral paradigms of humanity", instrumental in providing the human culture – for Černý, the "*struggle between truth and lie*" – with weighty examples tipping the balance in favor of *logos*. This is so, he holds, for culture's "ultimate goal and effect is nothing else but enabling humankind to fuse knowledge with freely accepted responsibilities, *to fraternize conscience and consciousness* whose *unity* [...] is the actual reality of the creative personality's soul [emphasis V. Č.]".[74]

Permit me to conclude my paper by observing that despite all the controversies surrounding this flare figure, Černý's parrhesiastic ideas did vibrate in the writings of his fellow dissidents rallying against injustice under the banner of Charter 77. Václav Havel's famous political manifesto "The Power of the Powerless" provides a handy example. Streamlining it for my purpose, this drawn-out essay contains a transformational narrative about a fictitious greengrocer who, against all odds, managed to overcome his inauthentic existence, becoming a personality along the line as Černý understood this category, a *parrhesiastes* in his own right. The story starts on an inauspicious note. Rolling with the punches dealt by the oppressive post-totalitarian regime, the helpless vegetable vendor – like almost anybody else in Communist Czechoslovakia – is inadvertently dragged into performing the repetitious rituals promulgating the state ideology utterly alien to him. In his case, displaying Communist slogans in his shop window. "Therefore," Havel sums up his unenviable predicament: "he must *live by lie* [emphasis V. H.]."[75]

But the happy ending is looming in Havel's tale, for the vegetable monger's self-alienation is not preordained to last forever. Suddenly, the bell of liberty has to ring, awakening in him his "concealed 'openness to truth'".[76] And he, coming to terms with his genuine self, no longer intimidated by the powers that be and undeterred by the impending punishment, "begins to say what he really thinks at political meetings. And he even finds the strength in himself to express solidarity with those his conscience commands him to support. Through this rebellion, the greengrocer steps out of the 'life by a lie,' rejects the ritual, and [...] rediscovers his repressed identity and dignity, fulfilling his freedom. His rebellion will be an attempt to *live by truth* [emphasis V. H.]".[77] Yet, the purport of

[73] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 37.

[74] Černý, *Osobnost, tvorba a boj*, p. 39.

[75] Václav Havel, "Moc bezmocných", in *Spisy IV* (Prague: Torst, 1999), p. 235.

[76] Havel, "Moc bezmocných", p. 250.

[77] Havel, "Moc bezmocných", p. 247.

this existential revolution – of the alignment of *logos* and *bios* – though seemingly the greengrocer's private business, far transcends his solitary being. "By this deed," Havel declares, "the greengrocer addressed the world [...] showing to everyone that it is possible to live by truth."[78] Thus, in the shadow of the legendary Athenian truthteller, this outwardly insignificant man furnishes his fellow citizens with a *basanos* for reassessing their lives against and, if disgruntled with what they find, a moral campus to follow.

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[78] Havel, "Moc bezmocných", p. 248.

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REVIEWS

RECOVERING THE EMANCIPATORY SIDE OF ZIONISM?

Pavel Barša, Mezi Davidovou a rudou hvězdou: Židovské odpovědi na krizi liberální emancipace [Between the Star of David and the red star: Jewish responses to the crisis of liberal emancipation] (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidových novin, 2022), 335 p. ISBN: 9788074228117.

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.10

Books written in Czech often address topics that are primarily, even exclusively, of interest to Czech readers. Not so the stimulating book under review, which provides answers to a question that has been debated by leftist intellectuals worldwide for over a century and which has assumed new urgency since Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel and the ensuing war in Gaza: Is Zionism an emancipatory project? Pavel Barša, a professor at the Department of Political Science of the Charles University Faculty of Arts, published the book in Czech before the latest catastrophic developments in Israeli-Palestinian relations, but it deserves a broad international readership among anyone trying to understand the historical roots of Zionism. More importantly, his partially affirmative answer to the question posed above is embedded in a broader argument about the emancipatory potential of nationalism and its historical entanglement with revolutionary socialism. In the course of nearly three hundred pages of crisply argued, engaging prose, Barša demonstrates the historical and political-philosophical parallels between early Bolshevism and labor Zionism.

