

Alfred Schmidt – Werner Rehfeld
Discussion on Marxism

Rehfeld: The Eastern and the Western worlds this year celebrate the 150th anniversary of Karl Marx. Does this not give rise to the danger of a misuse of the occasion, in that each side might claim Marx for itself by noisily accepting parts of his works and rejecting or even withholding others? Is there not the danger that the young Marx is played off against the old, the humanist against the economist, because one knows that one cannot do without him and cannot ignore his works?

Schmidt: What often happens to important theoreticians, who started by being an annoyance to society, has also happened to Marx. We only need remember how strongly Freud's²⁰⁰ theories were first opposed and to what extent psychoanalysis, though admittedly in a simplified form, has now become the daily bread of the American Babbitt²⁰¹. Eastern countries have even made him into a "classic" – a thing that Marx would have declined with thanks.

Rehfeld: We just need remember what happened to Bertolt Brecht²⁰² only ten years ago and what is happening to him now. Those who were his opponents yesterday are today claiming him as their ally. This does not necessarily imply that a change of mind has taken place. Can there be tactical reasons for it? One tries as a false friend what one could never have achieved as an open enemy. One produces the illusion of agreeing with him and enters into his work in order to attack it from within, because attacks from without lack an audience.

Schmidt: In other words, the danger of the edge being taken off criticism and of the critical spirit being neutralized, is immense. On the other hand it is, of course, true that both halves of the world today have a relative right to appeal to Marx. The understanding of oneself in the East as well as in the West is unthinkable without Marx and the influence exerted by him.

Rehfeld: Why is it that the modern Western world can no longer do without Marx?

Schmidt: That we can easily gather from the method employed by Marx himself. He still thought that capitalism could be considered as a closed and self-explanatory system. But by 1917 at the latest a qualitatively new order of life had sprung up (whatever name one wants to give to the non-capitalist sphere), that has become not only a permanent challenge to our own, but also a historical dimension that has to be included in a definition of Western society.

Rehfeld: You were saying that both halves of the world today have a relative right to appeal to Marx. Would you describe the world-wide interest in Marx as a dialectical point of reference? Will the West have to face up to the challenge coming from the East, whether it likes it or not?

Schmidt: Yes, and we can say that the present state of technology confronts us, once again, with social questions, which seemed to have been solved by the capitalism of the second half of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century. This also applies to a problem central to Marx, that of gaining mastery over nature – admittedly he did not call it that, but it lay at the root of all his thinking. And this problem is becoming more and more urgent today; the merely quantitative increase in productivity, the ideology of still bigger and still better refrigerators, other gadgets and consumer goods – all this is no longer going to be sufficient. The question is no longer simply to increase productivity, but to prevent people from becoming the slaves of their own productive forces, in other words, to bring the whole of this process under the conscious control of mankind as a whole.

Rehfeld: You say that the topicality of Marxism for the West does not exhaust itself in the West's reaction to the Eastern challenge. For the central question of Marxism, namely, in how far can the freedom of the individual be realized under the present circumstances, this question is capable of causing great anxiety in our minds. Thus Marxism is still, as it always has been, a topical annoyance for lazy minds and hearts. But we shall come back to this later. Let us, for a moment, look at the question, to what extent Marx is being laid claim to by different sides.

Schmidt: Within the official sciences, particularly that of economics, the first tactics to be applied was that of ignoring Marxism. It was here that Marxism first appeared; in Kautsky's²⁰³ days Marxism was primarily a matter of national economy. After the First World War – I am thinking of Paul Tillich²⁰⁴, of the discovery of the *Paris Manuscripts* that threw a completely new light on Marx's theory – the new tendency arose, partly under the influence of "existential" modes of thought, to reduce Marx's teaching to a kind of anthropology of "alienation". Misled by the fact that in these early fragmentary works, in which Marx enters into a discussion with Hegel and Feuerbach and – for the first time – with classical economy, and therefore still uses the traditional language of philosophy, people thought that they were entitled to categorize him as a philosopher, and he was made academically presentable and became the subject of official discussions.

Rehfeld: What they discovered was the young Marx, the so-called humanist Marx, and they played him off rather unfairly against the old, the economist Marx.

Schmidt: And this was, of course, sheer nonsense, because the aim of setting free all human qualities, the aim of setting free the aptitudes and needs of the individual, is defined in a much more material way by the mature than by the young Marx, and it would run contrary to the Marxist method if the mature work was interpreted from the early work by means of simple evolutionary methods. There is, somewhere in Marx's works, the beautiful sentence that we explain the anatomy of the ape from that of man and not the other way round; in other words: If we understand the intentions of the large-scale economic analysis, the only one we now possess, as the attempt at a comprehensive analysis of society . . .

Rehfeld: You are now thinking of the late Marx in *Capital*?

Schmidt: Yes, *Capital* and the whole concept of a *Critique of Political Economy*, which fulfills a twofold function, i.e. that of a criticism of science as well as of reality, that is bourgeois reality. If one considers the humanist early writings of Marx in this light, a number of things will become much clearer than when a simple distinction is made between the philosopher and the economist Marx. If we remember that the concept of science in *Capital* is inseparable from the strict distinction between the appearance and the essence of things, this is of course a philosophical distinction taken from Hegel, and on the other hand we also find economic aspects discussed in the writings of the young Marx. This means that this distinction cannot be carried out unconditionally; nor does it seem to me to have any great merit. Perhaps we can put it this way: Marx's interest in perceiving the

truth is the same, irrespective of the stage in his development at which this perception is set down in writing. For this reason it is always of great importance for any interpretation to keep in mind the work in which an idea occurs and the date of publication of that work. Yet, we must concede a unity of conception to Marx's writings.

