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IMMANENT CRITIQUE AND AUTHORITARIAN SOCIALISM

Andrew Arato

Is a critical social theory of authoritarian state socialism, one not apologetic for any contemporary form of domination, possible at all? The question and the theoretical efforts to which it is relevant have two identifiable origins, one Western and the other Eastern European. Born as a set of efforts to understand in a practical and meaningful way the forms of domination characteristic of our epoch, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School—the Western contribution—is today apparently exhausted. Aside from a whole series of brilliant analyses of German fascism, as well as a number of imposing studies concentrating on the cultural sphere of late capitalism, the older critical theory in New York and Frankfurt, I do not believe, has ever fulfilled its self-defined social-theoretical tasks. And while the newer critical theory in Frankfurt and Starnberg had at its highest point developed the foundations for a sophisticated, many-strata conflict model of the legitimation crisis of late capitalism, the representative product of this type of analysis contained some partially hidden doubts about the possibility of critical theory in the sense of immanent social criticism. Subsequently, the factual antinomy of practical philosophy and evolutionary social science in the work of Habermas (and his colleagues) expressed the new embarrassment of this tradition in a far more serious way than did his few increasingly sceptical remarks concerning the chances of an immanent critique with a communicative, practical relation to its audience. Independently of the value of the work done on the foundations of a discursive, communicative ethics and the theory of social evolution, no one today assumes anything more than at best indirect gains for a critical social theory of contemporary forms of domination from these primarily methodological, meta-theoretical projects.

The viability or impossibility of critical theory can be established only by actual efforts of analyses (philosophically informed, it is to be hoped) of contemporary social formations. Of these, quite obviously late capitalism and authoritarian state socialism are the most important. In the latter context the relatively minor part played by the study of the Soviet Union in the history of critical theory is more or less scandalous. While Horkheimer in 1940 pointed to the potentially apologetic function of class Marxism vis-à-vis the most authoritarian of the regimes of his time ("integral statism"), there are only two works in the Frankfurt tradition—one by Herbert Marcuse and the other by Oskar Negt—which, as far as I can tell, try to apply the methods of this school in this domain.[1] While it would not be easy to prove that this omission played a role in the exhaustion of critical theory, it is now clear that no version of this theory is worth reconstructing if it remains in part apologetic (as was Marcuse) or conceptually

powerless (as was Negt) in the face of authoritarian state socialism.

The same question can also be approached from the angle of independent Eastern European theoretical efforts to deal with their own social reality. Significantly the major form of oppositional thought in the 1950's and 1960's began with a Marxist (i.e., anti-Stalinist) revision of the ruling ideology and thus was never intrinsically connected with the democratizing and liberalizing political goals of many members of this reform generation. On the other hand, the full-fledged renaissance of Marxian philosophy (as a philosophy of practice), as well as the revival of serious economic analysis during the second half of this period, also by-passed the social-theoretical inheritance of Marx for a different but very good reason: the painful evidence of a personal experience with the weakness of a whole set of policies based on classical Marxian doctrines, i.e., concepts such as under-developed socialism, transitional society-degenerate workers' state, state socialism, and bureaucratic collectivism.

And yet, as contemporary post-Marxist intellectual ferment in several countries seems to show, the abandonment of all possible Marxian methods in favour of one or another well-known Western liberal or conservative approach can easily lead to theoretical impotence and, at worst, to apologies for forms of domination other than their own. Indeed, many Eastern European oppositionists today face the same danger against which they have justly warned Western radicals for 15 years: producing ideological justification for the form of domination faced by the other. In this context the project of a critical theory of Eastern European societies which might involve something more than the revision of official Marxism, or even the return to the classical Marxian social theory, surely offers some hope. Even if it should turn out that all of the doctrines of classical theory involve apologetic or irrelevant consequences for the study of authoritarian state socialism, it might still be the case that the original practical intentions can be well-served. Such would be the programme of a neo-Marxist critical theory of authoritarian state socialism and would require a reconstruction of historical materialism.

Yet if the practical intentions themselves could not be adequately distinguished from *both* state socialist forms of domination and irrelevant and incoherent social utopias, it still might be possible to relate a new project of emanicpation to a dynamic social theory that would at least preserve as its regulative principle the Western Marxist relation between philosophy and social theory. Such would be the programme of a post-Marxist critical theory.

Such theoretical programmes have indeed already emerged in today's Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary, even if the two types of critical theory—the neo-Marxist and the post-Marxist—have not yet been clearly differentiated. Actually, all significant efforts until now have made some serious use of, or concessions to, at least some dimension of classical Marxist social theory. And next to the projects of the reconstruction and transcendence of Marxism, those of revisionism and renaissance also continue (if decreasingly) to inform the meaning of critical theory in Eastern Europe. As a consequence, in addition to my original question concerning the possibility of any critical theory of authoritarian

state socialism, I will also want to ask to what extent and in what sense such a theory can and should remain in the Marxian tradition.