His foil throughout this imposing work is a 2015 book by Vít Strobach entitled *Židé: národ, rasa, třída: Sociální hnutí a „židovská otázka" v českých zemích 1861–1921* that, in Barša's telling – accurately or not – too simply equates class politics with universalism and therefore human emancipation while condemning nationalism (including Zionism, a variant of Jewish nationalism) as a form of particularism that slips more or less inevitably into exclusivist racism (35). The reality of the situation, both historically and conceptually, is more complex. "Universalism and particularism," Barša writes, "can both serve liberation and subjugation. The prevalence of one or the other in discourses of this or that social movement therefore does not by itself provide a sufficient criterium

for evaluating its emancipatory or oppressive potential and effect" (268).[1] His careful analysis of various revolutionary programs emerging from the intellectual ferment of late nineteenth-century Russia support such a claim, even if his relentless polemicizing against Strobach's first monograph often feels disproportionate and distracting.

From the cacophony of solutions that competing Jewish and socialist groups in the Russian Empire offered to the "Jewish question", Barša identifies several movements in which Jewish self-determination and revolutionary socialism conspicuously overlapped: early Bolshevism, including the early years of the Soviet Union, and two strains of labor Zionism, led or inspired by Nachman Syrkin and Ber Borochov, respectively, which viewed themselves as reinforcing international socialism. It is in these movements, he contends, that we can see the essentially Janus-faced character of nationalism, on the one hand accelerating revolutionary enthusiasm at critical moments, but later, sometimes imperceptibly, shading into nationalist chauvinism. The synthesis of national and revolutionary class politics that Borochov devised for his Poale Zion party made the removal of Jews to Palestine into a precondition for proletarian Jewish class struggle against its own bourgeoisie and, in turn, a genuine Jewish socialism as well as a revitalized Gentile socialism freed from anti-Semitic blinkers. Syrkin was less convinced of class struggle's historical necessity but believed successful Jewish national liberation depended on Zionist settlement taking a socialist form; early kibbutzim drew inspiration from him and, to the extent that they still exist, remain perhaps labor Zionism's most durable legacy. Meanwhile, the Poale Zion group in Palestine drifted in an increasingly ethno-nationalist direction under Borochov's erstwhile acolyte David Ben-Gurion. By the mid-1930s, confronted with rising Arab hostility, it openly espoused cross-class Jewish solidarity over both proletarian class struggle and socialist revolution. Zionism's emancipatory potential suffered further diminution following Israel's establishment, the wars of 1967 and 1973, and the 1977 election of Menachem Begin, which cemented Israel's fortress mentality: surrounded since time immemorial by implacable hostility on all sides, Jews' only hope of survival was a militarized nation-state that would value Jewish lives above all others.

Bolshevism underwent an analogous evolution vis-à-vis its nationality policy. Until the establishment of the Soviet Union, Lenin and Stalin believed that all nations should have the right to self-determination to the point of secession from multiethnic empires – a promise they extended to some nations that Marx and Engels had deemed "non-historic" (and relegated to extinction under the capitalist mode). But this promise was not extended to all such nations, including Jews. Less publicly, they hoped that the mere possibility of self-determination would mute the nationalist strivings of smaller peoples, bringing class divides into sharper relief and hastening their assimilation to large nations. Like Borochov, they were convinced that the national question had

[1] All quotations translated by the reviewer.

to be solved, whatever that might mean, for class struggle to mature. Yet, if national self-determination to the point of secession was in theory permissible during a revolutionary conjuncture to accelerate proletarian class consciousness, the early Soviet Union found itself compelled to implement safeguards against centrifugal separatist nationalism of its constituent peoples. Some national movements aiming at secession had to be nipped in the bud under the pretext that they were beholden to reactionary forces. Overall, however, Soviet nationality policy to 1928 was characterized by the suppression of Russian nationalism and the encouragement and institutionalization of other peoples' national movements in the belief that the satisfaction of national demands would hasten the transcendence of nationalism altogether. (Here, incidentally, are the origins of Vladimir Putin's distorting claim that Lenin created the Ukrainian nation.) Then, under Stalin, national identities were recast as primordial and eternal (just as Jewishness was around the same time in the Zionist movement) with a concomitant rehabilitation of the Great Russian nation as *primus inter pares*. The stage was set for the suppression of non-Russian national identities, if they showed too much independence, and a resurgence of official anti-Semitism in the USSR and its Eastern European satellites after 1947.