Rehfeld: Let us pursue this idea a little further. A great number of Marx's critics have attempted again and again to separate the young "humanist" from the old "economist" Marx. I was also thinking of this when I was talking about different sides laying claim to Marx. They amputate him because they are unable to cope with the whole. Where otherwise people talk of a "sin of one's youth", here they talk of a "sin of old age". According to this view the young Marx is the basically speculative philosopher, the old Marx, however, the socialanalyst and critic whose interest is directed towards practical application. And just this is not permissible.

Schmidt: In any case not in this uncompromising form. The writings of the young Marx are decidedly anti-academic. He is one of the great nineteenth-century critics of Hegel. After Hegel there have been no really great philosophers who were university professors. Think of Kierkegaard, the Hegelians of the Left, or even Schopenhauer²⁰⁵ and Nietzsche. Whatever important philosophy there was in the 19th century, it was no longer philosophy taught at universities. For this reason I should say it was just those early writings, giving the impression of being "philosophical", that represented a negation of philosophy, and a negation of philosophy by its being "realized".

Rehfeld: Today we can observe attempts made by Christians to incorporate Marx into their thinking. A well-known example for this is the French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin. This priest has become a kind of patron of the Marxist-Christian dialogue, a guarantor of a philosophical co-existence of Christianity and Marxism. Is it not true that any Marxist envisaging a classless society as a final goal, is eschatologically endangered? Is there not an affinity between a Christian's faith in God's kingdom and the Marxist's faith in a classless society? Perhaps you can use this occasion to say something about the *Paulusgesellschaft*?

Schmidt: As for Teilhard de Chardin, I think we are dealing with a pantheistic evolutionism, which, in some respect, bears a certain relation to Bloch's cosmologico-mystical conception. Marx himself did not make the universe, in the sense of the totality of all being, the main object of his interest. It is just the critically humanist quality of his thought which, by the way, still characterizes his late phase, that makes him see the whole of reality from the point of view of man and his history. It is left open what

the material world might be as it is independent of our practically productive activity. According to Marx the being of the world can only become the object of our inquiries in so far as it is the aim of man's historical and concrete practice seizing and changing it. And "practice" must not be taken in too narrow a sense; for it represents the basic form of being of man who is seen as an active being – active always in a social sense. In this respect the contact made by the French Marxists, as for instance Garaudy, within the frame-work of the discussions of the *Paulusgesellschaft*, with Metz and Rahner²⁰⁶ seems to me to be of greater interest than Teilhard de Chardin's scientific point of departure, because here the methodical starting-point of both sides is man and his unrealized possibilities.

Rehfeld: Why does this dialogue between Christians and Marxists take place at all today? Is there any sign of a rapprochement between the two points of view, or are the factors separating them becoming clearer, or perhaps both?

Schmidt: This discussion has been going on for a long time. And today we even talk critically of a "dialogism"; of course, the phrase of a "genuine talk" has its ideological side. People think that things can be put right just by their sitting down together and discussing them.

Rehfeld: This seems to me of special importance. This general naive faith in the value of dialogue between parties whose ideas are far removed from each other and can never meet is wide-spread and not restricted to the context of our topic. We are here not in a position to pursue this idea any further. Yet we might get a step further by asking whether, if again we take the talks between Christians and Marxists, both are not confronted with identical problems that must, however, owing to the different presuppositions on both sides, be answered differently in each case.

Schmidt: The limits of these dialogues must be seen in the fact that on both sides only the most progressive leaders are actually taking part, while the institutions they represent are by no means as open-minded as they are.

Rehfeld: But do these representatives achieve anything like a rapprochement?

Schmidt: Yes, they do; and one reason for this is that Christian theology – and I am telling you an open secret – is at present in a crisis that is deeper than any before. The forms of historical bible criticism, the process of demythologization, the existential interpretation of Protestant texts, the God-is-dead theology – with all this the traditionally minded believers have to come to terms. On the other hand, there is, on the Marxist side, the failure of the old idea of Marxism *Weltanschauung* as a conviction that all world events can be entered into a huge system of co-ordinates and that there is an answer to any possible question. An Italian Marxist said on the

occasion of discussions of the *Paulusgesellschaft*: For us too the world has a secret; we are no longer in a position to solve all questions in a naive rationalist way. To stress it once again, the ground on which sides meet is the problem of man and his uncertain future, his yet unrealized possibilities, the general world situation that today asks for a qualitatively new and growingly active humanism.

Rehfeld: Theology has become more worldly.

Schmidt: Yes, the question of this life and the life to come has become problematical for the theologian; for we are gradually losing the habit of seeing Christianity in the Platonically Greek form in which it has come down to us through the centuries.

Rehfeld: Let us close this question at this point and turn to another. Marx sprang from a Jewish family that had converted to Protestantism. Is the question justified that in spite of all seeming liberal-mindedness, and in spite of his emancipated attitude in practical matters, he was unable to free himself from the impulse of Judaism? It is true that he broke away from the traditional forms of Judaism; but did he not, in spirit, remain a Jew? Is there not a connexion between the religious prophecy of Judaism and the Marxist's faith in the classless society? Is this faith in a classless society not a secularized prophecy?

Schmidt: Yes, but Marx did say that criticism of religion is the presupposition for all criticism. And as far as his understanding of himself was concerned, he would certainly have flatly refused that what you are driving at has any truth in it at all. It is extremely difficult to distinguish clearly in Marx's thought whether something is to be traced back to the Germanico-philosophical, the Franco-socialist, the Anglo-economic or even the Jewish tradition in him. The – in the last resort religious – concept of prophecy does not occur in Marx's writings. There is, however, the concept of an objective tendency.

Rehfeld: Would you be so kind as to define clearly and briefly the difference between those two concepts of prophecy and the objective tendency?

Schmidt: In the case of prophecy, the condition of what is going to happen does not lie in the power of man. According to Marx, in any case, the given state of the world bears in itself the objective possibility of something else, something higher – a phrase that was also used by Leibniz²⁰⁷. And man has the midwife's job of bringing it into being. Power, Marx says somewhere, historically promotes any society that is pregnant with a higher one.