II

The history of critical theory in the West has, of course, involved a series of changing relationships to Marxism. The two works of the Frankfurt School dedicated to the critique of Soviet Marxism thus reveal two different types of theorizing. Both Marcuse and Negt used a method of immanent ideology critique, confronting Marxist norms preserved—even in their Soviet deformation—with the existing socio-economic structures which were unable to satisfy them. But while Negt carefully avoided, in the manner of Adorno, the support of all positive theory construction concerning the social structure, Marcuse (as usual more "affirmative") embedded his ideology-critical theses in a series of dogmatic assumptions, most notably, one involving the independent socialist logic of central planning and state ownership of the means of production guaranteed an outcome consistent with the relevant Marxist norms. And when in *One Dimensional Man* he produced his own end-of-ideology thesis in denying the tension between norm and reality in all advanced industrial societies, he moderated but did not abandon the affirmative and implicitly apologetic theses. However critical of this effort, I must also admit that Negt (then still under the influence of Habermas) produced nothing more than a static confrontation of Soviet norm and reality without any further theoretical and political consequences. In other words, neither a purely negative ideology critique, nor the affirmative linkage of critical theory to the body of classical Marxian doctrines, produced a dynamic and non-apologetic social theory of authoritarian state socialism.

Today after a decade of discussion, some additional and perhaps more important reasons for the failure of the older critical theory in the face of the societies of the Soviet type can be adduced. The programme that critical theorists from Horkheimer and Marcuse to Adorno and the early Habermas believed to have discovered in the Marxist critique of political economy was indeed an ambitious one. In this conception an immanent critique of formal ideological systems, first of all, combined the hermeneutic task of philosophy (by pointing to culturally significant norms embedded in social institutions and practices) with the empirical-analytical task of the best of the social sciences (by establishing the systematic interconnections among and within the spheres of social life). But secondly, its position between philosophy and science allowed critique to go beyond each by demonstrating the dynamic tension and opposition between norms and social institutions and practices, as well as the self-imposed, self-reproducing contradictions of the social system itself.

When made conscious, the opposition between norm and reality is the basis of social action for the realisation of the norm. On this level the relationship of

critique to its audience is that of practical enlightenment and motivation which works only if, in a discursive process, the addressees of theory recognise the norms as their own. The self-contradictions of the social system are, on the other hand, raised to the level of consciousness for the sake of theoretical orientation of already constituted social actors. The method was supposed to work because of the double sense in which the criticised ideologies embodied "true" and "false" consciousness: the unity of a valid norm with false claims of its actual realisation, and the unity of accurate or adequate scientific description with false claims of necessity and transhistoricity. Is such a theoretical programme in any sense defensible today? Can prospective critics of authoritarian state socialism relate to it at all?

Implicitly, but clearly, Habermas himself has recently restricted the general applicability of critical theory in the sense of immanent critique to classical capitalism, where, according to him, a market-based economic system has taken on the primary task of social as well as system integration. A value-theoretical critique could thus simultaneously operate on a normative and empirical or more exactly (since both levels involve norms) action and system theoretical levels. With the partial repoliticization of the economy under late capitalism, social and system integration are again institutionally differentiated, and the social sciences dealing with the various spheres of reproduction no longer have to be either totalising or normatively over-burdened.

Analogously, it could be argued that the transformation of authoritarian state socialism might undermine immanent critique.[2] There are, nevertheless, perhaps even weightier objections that do not assume a fundamental transformation of its object, ones that all contributions to the critical theory of authoritarian state socialism should take into account. The status of "critique" independent of philosophy and social science (which it supposedly absorbs) turns out to be difficult to sustain. If one does not assume a quasi-Hegelian logic of the development of thought for which every epoch is best expressed in a single system of ideas, and for which every such a system reflexively absorbs its predecessor (something Marx assumed even more definitively than Hegel), it becomes logically possible that the number of ideologies relevant to immanent critique will be one, several, or even none. If there are several which may indeed embody different normative claims, critical theory cannot dispense with the services of practical philosophy dealing with the foundations and validity of norms. I believe, at least in principle, that the same would be true (and given Marx's philosophical background as true) in the case of the existence of only one theoretically significant social ideology.

The objection that immanent critique always needs philosophical justification is in itself surely not fatal. Such was Marcuse's position with reference to the philosophy of the past in the 1930's; Adorno too insisted on the antinomic complementarity of immanent and transcendent critique. It may also be the case, however, that in a given social formation no generally significant system of thought exists with philosophically defensible normative claims, and/or that the intellectual schemes with normative claims that do exist have no implications

whatsoever for grasping the systemic interconnections of societies.

In the one case the hermeneutic claims of critical theory and in the other its social scientific (systems theoretical) dimension would be endangered. In reference to the first I should mention one version of the end-of-ideology thesis in the writings of Marcuse, Adorno, and now Habermas, according to which genuine, two-dimensional ideologies involving tension between empirical and normative claims are dead in a period (advanced capitalism) in which the bourgeoisie has become cynical about its values. This thesis has its parallels in at least three Eastern European countries (Kolakowski: Poland, Zaslavsky: USSR, Budapest School: Hungary) with one addendum: not only are the normative claims of the ruling ideological ritual, Marxism-Leninism, philosophically empty, but, given that their purpose is to exclude all serious discourse about society, they are not even believed by the ideologues themselves.