Barša's nuanced discussion of nationalism's ambivalent role in revolutionary Bolshevism and labor Zionism is a salutary corrective to much casual leftist discourse that denies the nation any constructive role in history and too often conflates it with racism. In the lengthy theoretical excursus that makes up the first part of the book, he first enlists Hannah Arendt and Benedict Anderson to assert particularist nationalism's progressive potential as well as to distinguish it analytically from categories such as race and class that have been mobilized for projects of societal transformation on a global scale while supplying ideological cover for much of the twentieth century's mass murder. Étienne Balibar is summoned to remind readers that racism can perilously amplify nationalism, but need not, while the work of Immanuel Wallerstein shows that the global spread of universalist capitalism generated new particularisms of race and nation. No simple ideological-philosophical formula delivers emancipation. Rather, freedom needs to be rethought as a process: "[F]rom a state reached once and for all at the end of the road to the road itself. It does not lie in final liberation but in a constantly renewed process of liberation. Although socialist and Zionist revolutions dreamt of final liberation, they can inspire us even after we have abandoned their finalism" (293). Barša wants us to wake up from the eschatological dream of transcending history that is a feature of both Marxism and the now hegemonic human-rights globalism; instead, we should seek "the possibility of emancipation in history" (245).

Barša's ideal of emancipation appears to be a voluntarist, DIY form of socialism – a process in which people "transcend the position that history assigned them and take their lives into their own hands" (141). Both discourses of class and nation could feed into this essentially collectivist project and did, for a while at least, in labor Zionism

and early Bolshevism. Only in the book's conclusion does the author reveal his admiration for anarchism, or a socialism that does not wait for history to be deterministically transcended after an indefinite period languishing under bourgeois domination or the dictatorship of the proletariat but is geared toward freedom in the here and now. Still, the specter of reaction may always lurk, in dialectical fashion, in revolutionary movements. Even in their most dynamic phases, both labor Zionism and Bolshevism viewed Muslims through orientalist lenses, as Barša does well to recount.

Yet, having reached the analytical end of the road amid cheers for Bakunin, Proudhon, and the intellectual non-conformism of what Isaac Deutscher called "non-Jewish Jews", one may wonder, as this reviewer did, about the road taken to get there. If stateless voluntarism is the most promising way to emancipation, why does Barša not devote more space to the kibbutz movement? Why does the kibbutzim's specific fusion of socialism and Jewishness deserve so much less attention than Borochov's "scientific Zionism" (127) and early Bolshevism? Similar questions could be asked of Barša's cursory treatment of Austro-Marxism and its Bundist fellow travelers in the Russian Empire. In place of the territorial national autonomy pursued in Palestine by Zionists and throughout the Soviet Union by Bolsheviks (including for Jews in the far eastern region of Birobidzhan), Karl Renner and Otto Bauer in Austria-Hungary as well as Vladimir Medem in Russian Poland believed that nationality, as manifest in language and culture, could be a matter of personal choice. With proper state reform, they argued, nationality could be sequestered in the realm of cultural institutions away from political economy, which was inevitably rooted in territory. Barša describes this program of cultural autonomy several times as a middle position between the territorial nationhood advocated by Zionists and early Bolsheviks at one end of the spectrum and Rosa Luxemburg's total rejection of national divisions in the socialist movement at the other. Following anglophone historians Terry Martin and Yuri Slezkine, he characterizes Soviet nationality policy in the 1920s as essentially Austro-Marxist, a volte-face forced on the Bolsheviks once they assumed control of ethnically mixed territories, particularly in the former Pale of Settlement. Early in the book, Barša admits that socialist ideas of cultural autonomy will receive less attention because he aims to concentrate on the same movements as Strobach (14), but this seems a dubious rationale considering his adversary's book addressed the very different manifestations of Bolshevism and Zionism in the Bohemian Lands. Moreover, the geographic blank slate that proponents of a territorialized Jewish nationalism sought was always a chimera. The Austro-Marxist and Bundist recognition of intractable ethnic diversity in many places, even if the former denied Jews the status of nationhood, looks in some ways more humane – perhaps even revolutionary, in that it sought collective emancipation without territorial autonomy – by comparison.