Rehfeld: A law that is immanent in the world is being realized.

Schmidt: Although it is a law – and here I must insert an important limitation – that would not exist if man did not do anything; it is not a law in

the sense of pure objectivity that we can but accept, but rather a law that achieves realization through our actions and yet, at the same time, over our heads.

Rehfeld: Are these actions performed by an individual acting in a pre-determined way or by one endowed with free will?

Schmidt: Your alternative is a pre-dialectical one. People living in a bourgeois society pursue their conscious desires and aims, but the totality of these acts, which taken in isolation, are free, produces an objective connexion among them, namely society; this society would, on the one hand, not exist without the individuals and their everyday activities; on the other hand, however, and this is what Marx says in his lecture on "alienation", society represents a reality of its own, a reality transcending consciousness.

Rehfeld: The individual is therefore essential in any case. Without the individual the law would not happen.

Schmidt: Most certainly not. It is, by the way, interesting in this context to consider what Engels says in an early programmatic work that inspired Marx with the idea of a *Critique of Political Economy*: The natural laws of capitalist production are based on the unconsciousness of those involved.

Rehfeld: Shall we repeat the question about Judaism and Marxism?

Schmidt: I am inclined to see a specifically Jewish element in the way Marx gives an air of taboo to the better future he prophesies. It seems to me as if this was an effect of the commandment about not having graven images in the Old Testament. One might, of course, also say that in this he is simply an Hegelian; for Hegel does not allow either for a possibility of imagining other, higher states than that of objective reality, in the sense of abstract possibilities; but the possible is always objectively possible and partially real. There is in each case a concrete historical dialectical relation between what is and what ought to be. This example might show what I meant when I said that it is extremely difficult to isolate the specifically Jewish element from the rest of Marx's thoughts. For his careful avoidance of statements about the higher state can be attributed with equal right to his Hegelianism and his Judaism.

Rehfeld: This leads us straight up to the question of why Marx has said relatively little about the state of the classless society.

Schmidt: This is again part of his method, which is strictly an immanent one. He measures the given state by his own concept of it. Shall we now go into the eschatology thesis?

Rehfeld: Yes.

Schmidt: There is a momentous stream of Marx interpretation that is

centred round the idea of Jewish elements in Marx's teaching, which was the idea that led you up to your question. Karl Löwith has written to that effect. He says for instance: The *Communist Manifesto* is an eschatological conception written in the language of national economy, and in another passage he calls it a pseudomorphous Jewish-Christian eschatology. What I should say about this is the following: As a thesis in the history of ideas it is interesting and worth considering; for it is by no means necessary that Marx himself was conscious of what influenced him; he may have misunderstood himself, when he maintained that the "realm of freedom" could be scientifically deduced. But as for the analysis of the contents of Marx's works, the extremely impressive line of ancestors that could be drawn up – from the prophets of the Old Testament to the sects of the late Middle Ages and the Utopian socialists up to Marx himself – can only say something about the revolutionary impulses active in him. For investigation concerned merely with the history of ideas can contribute nothing to the question of the so-called "tendential fall in the profit-rate"; this question is far too specific and needs to be explained by means of special sciences and philosophy.

Rehfeld: It is far too general, I should say.

Schmidt: Yes, an investigation dealing with the history of ideas reaches its limit exactly at the point where an explanation would have to begin – at exactly the point where our interest today lies, namely where we ask: To what extent can these theorems be applied to our reality?

Rehfeld: In October 1967 the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution took place. And on this occasion the central figure of the revolution, Lenin, was not dealt with in a way conforming with the most important Marxist thesis that all events are to be explained by reference to their causes and in accordance with the rules of economic dialectics. In other cases no exception is allowed to the rule that an event is always the effect of its causes. In the case of Lenin, however, there is a belief in the genius of a revolutionary, who created something new that cannot be deduced from what has been. Is not this a contradiction? Can the October Revolution be explained at all from the class contrasts in the Russia of 1917? May I, on this occasion, ask the general question how Marxism deals with such phenomena as genius and spontaneity?

Schmidt: In the sense of formal logic a contradiction between Marx's conception and the historical reality of Lenin only arises if we understand economic dialectics in the sense of a simple causality; and this is what you have just done. In truth, however, we are here confronted with a "structural" causality, as French interpreters like to put it, i.e. a much more

complex causality; a causality that can no longer be taken to mean that an event t_1 is followed by an event in time t_2 , but that must be seen as a chain of events made up of many separate strands. Even Engels says that the course of history – that with him is still unplanned – is, to continue for the moment in this method of natural science, the product of a number of conditions intersecting each other rather than a linear happening. On the one hand Marx and Engels sharply criticized the hero worship of the 19th century – just remember the Young Hegelians, Carlyle²⁰⁸ and also Nietzsche, who saw in Napoleon *the* historical man of action. But on the other hand they tried to have the best of both worlds, i.e. to relate to each other the objective logic of events on the one hand and the free play to be allowed to the so-called great men on the other. The importance of great men is neither pronounced null and void – for it is in them that the ripeness of the age finds expression – nor are they made into mere exponents of historical necessity.

The fact that Lenin has become an object of hero worship in Russia today, a thing Marx and Engels always hated, is a different matter and has no immediate connexion with their theories. And as for Russia's condition in 1917, I should say the following: Russia's class system as an isolated factor certainly does not allow us to deduce from it the events of 1917; this can only be done by considering the critical situation of the whole of capitalism at the end of the First World War, a critical situation that misled Lenin, as we know, to conclude wrongly – in his essay on imperialism as well as in his policy – that capitalism had not much longer to live. So impressed was he by these events that he exaggerated their significance. The class situation in Russia was a highly qualified, though quantitatively small proletariat and a farming population full of superstition and consisting almost entirely of illiterates. What Lenin did that was new was to include the farming population in the revolutionary conception which he thought was going to bring about a world revolution. And it is interesting that towards the end of his life he made the victory of world socialism dependent on demographic factors, and that he said that the overwhelming part of the population of the earth lived in India and China anyway, so that they were the countries most certain to produce socialism. Thus in later years the logic immanent in the capitalist world loses in significance as compared to such completely different considerations.