Assuming the necessity of social integration for all societies, one may, of course, argue that forms of symbolic life with implicit validity claims will necessarily exist even in such a context, if on a deeper level, embodied by institutions (often small-scale), practices, objectivations, beliefs. But theory building in the sense of immanent critique requires something more: genuine two-dimensional ideologies. Their supposed decline may drive one to a resigned social philosophy, though it should not—as it unfortunately did for the older critical theory—exclude the rehabilitation and critical appropriation of those methodologies (hermeneutical, phenomenological, interactionist "genealogical") that are our only access to the institutions, objectivations, practices, and beliefs responsible for social integration.

In reference to the second problem, the absence of systematic interconnections in the case of existing ideologies or even social-scientific approaches, the answer after the recent work of Habermas is simple and somewhat tautological. Given such a quandary, only the application of the concepts of systems theory gives us a key to systems integration. Such a step may be unavoidable, even assuming the existence of genuine ideologies (in the sense of the Frankfurt School) with both normative and systemic implications. We ourselves should not accept too quickly the global claims of such ideologies, or, worse, attribute much significance to them. There may not be a single road, even in principle, to the study of the "totality" of the social spheres, and those in the tradition of critical theory perhaps ought to learn methodological pluralism, even at the potential cost of being charged with eclecticism. In other words, not only philosophy but the action and system theoretical social sciences need at the very least to complement immanent critique, with the boundaries among them depending on the gradually reconstructed structure of the social formation in question.

The reason for continuing to insist on immanent critique in the context of such an expanded theoretical program is the special relationship of this type of theory to its addressees. In the present context this relationship also has its problems. The linking of the critique of ideology with the enlightenment and motivation of the addressees of theory assumes, I believe, a homogeneous value system between the ideology and the relevant social agents. Under some conditions of

social integration (given certain national contexts) such an assumption may be empirically defensible. But we should recall the latitude given by Max Weber (on very good empirical grounds) to the conditions satisfying political legitimacy: a form of domination is indeed strengthened by the relevant beliefs of a whole population, but the conditions of legitimate domination are minimally satisfied by referring to what he misleadingly called the administrative staff (*Verwaltungsstab*). Moving from the concept of legitimacy to that of ideology (in some respects a precarious move), we might therefore admit that in some societies immanent critique will address only ruling elites (to use another inadequate term). Such indeed has been the partially justified claim of Kolakowski and members of the new Polish opposition concerning the social critique of the revisionist refomers of the 1956 generation. This claim is usually followed by another one—based on the end-of-ideology thesis—concerning the end of revisionism. Here too the response of critical theory would have to be based on the analysis of social integration without any self-restriction of the critique of ideology in the strict sense. The raising to the level of consciousness of those institutionalized beliefs and enforced practices that symbolically integrate systems otherwise perceived as oppressive, hierarchical and exploitative preserves the enlightening and motivating role—especially for authoritarian state socialism—that critical theory restricted to the critique of more formal ideological doctrines. The critique of the latter will, however, retain its relevance wherever significant sociological strata or groups continue to be motivated, at least in part, by values shared with dominant ideologies (in some countries not necessarily the official one).

III

The question concerning the conditions leading to the possibility of a critical theory of authoritarian state socialism fortunately does not have to be posed in an intellectual vacuum. Although in Eastern Europe itself no relevant theoretical project has, as far as I know, directly taken its point of departure from the older or newer critical theory, several have been noticeably affected by this tradition as well as some of its methodological difficulties. The entirely new dimension linking the approaches in question is the common desire to undertake a critique of ideology of classical rather than merely Soviet Marxism. In this context several historical precedents should be recalled. From the point of view of the imperatives of his own theory construction, Marx himself always distinguished between political and "vulgar" economy. An analogous relationship between classical and Soviet Marxism becomes theoretically plausible in the context of the already mentioned end-of-ideology thesis. Not only is classical—unlike Soviet—Marxism genuinely suitable for further construction theory if critically appropriate, it may indeed embody a normative project continuous with at least some aspects of institutionalized symbol systems under authoritarian state socialism.

The idea of a Marxian critique of Marxism, of turning historical materialism against itself is, furthermore, one of the constitutive dimensions of the tradition Merleau-Ponty names Western Marxism. First proposed by Lukács in 1919, then by Korsch and later by Mannheim, and accepted by members of the Frankfurt School in their various replies to Mannheim, the self-critique of Marxism had not been carried out until now. While on a metatheoretical level, Habermas and Wellmer achieved much in this regard, they most definitely did not explore the potential connections of the theory that criticized a new form of domination. While this was in part attempted by Negt, the critical thrust of his argumentation was turned back on Soviet Marxism.