Setting aside these issues of coherence and focus, *Mezi Davidovou a rudou hvězdou* is an important work that will reward readers interested in Zionism, the historical relationship between nationalism and socialism, or the ideological content of emanci-

patory politics. Barša's subtle theoretical interventions along with his original historical synthesis enhance our ability to face, understand, and maybe reorient the often-confounding politics of the present.

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SOVEREIGNTY AGAINST… WHOM? CATALAN MARXIST TRADITION AS A CHALLENGE

Milian i Nebot, Xavier, ed. 100 anys de marxisme i qüestió nacional als Països Catalans: (1910-2010). Volumes I-II (Tigre de Paper, 2022), 1600 p.
ISBN: 9788418705250.

DOI 10.46957/con.2024.2.11

The attitude of Marxist theorists – and consequently of all later leftist theory, including that of the modern left – toward the idea of the "nation" has been mixed. On the one hand, there is the classical conviction to renounce national aspirations, viewing them as undermining the class struggle and belonging solely to the superstructure. In the history of the European Left, these views were represented, for example, by Rosa Luxemburg and Jean Jaurès; both, incidentally, were murdered, in part due to their open internationalism. On the other hand, Marx and Engels themselves supported the independence of Poland and Ireland (as Engels wrote in the context of the Russian Empire's relationship to Poland, "A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations"). This idea was later continued by Lenin (though not necessarily in practice). In his "Critical Remarks on the National Question" (1913)[1], "the sovereignty of the people" and "of the nation" appear side by side. He continues, explicitly, Engels's line of thought by advocating the defense of "nations" against "oppression" while simultaneously opposing the promotion of any "national culture".

Some Marxists, such as Antonio Labriola and followers of Georges Sorel's thought, recognized the nation as a driving force of leftist praxis. This perspective reached its apogee either among the national left – especially popular in anti-colonial movements

[1] Lenin, Vladimir Ilich. *Critical Remarks on the National Question* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), p. 36. *passim*. In this sense, it is a more internationalist approach than that of Stalin in 1913 (and his book Marxism and the National Question, English translation 1942). In Lenin's case, the nation is a question of territory; Stalin's puts the emphasis on 'culture' and 'psychological' aspects, providing - in my opinion - the basis for his later nationalism in political practice as leader of the USSR.

– or in the very concept of a national welfare state, which social democrats adopted as their banner. Shlomo Sand likely captures this dynamic well when, in his essay on the "global" history of the left, he wrote that the First World War demonstrated that for the working class, national identity was more significant than class identity.[2] At the same time, Marxism began to dissipate as "non-historical peoples" suddenly claimed recognition as "nations," a phenomenon extensively analyzed by Roman Rosdolsky.[3]

However, the ontological debate about the nation on the left is not the main focus of this essay. Even from an internationalist standpoint, it can be acknowledged that the national question was an essential starting point in leftist thought, still relevant at both the theoretical and practical levels. Moreover, this remains an ongoing issue. In the 1970s – just after the globalist May and March 1968 movements – Régis Debray said in the *New Left Review* that "the way [the communist mode of production – K. K.] envisages the disappearance of cultural and national particularities" is simply unrealistic.[4] "I believe that a little philosophy is needed on the subject of the nation," he claims in this interview.[5] This "national" issue has been also addressed recently by Volodymyr Ishchenko in his essay *Ukrainian Voices?*,[6] where, in a vein reminiscent of this of Lenin, he cautions that overemphasis on "national culture" can harm both leftist theory and praxis.

In this context, a left-wing publishing house from the Catalan city of Manresa, Tigre de Paper, has undertaken the titanic task of publishing an extensive anthology of Catalan Marxist texts, spanning two volumes and 1,600 pages. This collection is not simply about presenting Marxist writings in Catalan; it focuses on the relationship between Marxist thought and the national question. This monumental project was undertaken by Xavier Milian i Nebot, a Catalan historian and activist in the syndicalist union COS.