Rehfeld: For the world revolution Lenin assigned a different role to the farmers than Marx did. This change of meaning, the up-grading of the agricultural class, which in modern jargon would mean the up-grading of the illiterates in developing countries, this is, at the moment, of great

topical interest in politics and in practice a highly explosive subject. Do I see that correctly?

Schmidt: Yes, it is true that Lenin's conception, as opposed to that of Marx, introduces this new factor into Marxist theories. Marx saw the peasant more or less as the potential proletarian, not as an independent historical force; and this still determined Engels's view of the peasants' situation at the end of the 19th century. Lenin, however, held the opinion that they do represent an independent historical force. All revolutions that have taken place since then, as Maoism and the upheavals in Latin and Central America, show that the farming element in those parties that call themselves Marxist has become relevant to such an extent as would never have been dreamt of by Marx or Engels.

Rehfeld: I have still another question: Marxism (so-called) is today a hundred years old. Marx attempted to grasp the world in its totality. Is not this ambition of a total view characteristic of the 19th century? Hegel too tried to achieve it in his own way. Meanwhile philosophy has developed further. And Hegel's intentions are to us in this respect of historical interest only. Cannot something similar be said of Marxism? Have these past hundred years not brought discoveries of which Marx could not have the slightest notion and that ought, therefore, to cause certain difficulties to classical Marxism? I am thinking, for instance, of psychology where it has been proved that the mind does not function according to a causal scheme. Or take the discoveries in physics around the turn of the century. How does Marxism react to all this?

Schmidt: It is undoubtedly true that Hegel's attempt at a total view can never be repeated, and perhaps even that the belief in the possibility of a complete system cannot be kept up in philosophy. Nietzsche said: "I mistrust all systematians and avoid them; the will to a system is a will to dishonesty." Now, in Marx we have no longer the attempt – you called it a "total view" – to grasp the whole of reality, to grasp the world; the world for him is primarily the people who live in it.

Rehfeld: May I repeat my question? How does Marxism today deal with psychology?

Schmidt: During the Stalinist era there was nothing but a coarse "reflex" doctrine in the style of Pavlov²⁰⁹, which was scantily interspersed with elements taken from historical materialism; the aim was simply to do away with Freud's psychoanalysis as an irrationalist or even Fascist ideology, a thing that is particularly curious in the case of Freud. It was then not noticed that, although Freud is occupied with irrational factors in man, he treats them in a highly rational manner. Freud himself was a rationalist,

perhaps too much of one. Owing to the objects of his investigations Soviet ideologists tried to earmark him as an irrationalist; and this is certainly not possible, at least not in the way they or even Lukács did it.

Rehfeld: Let us look a little more closely into this paradox. You are saying, and I apologize for using this as a formula, that Freud used a rational method to deal with an irrational subject. Would this also apply to be possible for a Marxist? Is not his question: Does the irrational exist at all?

Schmidt: The irrational exists as the characteristic of society's situation as a whole, while its individual actions, if considered on their own, are rational. For this reason it is true that the dialectics of the rational and the irrational is part of Marx's analysis of capitalism. The irrational element in man as an individual has without doubt been given too little attention in physiological psychology, among whose adherents Marx and Engels too belong. Western Marxists, not only Herbert Marcuse but also communists in other Western European countries such as France and Italy, are today engaged in finally filling in this gap. And I do not think for a moment that the findings of psychoanalysis are incompatible with materialist dialectics. Even in Russia important attempts were made in the 1920's to make this possible, but they were suppressed during the Stalinist era.

Rehfeld: Let us once again go back to the 19th century. I should like to point out a difference between the 19th and the 20th centuries. The 19th century held a very romantic attitude to the revolution as the eternal principle of world history. People believed in the eternal revolution with romantic enthusiasm. Thus Freiligrath²¹⁰ wrote: "It speaks with boldest prophecy: I was, I am – and I shall be!" Does not this romantic attitude to revolution still lie at the bottom of Chinese communism, of the so-called cultural revolution of Mao²¹¹, while the Russians have given up this belief and have proclaimed political co-existence? Has Marxism not therefore seen a development? Do we not have Marxism in its classical and in its developed form side by side in the East?

Schmidt: Yes, I think so. Let us begin with the romantic predilection for revolution. I personally should not like to see it quite so strongly in the light of the history of ideas, but also in connexion with the epoch-making event of the French Revolution in 1789. For Hegel's idea that a slow and gradual change suddenly turns into something qualitatively new was not uninfluenced by his observation of the French Revolution. One might go so far as to say that the whole of Hegel's philosophy represents the attempt to discover a speculative concept for this new bourgeois Europe that arose during the years from 1789 to Napoleon's downfall. Now it is true that there is a passage in Marx – who was a good Hegelian in this question –

a passage where he speaks of a "permanent revolution", and the expression was later made famous by Trotsky²¹². But for a historical dialectics there can be no such thing as a permanent revolution. If, therefore, a poet like Freiligrath gives such soulful expression to the idea that revolution is really the sole content of history, this is not quite correct; revolutions lead to evolutions and not the other way round. In this point, I believe, it is of great importance to attribute the right weight to the various factors prevailing at any given time. What was your second point?

Rehfeld: Does not present-day communist China conjure up faith in eternal revolution? And Mao reproaches the Russians of revisionism just because they have given up this faith.