Given these precedents, the current Eastern European efforts at a critical theory of authoritarian state socialism, which engage in serious confrontations with some of the strongest versions of Marxian theory, represent both a continuation of and a new departure within Western Marxism. In the context of this essay I can only list a series of such efforts (perhaps unavoidably stressing Hungarian theorists, given my own background), but will select one—that of Ivan Szelényi and György Konrád—for closer scrutiny.[3] The objective will be to indicate the differences among five representative approaches by pointing not only to the various notions of critique, but also to the different types of relationships to social scientific theory construction, both Marxist and non-Marxist.[4]

1. Rudolf Bahro's position in the spectrum of critical theory in Eastern Europe is indeed unique: he is the only neo-Leninist. It is in large part from this point of view that he criticizes classical Marxism. His conception of critique involves using parts of the theory against other parts (at times correcting revolutionary expectations through what he takes to be historical evidence); he nowhere steps outside the Marxian tradition for sources of constructive theory building. He rejects the norm-reality model of immanent critique as useless or even dangerous utopianism; classical Marxian norms he (inconsistently) considers historically irrelevant and Soviet Marxist ones apologetic, at least in the context of an already modernized version of state socialism. From classical Marxism, he accepts a version of its deterministic theory of history; from Leninism, its political substitutionism, although in a new and openly elitist form; from Western Marxism, the program of cultural revolution. It is not hard to show the perhaps unintended political and theoretical conservatism of his approach.

2. The work of Ivan Szelényi and György Konrád represents an immanent critique of Marxism as an ideology of revolutionary intellectuals, a motif also present in Bahro. The critique remains a Historical Materialist one to the extent that it is built around the model of the Marxian class theory (reinterpreted through concepts drawn from Weber, Polányi, and Mannheim), but is post-Marxist to the extent that it breaks (more radically and consistently than Bahro) with the philosophical dimensions of the original project. While explicitly rejecting a normatively motivated critique, this theory—unwilling and perhaps unable to reflect on its norms—oscillates between populist (*ouvrierist*) and democratic socialist political conceptions. Recently, the program of a socialist civil society has acquired weight in Szelényi's essays equal to that of a society

where the immediate producers exercise control over the economic surplus, but the relationship between these utopian conceptions has been nowhere clarified.

3. The authors of the still unpublished *The Dictatorship over Needs* (not the same as the German essay volume with that title), Agnes Heller, Ferenc Fehér and György Márkus, work with a somewhat antinomic combination—analogous and indeed related to the newer critical theory—of the philosophy of praxis and critical social science. In the case of two of these authors, Heller and Fehér, the combination is that of a philosophy continuous with the Renaissance of Marxism of the 1960's reinterpreted as a radical communications theory within a formal sociological, in large part Weberian, framework mobilized for social criticism. In the case of the third author, Márkus, while the philosophical perspective—his own version of a radical communications theory—is shifting in a post-Marxian direction, his project of a critical economics relying on a variety of sources (Robinson, Sraffa, Kalecki, Brus, et al.) is built up around Marxian principles of organization. For Márkus, also co-author of an unpublished 1972 critique of *Das Kapital*, critical theory must discover the specific rationality ("goal-function") of a socio-economic system from the point of view of another possible society.

4. The work of Mihály Vajda increasingly represents a break with all dimensions of both the philosophy and the social theory of the Marxian tradition. The program of a socialist civil society remains regulative for the post-Marxist critical political theory of Vajda, who, somewhat like Kolakowski, has concentrated his Marxian critique on the intended abolition of the state/society duality which can be realized, as both argue, only by the state-absorbing society. Unlike Kolakowski, Vajda is a critical theorist insofar as he explicitly seeks to work out a perspective, without, however, utilizing Marxian categories of a new type of social formation that would be a post-bourgeois, but democratic (radical democratic?) version of civil society. In his recent work he has sought in a somewhat historicist manner, to ground the chances of such a society in the differing historical traditions of the several Eastern European cultural complexes.

5. Another project of a post-Marxist critical theory is that of János Kis and György Bence (Marc Rakovski), co-authors with Márkus of the *Das Kapital* critique and authors of *Le Marxisme face aux pays de l'est*. They have now definitively broken with the philosophy of praxis, and more recently—seeking to establish an adequate communicative relationship with today's actual or potential democratic movements—with all Marxian language. Nevertheless, their desire for a dynamic social theory necessary for the clarification of the issues faced by existing or possible social movements make them post- rather than anti-Marxist, even if their conception of another desirable society is increasingly restricted to liberal parliamentary democracy not adequately distinguished from the existing capitalist democracies. The presence of socialism in such a society is neither thematized nor rejected by Kis and Bence.