The anthology, titled *100 anys de marxisme i qüestió nacional als Països Catalans: (1910–2010)*, begins nearly two decades before the first translation of *The Communist Manifesto* into Catalan – an edition translated from French by Emili Granier Barrera, an activist with the Socialist Union of Catalonia (USC), in 1930. However, the story of Catalan Marxism is more intricate and far-reaching. Thus, for historians of ideas, the first chapter of this work, entitled "Catalanism and Socialism: From Antagonism to Integration (1910–1923)", is especially significant. Milian i Nebot notes from the outset that anarcho-syndicalist ideology had a strong early influence in Catalonia. Nevertheless, as the Polish historian of ideas Eugeniusz Górski observed, this was a trend

[2] In the context of nationalism in Russia, for example - p. 123, *passim*. However, the theme appears several times in the book itself. See: Sand, Shlomo. *A Brief Global History of the Left* (Cambridge, New York: Polity Press, 2023).

[3] Debray, Régis, „Marxism and the National Question", *The New Left Review*, no 105 (1977), p. 26.

[4] See: Ishchenko, Volodymyr, "Ukrainian Voices?", *The New Left Review*, no 138 (2022), p. 29-38.

[5] Debray, „Marxism and the National Question", p. 25.

[6] I am referring to Rosdolsky, Roman. *Engels and the „Nonhistoric" Peoples: The National Question in the Revolution of 1848* (Critique Books: Glasgow, 1986).

throughout Iberia (see: Górski, 1988[7]), which can likely be attributed to the limited initial impact of Hegelian philosophy on Spanish progressive ideologies. It's worth noting that Iberian liberalism was largely shaped by the ideology of krausismo, a very different perspective originating from German idealism. Even during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), orthodox Marxists were mostly absent among the principal ideologues of the Republican side; even one of the most "orthodox" ones, Joaquín Maurín i Juliá, was a really independent theoretician.

What's interesting, Catalonia reflects broader regional trends; Marxism forms only part of a larger landscape of left-wing theory and is just one aspect of discussions on Catalan sovereignty. In the introduction (Volume I, p. 17), Milian i Nebot makes one of the practical aims of this work explicit: to show that Catalan nationalism does not solely possess a right-wing or bourgeois-neoliberal character, as it has been recently associated with the controversial figure of Carles Puigdemont in media portrayals. This historical investigation appears to serve not only as a scholarly endeavor but also as a political statement – an effort to articulate a distinct conception of Marxist thought in semi-peripheral (as understood by Wallerstein, 1976)[8] conditions.

The anthology is divided into two volumes. The first covers the period from 1910 to the 1960s, beginning shortly before World War I, when Iberian republicanism (as exemplified by figures like Francesc Pi i Margall, one of the ideologues of the First Republic of 1873) started shifting toward socialist ideology. This era extends to the transition in Francoist rule from fascist fanaticism to a policy of autarky and a gradual "opening up to the West". Throughout, various critical issues arise, including Soviet influence – often exerted by Comintern activists, which led to internal purges within Republican political parties during the Spanish Civil War and culminated in the assassination of Andreu Nin, one of the leading thinkers and activists of the Iberian libertarian left.

The author traces the origins of the so-called "the Catalan thought with Marxist roots" to 1910, to the speeches of Gabriel Alomar i Villalonga on the future of the Catalan progressive movement. At this point, the focus shifts away from nationalism in the republican sense or solidarist projects – Alomar i Villalonga introduces a clear division within Catalan society. He identifies three groups: the plutocrats, the "pure" bourgeoisie, and the proletariat (I, p. 20). He suggests that the Catalan left should turn to this third group, combining efforts on "national culture" with the struggle for working-class emancipation. This entails a reorientation from bourgeois nationalism to include the concept of "the people" (in the sense of Catalan *poble*, Polish *lud*, or Russian народ), thereby shaping Alomar i Villalonga's vision of "socialist Catalanism". Thus, a new ideology emerges, combining the Catalan struggle for sovereignty with the class struggle.

