

## Summary

The book *Příspěvky k dějinám marxismu. Studie a články* (Contributions to the History of Marxism: Studies and Articles) presents a selection of works by Lubomír Sochor (1925–1986), a Czech philosopher, historian of Marxism, and critic of Stalinism and Soviet-type societies. Edited by Petr Kužel, this volume presents readers with many previously inaccessible texts, including unpublished manuscripts and work published only in exile journals, in foreign languages, or in samizdat. The book thus offers an exceptional insight into the thought of this semi-forgotten author, whose work the state-socialist regime repeatedly prevented from appearing. The censorship of the time also prevented the publication of several of Sochor's translations (including works by Trotsky, Marcuse, Korsch, and others). Consequently, many texts remained in manuscript form in the author's literary estate. Now readers have the opportunity to engage with them for the first time.

The introductory study by editor Petr Kužel, titled "Lubomír Sochor: Filosof dějin potlačeného marxismu" (Lubomír Sochor: A Philosopher of the History of Suppressed Marxism) serves as a guide to Sochor's life and work. It emphasizes Sochor's significance as a critical thinker who sought to revitalize Marxism as a living and self-reflexive theory of society. The study demonstrates that Sochor's approach to the history of Marxism represented an effort to critically reassess its intellectual trajectory, including its marginalized and repressed currents. It highlights Sochor's application of Marxist methodology not only to Marxism itself but also to the analysis of so-called "real socialism." This leads, in Sochor's work, to a theoretically stimulating critique of Eastern Bloc regimes, which anticipates certain strands of ideology theory later developed by critical social theory. Kužel further points to the deeper theoretical connections between thematically distinct texts by Sochor, analyzing their organic coherence and presenting them as different facets of a unified critical theory of society.

The book is divided into eight distinct but intrinsically interconnected thematic sections. The first section focuses on Sochor's analyses of Italian Marxism, particularly of the works of Antonio Labriola and Antonio Gramsci. Sochor examines Labriola's complex intellectual development, exploring the influences of Hegelianism and Herbartianism on his Marxism, as well as the political and social conditions in Italy at the time. Although Labriola's contribution had long been overlooked in the history of Marxism, Sochor highlights his original contributions to Marxist philosophy, particularly his

critique of the theory of factors, of the infiltration of positivist elements into Marxist philosophy, and of naturalistic and mechanistic distortions of Marxism, as well as his critique of the economism of the Second International. In another extensive essay, Sochor traces the continuity between certain aspects of Labriola's Marxism and the work of Antonio Gramsci. He provides a detailed analysis of Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, the historical bloc, and praxis, demonstrating their relevance for the further development of Marxist philosophy as well as Marxist and non-Marxist sociology—in, for instance, their connection to elite theory.

The second section similarly presents a historical examination of thinkers marginalized by Stalinism, particularly the philosophies of Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch in the 1920s (in Czechoslovakia, Lukács's works from his Stalinist phase were published, while his texts from the first half of the 1920s were censored). It also explores philosophical debates in the Soviet Union that were ultimately terminated by political decree. In this context, Sochor pays particular attention to the philosophy of Abram Deborin and the debate between so-called dialecticians and mechanists. His analysis uncovers numerous philosophical concepts suppressed by Stalinist orthodoxy, which Sochor regards as integral to Marxism and as retaining emancipatory potential—capable of revitalizing Marxism and freeing it from its rigidity. This applies especially to the early concepts of Lukács and Korsch, particularly the notion of concrete totality, the subject-object relationship, and theories of reification and alienation.

The third section examines the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis. Once again, Sochor reconstructs, with historical erudition, the various historical attempts to integrate these two approaches, paying particular attention to the works of Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich. He explores the possibility of synthesizing Marx's theory of human liberation with Freudian analysis, emphasizing that both theories share a common goal: the critique of society's repressive structures and the search for possibilities of freer existence. According to Sochor, the originality of Marcuse's approach lies in his refusal to mechanically combine the two theories, whose deeper philosophical connections he seeks instead. He rejects both vulgar Marxism and dogmatic psychoanalysis, demonstrating instead how each theory exposes the contradictions of modern civilization and offers a path toward its transformation. Sochor analyzes Marcuse's development of the concept of "repressive desublimation," which describes how capitalist society manipulates human desires to maintain its dominance. In doing so, Marcuse moves beyond Freud—who was skeptical of non-repressive desublimation—and beyond traditional Marxism,

which often neglected the psychological dimensions of oppression. Sochor further develops these insights, situating them within the broader framework of Marxist concepts and the evolution of Marxist philosophy.

The fourth section continues with an analysis of theories from key figures of Western Marxism—C. Wright Mills, Karl August Wittfogel, and Isaac Deutscher—whose works significantly influenced critical thought on society and power. In his text on C. Wright Mills, Sochor draws on his sociological training, focusing primarily on *The Sociological Imagination* and Mills' theory of elites. He also examines the evolution of Wittfogel's thought—both theoretical and political—alongside debates on the so-called "Asiatic mode of production." The section further includes a text on Deutscher, particularly his writings on Stalinism and Trotskyism.

The fifth section addresses the themes of alienation and commodity fetishism. Sochor analyzes the interconnectedness of these two theories while demonstrating that they are not merely synonymous. Particularly stimulating are his reflections on Marx's concept of "natural law" and the question of whether Marxist categories, developed in the context of capitalist society, can be applied to "real socialist" societies. These aspects are further elaborated in texts included in the book's eighth section.

In the sixth section, Sochor turns to Marxist cultural theory, with an emphasis on mass culture. His contribution lies in rejecting reductive perspectives that view mass culture either purely as an instrument of manipulation or as a neutral byproduct of technological progress. Instead, he highlights the dialectical complexity of this phenomenon, analyzing its exploitative mechanisms in relation to socially constructed needs. Here he applies previously examined Marxist concepts—alienation and reification—to demonstrate how mass culture sustains the social status quo by mystifying everyday life and integrating individuals into alienated structures. His analysis draws inspiration from Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony and Goldmann's structural-genetic method, while also exploring the transformation and fetishization of love in modern society.

Themes of love, sexuality, and drives are explored in a section dedicated to pre-Marxist intellectual traditions (though they also feature prominently in the section on psychoanalysis and Marxism). Particularly noteworthy is Sochor's interpretation of Charles Fourier, where—characteristically—he focuses on the suppressed and heterodox elements of Fourier's work. He also analyzes Left Hegelianism, the intellectual development of the young Marx and Engels, and, in later texts, the philosophical dimensions of the writings of the Marquis de Sade.

The final section compiles Sochor's critical analyses of Soviet-type societies, particularly his critique of their ideological apparatus. In many respects, his approach aligns with the materialist conception of ideology as formulated by Louis Althusser and later developed by Slavoj Žižek. He introduces the concept of "liturgical Marxism-Leninism," arguing that the vacuity of official language is not a failure of its ideological function but rather a constitutive element in stabilizing the power structure. Stripped of literal meaning, ideology is reduced to ritual, undermining the very possibility of rational communication while fulfilling its function with remarkable efficiency. A more detailed examination of each section and the various dimensions of Sochor's work is provided in Petr Kužel's introductory study.

The volume also includes a comprehensive bibliography of Sochor's writings, encompassing works published both in Czechoslovakia and abroad. By examining typewritten materials from Sochor's estate, it was possible to identify some of the pseudonyms under which Sochor published. This represents the first such systematically compiled bibliography of his work.

As a whole, the book presents Sochor's major philosophical texts, written from the 1960s until his tragic death, offering readers insight into the oeuvre of this original and outstanding thinker.