Schmidt: By the way, interesting contributions to this discussion have been made by Merleau-Ponty in his fascinating book called *Les aventures de la dialectique*, where he not only gives a magnificent analysis of Trotsky but also says things that apply to modern China; thus he says that a state with no stationary aspects at all cannot exist.

Rehfeld: Permanent dynamics means explosion, physical and mental destruction.

Schmidt: Pure dynamics can never actually be lived through; it would lead to madness. All social changes that originate from the breaking-up of old institutions are in their turn in need of institutionalization. This insight is also incorporated into Lenin's party conception. Happenings in China today have certainly been inspired by Mao's fear of an overfed caste of functionaries entrenching and establishing itself and depriving the revolution of its fire.

Rehfeld: This calls to mind another question. Marxism has been developing scientifically during the last century. In Russia it solidified to a dogma some twenty or thirty years ago, and became a recipe for political everyday life. Has Marxism now progressed beyond this stage?

Schmidt: There are certainly tendencies to overcome this misguided development. Its causes were lastly not of an intellectual, but of a strictly political nature. Lenin – and I think it is with him that we must begin – was disappointed in his hope that the Western European proletariat would rally to his support and would help Russia to gain the political foundation which it so desperately needed. By 1923 the revolution had, however, lost its topicality almost everywhere. And it was to Stalin's credit that he was one of the first to realize that the revolution was reaching its lowest ebb. His theory of "socialism in one country" was really less of a theory than a formula that described the actual state of affairs. The limitation of Marxism to a *Weltanschauung*, an ideological instrument of justification had its

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reasons in domestic and foreign policies. The necessity to guide the masses led to Stalin's short catechism about historical and dialectical materialism acquiring canonical force – a pedagogically magnificent, but intellectually rather pitiful piece of writing, and just one chapter in the history of the party at the time. The theory of dialectics was reduced to four so-called basic features, and reality became just a gigantic collection of examples confronting a system of categories that was sterile from the beginning and always exempt from any discussion and dialectical movement. They were abandoned under Khrushchev, and it would be correct to say – a highly interesting point – that Soviet philosophy today is again a true philosophy, be it only in a sense Marx would strongly object to. The modern Soviet philosophical system is a realist ontology, similar to that developed by Nicolai Hartmann, only taken dynamically. Although officially one continues to talk of “Marxist” philosophy, at a closer look the whole of the Soviet Marxist system turns out to be an academic philosophy that can be studied without one's ever going back to Marx. The few remaining Marx quotations have a merely ornamental function and are external to the real interest of this philosophy.

Rehfeld: How can this development be explained?

Schmidt: Considered from the point of view of the history of ideologies this is connected with the questionable mortgage of “natural dialectics” which Engels in his later writings left to his Russian disciples; considered from the point of view of general politics it has to do with the stagnation of the “world-revolution” tendencies, as well as with the fact that within the East considerable contrasts between interests have arisen owing to the different standards of productivity.

Rehfeld: That was a matter of great interest. Let us now lead up to a simple, extremely popular question that is asked in every discussion on Marx. Marx has set up the thesis that with the progressing industrialization of the working classes the proletariat would become progressively poorer. In other words: The rich are going to become richer, the poor even poorer. The development of Western industrialized states has, however, shown that the working class participates in material progress; the worker drives to the factory in his own car, spends his holidays abroad, owns a house etc. Does this mean that Marx was wrong? What would a Marxist say, who can certainly not deny these facts?

Schmidt: The increasing poverty of the working class as predicted by Marx has certainly not become true. Marx was unable to imagine that the capitalist world might give back to the masses part of the “surplus value” they had been deprived of. He was convinced that the withholding from the

proletarian of the fruits of his own labour, which was actually the fate of the bulk of society in the 19th century, was immanent to the system, whereas it was in fact specific to some forms of capitalist production that were still greatly in need of investment.

It was impossible for him to foresee that the conditions of production would prove much more elastic in the face of the growth of productive forces than he assumed. He supposed that only a small further increase in the growth of productive forces would burst the given conditions of production. The expression of these conflicts was to be the proletarian revolution, the concept of which is too closely orientated by the bourgeois revolution of 1789. This had to lead him to wrong analogies insofar as the bourgeois class was only ratifying in the sphere of law and politics what it already had in the field of economy. All it wanted was to take up a political position adequate to its actual economic importance. The proletariat, however, was first of all according to Marx to appropriate to itself those means of production, which indicates a decisive difference that Marx, to my mind, paid too little attention to.

Rehfeld: A modern Marxist would answer straightaway that the elasticity mentioned by you is a sign of a particularly dangerous development of late capitalism. For the fact that part of the produced “surplus value”, of the increased social product, is given to the workers only means that their revolutionary enthusiasm is being lulled to sleep; they are but given a fraction of what they ought to claim; and this fraction is sufficient to satisfy their material interests, to safeguard their so-called standard of living; but the alienation . . .

Schmidt: Most certainly; for the continuing alienation of man is becoming capable of institutionalization; it becomes enjoyable at the moment when alienation, to put it crudely, no longer implies that I must go barefoot. The moment I participate in the wealth . . .

Rehfeld: . . . I am lulled to sleep, says the modern Marxist.

Schmidt: . . . I am lulled to sleep, because I no longer see the necessity for a qualitative change in the existing state of things. For this reason Marx's theory, and this is particularly true of capitalist countries, lacks an historical object of change: the organized proletariat. Today it is single intellectuals or groups of intellectuals that are active. This is, by the way, also an important point that does not receive sufficient attention from Marx. He has, on occasion, spoken of the “over-wise doctores” and was not exactly what you would call a lover of intellectuals. This characteristic recurs in Lenin.