IV

The book by Szelényi and Konrád, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, is of particular interest because it is the most explicitly relevant to critical theory in terms of the very self-definition of the authors. In the book, as well as in Szelényi's subsequent essays, the terms "immanent critique", "critique of ideology", "critical social theory" repeatedly appear whenever their own method is discussed. They define "immanent and transcendent critique" and the, for them, parallel (if ambiguous) terms "critique of ideology" and "ideological criticism" by a rather scientistic reference to the value-fact problem. The immanent critique of ideology, as against tanscendent ideological criticism, does not evaluate premises, but interprets societies wholly from within their own context. Thus the aim of immanent critique is to discover the interests, conflicts and alternatives hidden by ideologies and especially by universal normative claims which are not further explored for their dimension of truth. While one of the requirements of the Frankfurt school critique of ideology—the "defetishization" of false appearances—is thereby satisfied, it is not at all clear that something important is not lost here by the easy abandonment of a second requirement, the bringing of valid norms and their false claims of realization into explosive tension. In effect, as I will try to show, the conception of critique here inadvertently vindicates Adorno's refusal to make a clear-cut decision between immanent and transcendent critique. The difficulty is not solved by self-reflection alone. Szelényi and Konrád do interpret the critique they are interested in as self-critique: as Marxists of Marxism, as intellectuals of the ideologies of intellectuals, indeed as immanent critics of immanent criticism (identified as empirical sociology in Eastern Europe, at least, in other words with the authors' own background). Only it is not at all clear how and whether they get out of any of the logical circles involved. Indeed, they say as much when denying that even self-critique can divest intellectuals of their social character and ethos as intellectuals.

The aim of the two authors, and here they are the direct heirs of Mannheim, is to clarify or uncover the particular empirical interests behind all norms, projects, and values. Szelényi, in particular, vehemently denies all attempts (Habermas, Budapest school) to justify, validate or even seek the universal. If in one place Szelényi somewhat inconsistently confesses to be within "the broadly defined value framework of Marxism", this can mean only (for the sake of even minimum consistency) that the value of the interests of one particularity—the direct producer—is implicitly affirmed by this framework, though in a contradictory fashion. It is the continuity of this otherwise ungrounded and surely transcendent valuation that links the three apparently different formulations of this project to criticize Marxism as an ideology: Marxist critique of Marxism-Leninism, historical materialist critique and post-Marxist critique of Marxism. All three formulations presuppose the *ouvrierist* value premise, the application of class analysis and the rejection of the point of view of the universal.

If the direct producer and the power of class analysis are the elements that

remain valid for Szelényi and Konrád in the theoretical heritage of Marx, its original sins, to the authors, are teleology and universality (or more exactly the subsumption of *techné* under *telos*, of technical reason under the claims of goal-setting or teleological reason) and the sacrifice of particular interests to supposedly universal ones. Applying the method of class analysis to the two ideological doctrines, they argue that these correspond very well to the interests of a new intellecual class in formation. These interests converge to create a social structure (itself not wholly unprecedented in Eastern Europe) around which the new class can be constituted and consolidated, a structure based on the economic dominance of teleological (in other words, centrally planned but elsewhere ambiguously identified as "rational") redistribution of the produced surplus under the cover of supposedly general interests. To be sure, they argue that the ideology did not produce the new social structure; indeed the dirigistic and étatistic ethos of late nineteenth century bureaucracies pre-existed, if not also penetrated, the Marxism of the time in which intellectual and worker interests were both embodied. Nevertheless, the continuity of Marxism as a pre- and post-revolutionary ideology indicates the deep elective affinity between the classical doctrines, the desire of the intellectuals for a scientifically planned and organized society, and the bureaucratic ethos.

It is of course admitted that in the post-revolutionary period Marxism indeed degenerated from a critical theory of capitalism to a set of apologetic, affirmative doctrines—a state religion. But Szelényi and Konrád do not stress its consequent demise as a genuine ideology suitable as the object of immanent criticism; obviously they do not consider the issue important. The best-developed ideology of intellectual class rule (however ambiguous internally) remains the classical Marxian system, and for the Soviet Union and some of the Eastern European societies the point retains at the very least its historical significance. More importantly, the knowledge of its open and hidden dimensions justifying domination by intellectuals allows the thematization of those features of the social integration (Szelényi and Konrád call it "ethos") which symbolically embody these ideological dimensions if (Szelényi and Konrád do not admit this) a ritualistically preserved Marxism-Leninism were to be unable to do so. According to Szelényi, some of these dimensions, existing in the form of the consensus of beliefs, are:

1. The necessity and legitimacy of a direct proportion between inequality and different levels of intellectual qualification.
2. The necessity of scientific allocation of resources and of long-term planning.
3. The priority of societal and long-term over individual and short-term interests.

The three points correspond to the symbolic requirements of the conception of intellectuals as a new class. The first (coming more from functionalist sociology and only indirectly justifiable by the classical Marxian conception of the first post-capitalist stage) validates a gulf between intellectuals and the rest of the population without, however, pointing to a principle of unity and coherence for the "new class"; the second legitimates the structure around which it is sup-

posedly organized, that of central planning ("teleological" or "rational" redistribution) but at the possible price of conflicts among competing technocracies and alternative plans; the third validates the unity of the class around the claims of a scientific knowledge of history possessed by the center of the politocratic party.

