

Summary

The present book provides a Czech translation of the Hungarian philosopher György Lukács's book *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of his Thought*. The study was published in 1924, a year after the publication of the famous *History and Class Consciousness*, and is in a certain sense a continuation of it. As he does in *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács attempts to reconstruct the fundamental principles of the Marxist method, the categories of dialectics, totality, and concreteness. In his own words, for formulating the Marxist method, it is (after Marx) "Lenin's writings and speeches that become methodologically decisive". According to Lukács, the core of the Marxist method lies in the perspective of *concrete totality*, in the holistic principle where each element can only be understood within the structure in which it occurs, and on the basis of the function it plays within that structure. Lenin's political activity, he argues, is an application of the Marxian method to a concrete situation. Lukács, based on an analysis of Lenin's concrete political activity, attempts to reconstruct the Marxist method and its principles and express these principles *theoretically*. However, his book was also a critique of the official interpretation of Lenin. As Andrew Arato and Paul Breines state, Lukács's Lenin represented a kind of counter-myth: a critique of the official Leninist Lenin, or rather the official Marxist-Leninist interpretation of Lenin. In the present book, Lukács points out that the fundamental misunderstanding of Lenin's method – which was dominant in both the Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods – lies in the idea that in Lenin's decisions one can find "universally applicable 'recipes' and 'prescriptions' for correct practical action" or some "general rules' that could be 'applied' to different cases." However, according to Lukács, such a "mechanical 'generalization' of his prescriptions or decisions" "can only produce a caricature, a vulgar Leninism". And it was precisely against such a caricature and schematization of dialectics and Marxist method that Lukács wanted to oppose with his study. Lukács's book *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought* – as well as, for example, *History and Class Consciousness* – falls within the period of Lukács's so-called "apprentice Marxist years". While the writings of this period, from 1918–1930, were considered by Lukács in later years to be outdated in thought, it was nevertheless this period that produced Lukács's insightful and stimulating analyses of Marxist method, which had an indelible impact on the development of both Marxist and non-Marxist philosophy. Even though Lukács considered the writings of this period to be in many respects obsolete, as we said, methodologically, in his view, the book on Lenin led to results which, as moments of suppression of Stalinism even in the mid-1960s,

“retained a certain methodological legitimacy” and contained “explicit criticisms of later Stalinist developments – at times aptly expressed”. These criticisms remained relevant not only for the Stalinist period, but in many respects also for the post-Stalinist period, or for the period of so-called “normalization”, which, although qualitatively different from Stalinism, on the other hand, had a number of features in common with it. For this reason, too, the Czech translation of this book could not be published in 1970, at the beginning of normalization. Even though the book was already typeset, the normalization regime no longer allowed the book to be published and the typesetting was scrapped. Thus, the Czech translation from 1970 made by the Czech philosopher Lubomír Sochor is being published almost a century after the book was written and more than half a century after his translation was made. Sochor’s original translation has been revised and footnotes have been added, especially references to the literature cited, which were not in the original edition.