Rehfeld: This is a question of great importance to any Marxist: To what

extent has the proletariat, lulled to sleep by material pleasure and therefore no longer existing in the sense of Marx, been replaced by the intellectuals, whose importance for the progressive development prophesied by Marx is clearly greater than Marx himself envisaged? First of all, we ought perhaps to point out that the theory drawn up by Marx of the increasing poverty of the poor has not been confirmed. Today's worker does own property and does have spare time at his disposal; this development is always being held against Marxism. Yet I believe that this objection is not likely to cause a Marxist great embarrassment. I am thinking of Herbert Marcuse who considers this the wolf in sheep's clothing.

Schmidt: The all-round development of the "forces of man's essential being", what in his *Paris Manuscripts* Marx calls the "humanization of nature", the "naturalization of man", the "realm of freedom", where the development of human energies becomes an aim in itself – a concept very similar to that of Nietzsche's "superman" – all this Marx made dependent on free time, *not*, however, on spare time. And it seems to me that within their spare time people still largely remain within the grasp of their working rhythm. For many workers, be they white-collar or not, find their spare time much more strenuous than actually working for a living. And the needs which people think they ought to satisfy during their spare time have been largely prescribed by profit interests.

Rehfeld: Are these needs genuine needs of man? the Marxist asks. Are the decisions really free individual expressions or are they manipulated and suggested?

Schmidt: I should like to put it very bluntly. Feeding the population is still a secondary element in the self-utilization process of capital. People's needs are still subsumed under the interests of the self-utilization of capital and are not the decisive stimulant of social development. And in this respect nothing has changed. There has, however, been a change in the immediate living conditions of large parts of the population, and it would be perfectly stupid to wish that these people should be worse off in order that the theory might prove to be right. Yet I still believe that it is important for us not to let these qualitatively new phenomena in capitalism, which are gradually also acknowledged by theoreticians from the East, blind us to the fact that society is still harbouring disastrous antagonisms. The continuous possibility of a complete destruction of mankind – and this is something Marcuse has pointed out over and over again – appears, as it were, as "the other side of the story". It is being justified by the high standard of living that until a short time ago at least could be linked with a simultaneous vigorous armament.

Rehfeld: Forgive me if I repeat my question in a different form. Keeping in mind the high standard of living in Western industrialized countries as something not to be underestimated – have the people in these countries come closer to the aim of self-realization?

Schmidt: No, they have not. This self-realization would perhaps even necessitate that our everyday habits of consumption, which by now have become fossilized and ritualized, should be removed to the periphery of our lives. We must strongly criticize the 19th - century concept of progress – and this includes that of Marx. What does progress mean today? As long as people have nothing, progress means in Africa and Asia that there is running water – an offer that has little attraction for us. Progress can no longer be identified with the merely quantitative increase of consumer goods and services, but it would have to consist in gaining power over itself. This is what, in my introductory remarks, I called the mastery of nature. It is likely that even in the more progressive countries of the West people would manage better on less, and this would have nothing to do with enforced renunciation.

Rehfeld: Yes, but let us assume that everybody reached the Socratic wisdom of saying: I do not need any of this, neither the refrigerator, nor the car. That would mean that the workers who produce refrigerators and cars would lose their jobs. And this again would lead to the break-down of a branch of economy. Seen in this light, artificially suggested needs safeguard jobs.

Schmidt: Economy in the form it has now would be endangered. Of course, when considering this problem we must never fall victim to a reactionary hostility to technology; that we propose to leave to irrationalist ideologists. The point is, I think, that the technological rationality which suggests more and more pragmatic and operational thinking as the only attitude worthy of human beings, must be newly defined by means of a reflexion on its own nature. The only thing that matters to my mind is that we should develop a new type of objective reason as opposed to the old belief in progress, an objective reason that would not exclude but would yet subordinate to the whole the element of subjective reason.

Rehfeld: We still have to ask: What about the Eastern European countries? There we usually do not find a refrigerator in the house or a car outside the door; the individual has probably not yet realized himself either. Is the material and intellectual situation worse here?

Schmidt: There is something ironical to be said to this. When one comes to Eastern countries it often becomes obvious – without one's having fallen victim to the common ideology – that many people lead much more substantial lives than a great number of "consumer-conscious" groups in

the Western world. But this cannot simply be explained by the merits of socialism but must be seen as the consequence of the fact that there people have not even reached the stage of capitalist technology.

Rehfeld: I am thinking of the German situation before the so-called "economic miracle". We all had less, but the contacts between people were achieved much more quickly and were much more intense.

Schmidt: Yes, those were the days when you had to queue for hours in order to get a theatre ticket.

Rehfeld: But such conditions are, I hope, not a confirmation of socialism.

Schmidt: No, curiously enough a more substantial life seems to me to have a certain connexion with a degree of technology that makes life comfortable but has not yet turned from a means into an end.

Rehfeld: Marx remained relatively vague about the character of the classless society. He did not give any details at all. The Marxist's ideas about classless society are just as vague as the Christian's ideas of the Kingdom of God. Must we not ask whether detailed statements about a condition that will not come for a long time can be made at all? Would they not define too closely what is still unknown and thereby kill it? This question has a certain connexion with the present students' riots in Germany; for these young people are also reproached with not knowing what they want.

Schmidt: I have pointed out before that Marx was an anti-Utopian. His criticism was aimed at such authors as Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen²¹³, who kept saying a great deal about the future state of things, but about the given conditions very little that was more than a mere moral protest. This is why Marx concentrated his attention on the analysis of the given and its objective tendencies. It characterizes scientific as opposed to Utopian socialism that its aim is historically derived from what is, instead of things as they are being abruptly confronted with things as they ought to be.

Rehfeld: So there is no question of a Utopia in the sense of a fool's paradise.

Schmidt: That is the one fact to be remembered. And the other is that Marx has, though only in hints, said something about the future world. In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* he distinguishes between two phases of the post-revolutionary stage.

Rehfeld: So he did say something definite about the classless society?

Schmidt: Yes, mainly in the idea that people will succeed in organizing their "metabolism with nature", as he calls it, in a way adequate to their human needs. And this, I think, says a lot.