It would surely be possible to claim that the three points validate the privileged position of three differently constituted and in part overlapping strata capable of both conflict and concerted action: intellectuals, technocracy, politocracy. On the other hand, the ideological coherence and continuity among these doctrines provides the best argument for Szelényi and Konrâd that ideological/technocratic/bureaucratic intellectuals constitute the unified ruling or dominating class of an authoritarian state socialism still in the process of its final crystallization. To be sure, they seem to prefer a combination of statistical arguments drawn from stratification theory and research, and structural arguments stemming from the Marxian class theory. Yet no statistical arguments about income, living conditions and other forms of material privilege that show the relatively privileged condition of intellectuals under state socialism can establish, I would contend, the *interest* of intellectual individuals or groups (or anyone except the upper apparatus) in a society in which the economic interests of almost all individuals and most groups are daily compromised and sacrificed. At most, one could speak of the constitution of such an interest within a structure of power that appears as given and unchangeable, imposed objectively (or externally) and not through the will of the social stratum in question. But what is the sense of treating the intellectuals as a whole (however defined) as the ruling or dominant class within such a social structure? Szelényi and Konrâd must insist on similarities of income and privilege because only these criteria (unlike status or power) homogeneously relate to the presumed class as a whole. Even in their conception the whole does not rule, only what they suggestively call its politocratic estate. (The analogy to the bourgeoisie, a dominant but not necessarily ruling class, would be of no use here because it presupposes the state-civil society separation and the consequent existence of a form of power that is in itself not political.)

"Rational redistribution", the structure of economic planning legitimated by claims of rational knowledge, also does not point to an unambiguous future class position of intellectuals. Although the legitimating principle of redistribution was originally understood largely as expert, instrumental, means-end rationality (which would be fully developed only as technocracy), the term "rational" was later reinterpreted by Szelényi according to Weber's few remarks defining substantive or material (i.e., goal-positing) rationality. It is not so important that Szelényi does not as a result reverse his prediction concerning the triumph of the technocracy over the politocratic order; the conception as a whole stressing the fusion of *telos* and *techné* implies the mutual dependence of the two, given the structure of teleological planning. As long as there is such a dependence, the central structure of domination remains that of hierarchical orders (*Stände*) and not classes, according to the logic of the conception.

But even if a techno-bureaucracy came to appropriate all the key positions around the planning structure all the way to the very top of decision-making,

reducing the remnants of the politocracy to a political administration, it would still not be clear how, in a society where all power is exercised through the state structure (here identified with rational redistribution), intellectuals outside this structure could possess class power in any meaningful sense of the word. And to produce ideology for such a structure from which they are directly excluded would not distinguish the cultural, artistic, academic intellectuals from their analogues under capitalism, which, the authors hold, forms an independent stratum and not a class. Unless, of course, being censored were to be interpreted as a special sign of power, a point they actually make, but never take too seriously.

If, however, the only argument for the unity of the intellectual class is the ideological content of the ethos of state socialism (which especially in an earlier period also embodied an *ouvrierist* content), then the case for an intellectual ruling or dominant class is only slightly better established than that for the dictatorship of the proletariat under Stalinism. One can claim participation in direct rule for neither, and all explicit (workers) or implicit (intellectuals) claims to rule would be falsifiable by pointing to (as do Szelényi and Konrád) the unification of particular interests, politically defined status and actual power in the party-state structure itself. To the extent, furthermore, that the ethos of state socialism has been investigated from the quasi-functionalist point of view as the ideology of intellectual class power, one develops the suspicion that the domain of ideology (or rather of social integration) is itself seriously shortchanged by the class analysis of Szelényi and Konrád. I am thinking of such obvious issues as nationalism, traditionalism and neo-traditionalism, religion and quasi-religion, of the key ideological differences between imperial center and its various peripheries; there is no way (except entirely negatively, by referring to the identity problems of intellectuals unable to identify a form of class rule as their own) to integrate these theses in the model of ideologies, legitimating intellectual class domination in a period of transition between politocracy and technocracy. If we were to claim that the ideological dimensions stressed by Szelényi and Konrád are constitutive of class structure (not their position but perhaps more defensible), should we not also admit that these other dimensions of the state socialist ethos might be constitutive of social realities as well?

To sum up: not only does the utilization of classical Marxist class analysis as the foundation for the critique of ideology lead to unjustifiable sociological analyses and projections, but the very content of the ideologies is in the process illegitimately narrowed down with further potentially damaging consequences for the analysis of social structure. I do not believe that the situation is any better concerning the political conclusions of the analysis, or, rather, it is better only because they (especially Szelényi in his more recent essays, but implicitly also Konrád in his new volume of essays and fragments) bring another rather different perspective into their account.