[7] ed. Górski, Eugeniusz, *Filozofia marksistowska w Hiszpanii*, (Wydawnictwo "Książka i Wiedza": Warsaw, 1988).

[8] Wallerstein, Immanuel, „Semi-peripheral countries and the contemporary world crisis", *Theory and society* no 3.4 (1976), p. 461-483.

This is no longer the regional conservatism of the Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya (part of which later supported Franco's fascists), nor the "Hispanicizing republicanism" of Alejandro Lerroux (a comparison borrowed from the anthology, see: I, p. 38).

This tension – between national sovereignty and the federal project – long weighed upon various branches of progressive thought in Catalonia. This dynamic is evident in texts on the Republic and the ideological disputes that arose along Marxist lines as well as in social democracy, liberal, and even conservative ideologies (as can be seen e.g. in the ideological dispute between Macià and Companys). A recurring theme in many texts in the volume is the frustration stemming from collaboration with the Spanish left. For example, even before the civil war (1936), the Catalan communist Antoni Sesé i Artaso referred to "the attack of Spanish imperialism against the freedoms of the popular masses" (I, p. 259), in the context of so-called attacks of the Madrid government on regional sovereignty.

The anthology – interesting both for Sovietologists and historians of ideas focused on the region – also includes an overview of Soviet influence on Catalan Marxism, which existed as one current among many but not as a primary or exclusive source. It is also fascinating to observe the development of an underground political ideology. Two key streams are represented here: texts published illegally within Francoist Spain and those produced primarily in Latin America by political exiles. For instance, it was in exile that discussions about Catalonia's sovereignty as a separate state or autonomous region could continue. In 1960, for example, Pere Ardiaca – later head of the Communist PCC, from 1982 onward – wrote in Mexico about the link between internationalism and the rights of persecuted nations, referring specifically to "Catalan, Basque, and Galician workers" (I, p. 609).

Within Spain, one can also observe an intersection of national struggle with internationalist principles. In statements from official parties in the 1950s, we see support for the independence of Arab or African countries and even references to the Israeli community and the Six-Day War. Notably, the 1967 declaration by the MSC (Socialist Movement of Catalonia) (I, p. 606) supports the "people of Israel" (Catalan *poble*), describing them as "an authentic example of democracy and socialism" in the face of aggression.

A strength of the collection is the organization of diverse statements and text fragments around specific issues. For example, there are discussions about the "European project." In the early Francoist period, there are notable reflections on the European Union, where an abandonment of the Catalan cause is perceived as the European project begins (as in the text by Jordi Saltor i Arquer, I, p. 565).

The second volume moves into a more open discussion within Catalonia about its place in Europe. Of particular interest are texts compiled by Milian i Nebot on individual political parties during the period leading up to and following the political transition after 1983. A noteworthy section presents criticisms of "Pujolism" from Marxist perspectives. Pujolism, the conservative political ideology associated with Jordi Pujol i Soley's government in the Generalitat de Catalunya (1980–2003), was oriented toward cooperation

with the Madrid government (regardless of its ideology) and a neoliberal agenda, with roots in the Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya. The response from the Marxist left to this ideology offers an insightful example of how the regional left from a semi-peripheral region addresses the right in power, even when they share some slogans. A distinction is notably drawn in a 1988 text by Barcelona writer Manuel Vázquez i Montalbán, who characterizes Pujolism as "a theory of Catalanism that can be translated as nationalist-interclass possibilism" (II, p. 515).

Once again, the European theme is significant. *Lluita* magazine, for instance, critiques Spain's (and, therefore, Catalonia's) entry into the European Economic Community; Catalonia is perceived here as a "colony" (II, p. 590–591). There are also openly anti-EU voices, such as a 2010 text from *Endavant* (II, p. 600), which criticizes the European Union as a structure that prevents the Catalan state from gaining sovereignty.

The anthology "ends" in 2010, seven years before the notable Catalan independence referendum (though the topic of a referendum already appears, including critiques from Marxist perspectives, such as in a 2009 text by Josep Manuel Busquet i Franco; II, p. 599–600).