Rehfeld: But are not these very general formulations of the goal? The actual path towards the goal has not been marked, and it is probably impossible to mark it.

Over thirty years have passed since as a boy I first read the *Communist Manifesto*. The progressing absorption of my mind – although of a course by no means consistent or straightforward – by the writings of Marx has become the history of my intellectual development and, far beyond that, the history of my whole life insofar as it has any significance for society. It seems to me that in the epoch following the appearance of Marx the critical concern with him must be a central problem for any thinking person who takes himself at all seriously; that any thinking person's significance for the development of mankind is decided by the way in which and the extent to which he has made the method and the results of Marx his own.

Schmidt: I suppose that a theory, a conception belonging to the field of the philosophy of history, and conceived with revolutionary intentions can never define more than the very next stages. I think we ought not to ask more of the theory than it can fairly be expected to provide.

Rehfeld: Yes, if the goal of the classless society were to be defined realistically and in detail the picture would certainly be quite wrong. For in that case the future would be fixed and determined in such a way . . .

Schmidt: This would presuppose a dogmatic so-called "image of man" that does not exist in Marx's works; this too is an important point. What man's nature is like we do not yet know. A man who knew that in all its details would know more than could be known; he alone would know what in the end the needs, desires and aims of man are. We, however, intend to find this out historically.

Rehfeld: This has brought us to a very topical question. We frequently come across the slogan of the so-called revolutionary Marxism; it is at the back of the present extreme riots at German universities. This revolutionary Marxism is also unable to say what its aim is. Critics again and again put the question of what constructive alternative they can offer to things as they are. Perhaps they refuse to answer for similar reasons that made Marx refrain from giving any details about the classless society. Or is theirs an intellectual weakness? Ernst Bloch recently said in a discussion: "What is most obvious and what necessarily represents a permanent weakness of the students' riots is the curious fact that there is so little clarity, so little that is visible or even vivid about the goal they are fighting for. The negative element is visible, the objective dissatisfaction, embitterment and annoyance at what there is – all these are clear. This itself already contains the positive element, but without detail."²¹⁴ Does not this lead us a good way forward?

Schmidt: As for the concept of "revolutionary Marxism", which at the beginning you saw in connexion with the students' movement, I would say first of all that in this case the reflexions of an alien reality, namely the reality of the "third world", are continuing to exert their influence under different conditions.

Rehfeld: By that you mean, I presume, Herbert Marcuse's theory that the revolutionary situation no longer exists in the industrialized states of the West, but does, however, still exist in developing countries, and therefore the revolution will take place there and make its repercussions felt in the rest of the world. This is what you mean, is it not?

Schmidt: I wanted to say guerilla tactics, things as they are with Mao Tse Tung, then with "Che" Guevara, with Latin American revolutionaries . . .

Rehfeld: . . . with Fidel Castro²¹⁵ . . .

Schmidt: Yes, these conceptions of course show the marks of the geographical, social and historical conditions of those countries. I see a certain danger in this attempt, to revive this "revolutionary Marxism" as you call it, insofar as it is perhaps too easily believed that one ought to supplement the theory with – primitive – additional properties that have been devised under completely different circumstances, only because certain theorems and practices have proved efficient in other countries. Methods that have worked somewhere else and that are mechanically transferred on to Western industrial conditions can, as for their theories, lead to sectarianism, and in practice to nothing but noisy hoaxes. This is a danger that has long been seen by the most progressive among the students.

An anarchistic feature and a tendency to immediate action is obvious in these young people, and it is undoubtedly connected with the fossilized state of our society. I think we are paying today for the Western world's not having succeeded in developing an acceptable socialist alternative to Eastern socialism as well as to late capitalism. Nevertheless there are social groups that have not been completely integrated into the total consumer world. What Mannheim called the studying bourgeois youth in the 1930's has today yet another meaning. For some of those bourgeois students of whom Mannheim was talking were, economically considered, more strongly integrated and better situated than students today are, who are supplemented, though here in Germany only to a small extent, by students from other social classes.

Rehfeld: We have really passed this point, but let me come back to it again: Can these restless young people know what they want? This is but another formulation of the question concerning an alternative. It is the same question: In how far can a state that does not yet exist be described in detail?

Schmidt: The dialectical situation in which anybody participating in history finds himself is that he knows and yet does not know what he wants. The not-knowing implies imponderables. Marx was still convinced that a high level of industrialization leads inevitably to socialism. Today we can say that the technological potential, the immense means at our disposal, are, to start with, indifferent: it is up to us to decide what we want to make of them. For Marx the step from the high degree of development of productive forces to the new and better in history is much more straightforward and direct.

Rehfeld: May I probe a little deeper? Bloch says: "At the bottom of this No there lies a standard that is really already related to the Yes." Although

the new state might not yet be clearly formulated, the standard is nevertheless there, so that the Yes is in principle already immanent to the No.

Schmidt: Quite true. What Bloch says here does apply to these young people. This is the difference between an abstract negation, as Hegel would have called it, a negation that intends, as it were, to eradicate the existing state, and a "definite" or "immanent" negation, which would be one advocating its own better possibilities as opposed to the given situation.

Rehfeld: The latter would therefore not intend a blow-up.

Schmidt: No, but rather a negation continuously confronting society with its own repressed possibilities and judging society by the standard of its own concept.

Rehfeld: Another question in connexion with the students' movement: Would it be correct to say that because of the absence of a proletariat in Western industrial countries, philosophers like for instance Marcuse now put their stake on students and the restless masses in developing countries; that Marcuse has replaced Marx's criticism of bourgeois society by a general criticism of civilization, a criticism that is equally revolutionary and explosive; that Marcuse appeals to students who are under any circumstances critical and restless as well as susceptible to radical ideas? To this we must add the particular state of our German universities, with their hierarchical order that is no longer adequate to our society; and that does not exactly foster personal courage of one's convictions and intellectual independence. Another factor is the so-called "critical sociology" that is being carried on at the University of Frankfurt/Main. According to this sociology the university is nothing but one factory among others in industrial society; there is nothing special about it. Well, we are at the moment in Frankfurt. You are a member of the Frankfurt University staff. Perhaps you might, to begin with, tell us something more general about the so-called critical sociology and then, as a particular aspect, explain to us its attitude towards the university.