V

Whom does Szelényi and Konrád's immanent critique of ideology-*cum*-class analysis propose to address? Whose alternative does it represent? In his response to Bahro, to whom he directed the second question, Szelényi insists on a "sociology from below" articulating the interests of the oppressed and exploited. The idea consistent with his own inconsistently held value-premise is that the alternative in question is that of the immediate producer based on a new principle of legitimacy, that of the right of productive workers to control and dispose of the produced surplus. On the other hand, when the co-written book discusses the oppositional "marginal" intellectuals, who are clearly enough its actual addressees, we get a somewhat different picture. Of the first of the two general types, the "transcendent" revisionists or ideological critics—the theorists of the renaissance of Marxism (Praxis school, Budapest school) are criticized because their insistence on a new society realizing the original *telos* of Marxism can lead only to a new or a renewed version of the rule of the politocratic estate. At the same time, the second type, the empirical revisionists or immanent critics of ideology—hence the empirical socologists who are generally non-Marxist but also Szelényi and Konrád (as indicated by their earlier works)—are defended because of their unmasking of the actual interest structure and actual inequalities of state socialism. They are also defended as having aims that—because of the unavoidable limits of immanent intellectual criticism of intellectual class power—necessarily converge with those of technocracy. It is here, I believe, that Szelényi and Konrád hope to break the circle of all sociology of knowledge. Because they themselves are immanent critics, they defend technocracy as a higher, more rational stage of the existing system. But as critics of immanent criticism, they defend technocracy because they believe that among the unintended consequences of technocratic rule, given the need of technocrats for new allies and new legitimations, will be the greater and perhaps institutionalized possibility of the articulation of the interests of workers. Accordingly, Szelényi and Konrád propose that marginal intellectuals should, in such a context, become the organic intellectuals *both* of technocrats and of direct producers, formulating the interests of both. Clearly enough, they see their book as doing just that.

It is here that the political proposal of Szelényi and Konrád, based on class analysis and supposedly on the point of view of the direct producer, shows its problematic side. When they actually formulate what they take to be the content of working class interests, they come up with little more than the "monetarization" and "marketization" of all economic relations, a demand identical to those of the more radical technocratic reformers of the 1960's. While on the whole I accept these suggestions—though one needs to discuss their limits, and in particular Szelényi's argument that under state socialism it is redistribution that is the source of fundamental inequalities, with the market being the partial corrective—I am nevertheless still a bit amazed about such easy identification of two potentially opposed strata or "classes". While Szelényi and Konrád admit

the possibility of such a future conflict, *it is evident that this very idea tends* to exclude the possibility of being the organic intellectuals of both sides. In their book at least, the representation of workers' interests seems somewhat deficient beyond the point already mentioned; workers' control over the surplus, for example, is more less identified with the free-market sale of labor power as well of the products of small-scale producers, necessary but hardly sufficient conditions of the self-management they often mention. But they do not ever really indicate that the principle of workers' control over management (the economics of which are, to be sure, hardly understood is in immediate conflict with technocracy once anything resembling a genuine market—something both sides do need—is established.

It is not at all clear, as a result, whether Szelényi and Konrâd have avoided that "substitutionism" with which they have charged other radical intellectuals. A universalizing guise may not be the only form in which substitution can occur; for example, Szelényi and Konrâd use the famous Marxian critique of the French revolutionary bourgeoisie not only to characterize the project of the original Bolshevik intellectuals, but also to represent the alliance politics of technocracy.[5] The very idea of the *representation* of the interests of those who cannot articulate these themselves leads to substitutionism unless it is coupled with some kind of communicative, discursive model of interaction between theory and its addressees. In the absence of institutions that would permit such interaction, theory—if it is to avoid substitutionism—ought to restrict its political claims to the establishment of such institutions, which are logically prior and in a formal sense constitutive of the interests in question. Having rejected the communication model (of a critical *Öffentlichkeit*) of practical, normative justification in Habermas and the Budapest School, Szelényi has unfortunately closed, on the methodological level at least, this avenue to another, more democratic politics. But fortunately in his writings after 1978, probably under the impact of the new Polish opposition, he opened another, equally fruitful approach in the same general direction: the idea of a socialist civil society.

Already in their book, Szelényi and Konrâd point to the project of a new political society, abolishing the duality of state and civil society, as one of the elements of the classical Marxian ideology that could foreshadow and eventually justify the étatist synthesis to come. While their connection of this idea to the desire of intellectuals for a scientifically planned society is at odds with their insistence on the necessarily beneficial effects of the victory of technocracy for the restoration of civil society (plurality, legality, publicity)—a thesis otherwise based on an unconvincing hypothesis of the unavoidable spill-over of the consequences of economic reform—it is nevertheless this idea, presented in a deterministic and politically doubtful form, that already definitively connected the book to the political opposition of the 1970's. It was important that, contrary to the ideas of Bahro,Szelényi and Konrâd saw the next stage of state socialism not only as a form mixing two forms of "legitimation" (rational redistribution and workers' control), but also as (at least) a mix between two sets of state-society relationships. Some of the confusions pertaining to this latter notion were

dispelled as the development of the opposition helped to reverse Szelényi's stress upon the economic and political dimensions to the benefit of the latter. While he became somewhat less willing to spell out exactly the contents of workers' interests, he more and more clearly affirmed that—without civil society—self-management, political self-determination, workers' control, participation in planning, etc., remain empty slogans. As a result, the shape of the next possible and desirable stage of state socialism could be better conceptualized as a form of rational redistribution in which the important utopian (and contradictory) element of workers' control would still have only a corrective function, while the genuinely new aspect would be the institutionalization of articulated and organized conflicts. While Szelényi does not propose a political solution for the achievement of this stage of state socialism (a kind of determinism continues to plague his writings), he clearly states what would be at stake if such a stage were institutionalized: the extension of yet unpredictable forms of direct democracy. (But he continues to be skeptical about the relevance of representative democracy in Eastern Europe, as does Hegedűs.)

