

## **NIKOS TZ. SERGIS**

Dr. of Philosophy, Postdoctoral Researcher

ELTE University of Budapest, Department of Philosophy  
Academic Year 2008-2009, Winter Semester Course:  
**THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF GYÖRGY LUKÁCS**

### I. Timetable

1<sup>st</sup> period: 6-26 October 2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> period: 24 November-14 December 2008.

### II. Course Schedule

#### 1. Introduction

- The philosopher's ambivalence, the historical "crossroad" – philosophical (auto)biography and the "tragic hero".
- Perspectives of approach to Lukács' philosophy according to the bibliography.
- The importance of the Hungarian intellectual "atmosphere" for the formulation of Lukács' ideas.

#### 2. Historical division in periods

- Main and alternative divisions.
- The skeleton of Lukács' philosophy reconstruction: creation and rejection of *History and Class Consciousness*.
- Philosophy of History and the dilemma between "Ethics" and "Politics".
- "Reconciliation" between theory and praxis: Lukács' "course to Marx".
- The "dialectical" evolution of Lukács' political philosophy and the curve of the century.
- Lukács' "course" parallel with the succession of the traditions in History of Philosophy.

#### 3. Influences

- The "revival" of Hegelianism.
- Marxism.
- German "academic sociology".
- Leninism.
- Rosa Luxembourg.

- Kierkegaard.
- Dostoyevsky.
- Neo-Kantianism.
- Ervin Szabó.

#### 4. Texts

- *Soul and Forms*: i) being  $\neq$  essence, ii) “tragic” refusal of being (romanticism), iii) life through Art (“totality”), ix) the enriching of the past (latent Hegelianism?), x) soul as a “prosecutor” in the Court of History (Ethics in doubt), xi) a “tragic” consideration of Philosophy of History.
- *Theory of the Novel*: i) Greek perfection (=the Spirit in “calmness” – *Phenomenology of Spirit*), ii) “totality” as the pure, perfect Form, iii) Christian hierarchy from Heaven to Earth (=second “moment” in *Phenomenology*), iv) Aesthetics = Metaphysics, v) the new epic novel, vi) Dostoyevsky as a representative of the “new world” (Lukács’ unsolved problem).
- *History and Class Consciousness*: “Introduction” (1967): i) Lukács’ “amalgam” as a result of the “ideas eclecticism” period, ii) “de facto” acceptance of the book influence, iii) Hegel and Marx’s “totality”, iv) the importance of “alienation” (return to Hegel), v) “subject” identical with “object” (proletariat), vi) “orthodoxy” = method, vii) “partisan war” against Stalinism (?). Original text: i) “commodity fetishism” (*Capital*) – “reification”, ii) Kant: apparent rationalization of the world, iii) History: the highest stage of the evolution of classic German philosophy, iv) History: law system, v) the necessity of History dialectics, vi) Lukács’ program of Philosophy of History: a Hegelian – Marxist refusal of Kantianism, vii) History as a human product, viii) dangers coming from “humanism”: disregard for dialectics, ix) proletarian consciousness: reification overcoming, x) theory of praxis = practical theory, xi) proletarian praxis: dialectics.

#### 5. Conclusion

- Kant as a “catalyst” in the “chemical reaction” of the philosophical traditions.
- A sudden transition between a few days: two articles.
- Lukács’ insistence on “method”.
- “Theory” (*History and Class Consciousness*)  $\neq$  “praxis” (proletariat): an unsolved problem of political philosophy.
- The final result in Lukács’ political philosophy: a fertile rally of the parameters of “ideas eclecticism”.
- Final question concerning History of Philosophy.

### III. Bibliography

#### a) Works of Lukács

- *A lelék és a formák*, ed. “Franklin”, Budapest 1909 (Berlin 1911).<sup>1</sup>
- “Die Theorie des Romans”, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 1916 (Berlin 1920).<sup>2</sup>
- “Bolshevism as a moral problem”, *Szabad Gondolat*, 1918 (*Social Research*, 44 (1977) 416-424, in English).
- “Taktika és Ethika”, *Közoktatásügy Népbiztosság*, Budapest 1919 (in: *Tactics and Ethics. Political Essays*, tr. Michael McColgan, ed. Rodney Livingstone, ed. “Harper Torchbook”, New York 1975).
- *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, ed. “Malik-Verlag”, Berlin 1923.<sup>3</sup>
- *Record of a Life*, tr. Rodney Livingstone, ed. István Eörsi, ed. “Verso”, 1983.<sup>4</sup>

#### b) Secondary

- Congdon Lee, *The Young Lukács*, ed. “University of North Carolina Press”, 1983.
- Eörsi István, “The unpleasant Lukács”, *New German Critique*, 42 (1987) 3-16.
- Gluck Mary, *Georg Lukács and his Generation 1900-1918*, ed. “Harvard University”, Cambridge 1985.
- Goldmann Lucien, *The Hidden God*, tr. Philip Thody, ed. “Routledge and Keagan Paul”, London 1964.
- Illés Lázlo et. al. (eds.), *Hungarian Studies on György Lukács*, 2 vol., ed. “Akadémiai Kiadó”, Budapest 1993.
- Jay Martin, *The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, ed. “Polity Press”, Cambridge 1984.
- Kelemen János, “Philosophy of Science and its critique in Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*”, *Doxa*, 4, 43-58 (also: ed. “Transaction”, Oxford 1986).
- Löwy Michael, *Georg Lukács – From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, tr. Patrick Camiller, ed. “NLB”, London 1979.
- Marcus György, “Life and the Soul. The young Lukács and the problem of Culture” in: Heller Agnes (ed.), *Lukács Revalued*, ed. “Basic Blackwell”, Oxford 1983.
- Mészáros István, *Lukács’ Concept of Dialectic*, ed. “Merlin Press”, London 1972.

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<sup>1</sup> Students may use any available edition in Hungarian, German or English.

<sup>2</sup> Students may use any available edition in Hungarian, German or English.

<sup>3</sup> Students may use any available edition in Hungarian, German or English.

<sup>4</sup> Students may use any available edition in Hungarian too.

- Noutsos Panagiotis, “Le problème de la ‘direction intellectuelle’ chez G. Lukács”, *ΔΩΔΩNH, ΛΓ’*, Part 3 (2004) 29-35.
- Rockmore Tom, “Lukács Marxist Hegel” in: Joós Ernest (ed.), *George Lukács and his World*, ed. “Peter Lang”, New York 1987, 27-42.
- Sergis Tz. Nikos, “Történelem és etika. Lukács kantianismusa mint morális probléma”, *Világosság*, XLVI (2005) 127-135.
- Zitta Victor, *Georg Lukács’ Marxism. Alienation, Dialectics, Revolution*, ed. “Martinus Nijhoff”, The Hague 1964.