Certainly, this is a significant publication and an important starting point for further research into Catalan nationalism and the relationship between Marxist theory and the demands for national sovereignty. As demonstrated throughout these two volumes, such issues remain relevant in Catalonia. In this respect, a particular challenge is presented to progressive thought: without deciding whether or not the nation genuinely "exists", it raises a challenge to a simplistic interpretation of internationalism. Referring to the passage from "Critical Remarks on the National Question" cited earlier, we encounter a history of Marxism as seen from the perspective of an oppressed "national culture".

However, the work does have some noteworthy shortcomings. First, the anthology offers a somewhat vague understanding of Marxism, affecting the text selection. Not every class-related analysis is inherently Marxist, nor does every reference to a popular class or national theme establish a clear link between Marxism and nationalism. At times, this approach becomes somewhat confusing. Additionally, while the collection organizes texts by theme rather than by region, this structure does not fully account for the differing economic and class interests across the various parts of the region. Another limitation is the exclusive inclusion of texts in Catalan, despite the fact that Spanish-language works, including those by Catalan writers, have also been integral to this discourse. Finally, there is a notable focus on sovereignty and national culture, often from a single perspective, which tends to treat Marxism as a monolith, blending the voices of writers and party activists alike. For instance, there is a notable absence of female or queer voices, leaving the relationship between Marxism and the nation without intersectional analysis in these volumes.

The question of sovereignty continues to probe whether sovereignty inherently means emancipation. Even if we assume it does not – as evidenced in the experiences of Central and Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall – it is nevertheless

a concept persistently revisited and often effective, as seen in various decolonization movements across Asia and Africa. Nor does sovereignty necessarily need to be excluded from political praxis arising from progressive political philosophy. Ultimately, sovereignty represents a stance against oppression – a political stance centered on creating a friend–enemy opposition.

The anthology also makes a valuable contribution to discussions of the national question within the European semi-periphery. In this context, it is worth considering the potential for reading this anthology in the light of discussions around "non-historical peoples". The issues Rosdolsky raises in his work on this subject resonate here: just as Engels once imagined the Polonization of certain territories, might he not have written about the "Hispanicization" of Catalonia? In this collection, the notion of "nations" appears much like Engels' descriptions of Austria's "historical mission". However, it raises a further question: to what extent is "the right of peoples to self-determination" an absolute principle of leftist movements, and to what extent is it merely a conceptual tool? The anthology curated by Milian i Nebot provides a solid foundation for a more nuanced analysis – not so much of the "nation" as a concept itself, but of the extent to which this concept embodies differing interests. "The nation" is used in the political discourse by both Catalans and Spaniards; the real question lies in the nature of their relationship, as well as in the context of class dynamics and political praxis under specific socio-economic conditions.

It is worth asking to what extent Marxism in general is coherent with national theories. As in many cases in the history of ideas, in the history of Marxism one can observe a kind of diffusion of views on the concept of "nation" from traditions of quite different origins – in Slavic or Germanic countries, these would be especially the traditions of the Romantic period. The two volumes of the anthology under discussion are also worth giving careful analysis. Hence, in this particular aspect, one of the most interesting chapters is the first one – when, in his speeches, Gabriel Alomar i Vilallonga tries to clearly separate the socialist, leftist tradition of thinking about "national cultures" from the conservative or bourgeois one. Such an overview of the evolution of thinking about the nation and sovereignty over a century is very important material, not only for Iberians but also for historians of ideas in general – or, finally, also for left-wing practitioners. Finally, it opens up possibilities for thinking differently about sovereignty – still a key phenomenon for social scientists, including those of internationalist provenance. The work of Laura Llevadot is certainly an interesting starting point, also within political philosophy within Catalonia. This author, who is associated with leftist thought in the region, nevertheless presents arguments for the regional sovereignty coming from the Derridian tradition.[9]

Central to Llevadot's approach to language is the deconstruction of language as, between other aspects, a colonial and political. In this sense, it is apparent that classical

[9] See: Llevadot, Laura, *Jacques Derrida: democràcia i sobirania*, (Gedisa: Barcelona, 2019).

Marxism is not the only progressive basis for thinking about "national cultures" in the left-progressive intellectual tradition. The reviewed anthology is therefore only a starting point – an important one, and one that should be of interest not only to scholars from the region it directly concerns.

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