On an analytical level, Szelényi continues to this day to link the idea of a socialist civil society to the full (and therefore more flexible) unfolding of the class domination of intellectuals. He simply refuses to notice that if he accepts the emergence of civil society as a world-historic gain, he must more consistently rehabilitate some of the (always precarious) universal dimensions of the great democratic revolutions that, following Marx, he calls "bourgeois". But, so changed, the model would suggest an entirely different process of emancipation than one going through a fully modern variant of the class domination of intellectuals. Alternatively, if one conceptualizes the transition to technocracy on the basis of a falsely understood dialectic of universal and particular in the bourgeois revolutions (the universal as an ideological mask rather than the partially contradictory project of definite groups and movements)—or even on the basis of the alliance of two particularities (technocrats and workers) and their "organic intellectuals"—the project of a socialist civil society would be irrelevant to this transition. The model of Marxian class analysis and the theory of civil society have apparently different analytical and normative consequences; in this version, at least, a post-Marxian critical theory could not be successfully complemented by orthodox Marxian theory construction.

Nor is the project of a socialist civil society compatible with the rather peculiar notion of immanent critique put forth by Szelényi and Konrád:

> rational redistribuion finds it easy to appropriate any transcendent analysis for its own purposes just as the capitalist elite can integrate immanent critique to its own uses . . . in our day only that which is immanent can be transcendent, but only that which transcends the existing order can be immanent.[6]

Forgetting for the moment that the last phrase restores a normative intention toward another type of society, denied at the beginning of the same book but of

course implicitly assumed elsewhere, it is evidently true that the idea of a socialist or any other civil society cannot be generated from the immanent critique of the ethos and ideology of rational redistribution. At best, the already present or systematically engendered interests, conflicts and alternatives hidden and distorted by this ethos can be so uncovered. And whatever the meaning of the statement that the capitalist elite can integrate immanent criticism, the idea of civil society is available today only as a result of an immanent critique of civil-bourgeois society. On the other hand, a transcendent critique here would wipe out, and in practice always did wipe out, the civil along with the bourgeois. The point of view of civil society, justifiable on the basis of the criteria of a radical communicative ethics, is transcendent vis-à-vis the dominant ethos of state socialist societies, not to speak of the ruling ideology. It may not be so, of course, in the context of fragments of tradition preserved and available in perhaps most of these societies. In such a context, immanent critique is necessarily split: the method that opens up the crisis phenomena of the existing social integration (most relevant to ruling strata) will not be the same as the one establishing a communicative relationship with the actual or potential democratic opposition.

Cooper Union
New York

Notes

1. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, New York: Vintage, 1961; and Oskar Negt, "Marxismus als Legitimationswissenschaft, Zur Genese der stalinistischen Philosophie," introduction to A. Deborin and N. Bucharin, *Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969, pp. 7—50.

2. If it were possible to work out a stage model of authoritarian state socialism in which the political system (or subsystem) played the role of double integration (i.e., social and systemic) in the first, more authoritarian stage, then the same partial shift from immanent critique to positive theory construction would be applicable here too. Although I have written an essay claiming such a transformation and theoretical shift, I must admit that the analogy to capitalist development may not strictly hold. It is not yet possible to say certainly and unambiguously that any national variant of authoritarian state socialism has already reached or even can reach such a second stage.

3. Cf. György Konrád and Ivan Szelényi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, trans. A. Arato and R. F. Allen, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979. The original manuscript was completed in Hungary in 1974.

4. Here I cannot go into all the reasons for the important omissions in my short survey, i.e., Hegedüs, Medvedev, Havemann, the Polish and Czech émigré generation of 1968 whose relationship to critical theory was negligible when they were still in Eastern Europe, and The Praxis school whose important works on the subject at hand belong to an earlier period of Marxist discussions.

5. Here to be sure, given the changed evaluation, an element of historical correction is smuggled in: the universalistic claims of the bourgeoisie issued in a legal system that had to allow the formulation and defense of interests other than their own. Disregarding the historical over-simplifications involved here, and also that such a conception of universality is diametrically opposed to everything else the authors say on the subject, it is highly unlikely that the correction applies to a project, which, unlike that of the eighteenth century revolutionaries, is formulated in

purely economic rather than in political-legal terms. The argument therefore saddles technocracy with the logic of substitution without the unintended democratizing consequences. The step to substitutionism seems to be grounded in the very approach of the two authors.

6. Konrád and Szelényi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, p. 250.