Schmidt: Marcuse would not simply maintain – and I have frequently discussed this question with him – that the students have today taken the place of the proletariat. What he might say is that students as a group provide a place, a sociological place in society, to which the consciousness of what at one time was called the historical mission of the proletariat has hibernated.

Rehfeld: As we have mentioned before the former proletariat has by now been socially integrated; thereby the former potential opponents of society have turned into partners and friends. According to this interpretation the workers no longer provide an impulse and are without revolutionary dynamics.

Schmidt: Workers have largely been integrated. Marx thought that a revolution could only take place if there is actual physical privation that is becoming unbearable. Marx's revolutionary conception ought to be supplemented in the following way: According to our experience a revolution does not occur at the point of the highest development of productive forces, but some time before this point has been reached – as for instance in Russia. For the highest degree of development implies the technological and political possibilities of an integration rather than the possibility of a violent upheaval of existing conditions. This is what I wanted to add to the topic of Marcuse and his theory of revolution. What was the second part of your question?

Rehfeld: I asked you to give us a general impression of your subject of "critical sociology" here at the University of Frankfurt.

Schmidt: No, not yet. For I should like to come back once again to the keyword "general criticism of civilization" as a substitute for the criticism of bourgeois society. Marcuse does not carry on any criticism of civilization in the sense we know, namely an inveighing against mechanization and the reification of life – a mere abstract opposition born of that vague anti-capitalist longing that has been a great help to certain ideologists. No: Marcuse regards technology, for all its autonomy, as being embedded in actual power conditions. He does not simply subject phenomena of the superstructure, as Marx would have called them, to a critical investigation, but, in common with the Frankfurt school of thought, which we are going to talk about in a minute, he includes from the start in his analysis what Marx calls a "critique of political economy", i.e. universal barter, the commodity character of the products of labour and of the human labour force itself. This is from the beginning a conception of society and not an analysis of isolated spheres of civilization.

Rehfeld: I have come across yet another interesting passage in Bloch: "Usually it is assumed that poverty and particularly the scarcity of commodities, favour a revolution." And in the same conversation he said: "It is true that hunger is the common basis of a revolution, but we have seen in our times that it is also possible otherwise, and this, I should think, teaches us to think very highly of people and especially of young people." We have seen on the one hand that the worker of today is established, he participates . . .

Schmidt: He can think of changes as such only within the *status quo*. As Adorno²¹⁶ says, everything within the whole is subject to change, but not the whole itself.

Rehfeld: Yes, that is one side of the matter. The other side is that hypothetically we want to start from the imperative that the whole ought to

change. This imperative presupposes that I have a concept of man that . . .
Schmidt: . . . that is, on the one hand, definite enough to allow a criticism of the *status quo*, and on the other hand open enough not to coagulate into an "image of man".

Rehfeld: This is exactly what I mean. And thus we have answered the question in how far Marxism is dependent on the individual and requires his freedom; and we have also pointed out that Marxism makes great ethical demands. Let us now turn to the Frankfurt School.

Schmidt: The so-called "Frankfurt School" goes back mainly to the concept of a "critical theory" of society developed by Max Horkheimer in his *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* during the 1930's, a conception that owes a great deal to Marx's teaching and above all sees – in contrast to the codified Soviet Marxist conception – that the main point of this teaching lies in the criticism of political economy. The difference between this school and those techniques of research that are generally accepted in the social sciences today is, to put it briefly, that the Frankfurt School admits society as a concrete, yet negative totality. About half a century ago people were talking of a psychology without soul. The sociology of our times is really a sociology without society. Politically speaking, to take a left-wing position means first of all that one regards society as an objective reality and not as merely a classifying concept that subsumes groups of phenomena; to retain the concept of society – irrespective of any definition of its content – that is really the starting-point for any left-wing position.

Rehfeld: The position on the left begins at the point when this society is no longer considered as a sum of specifically organized groups; according to this sociology there are no groups confirming the rule and groups of an exceptional character, but a system . . .

Schmidt: . . . no single social phenomena are being classified. Society is not an "event" in the sense of formal logic, i. e. subsuming individual facts under abstract generalities. The dialectical element in this conception of society must be seen in the fact that society is regarded as a material generality which would, it is true, not exist without the individuals, but which in relation to these individuals nevertheless has an independent reality. This is the first important thing. To put it in the language of the logic of science: dialectics as opposed to a classifying nominalistic system of logic. The dividing element between the schools today is their respective theory of the concept of the concept.

Rehfeld: This is an important factor, but I think you put it rather abstractly. On the other hand, an example cannot help, because . . .

Schmidt: No, it would not. It is precisely the examples, which then stand

side by side with the rules, that form part of the logic that is being criticized. That makes it difficult to speak of the dialectical theory without at the same time going into its contents.

Rehfeld: Let us come back to the situation at the university as described by this sociology.

Schmidt: There is the students' criticism that is, in the first place, aimed at the institutional framework of the so-called "professorial" university, but then changes more and more into a criticism of society as a whole. We must, however, not see this in the same light as some critics see the present students' movement, namely in the sense that the students beat the sack and really mean the donkey, i. e. what they really want is to attack society as a whole, and their criticism of the university is merely a pretence. For by carefully analysing one specific institution, the whole is being grasped through its specific part, the general is grasped in its particular.

Rehfeld: This means that one might say, *vice versa*, that there are no groups in this society with a claim to special organization; a factory is just as much a focus of society as a university. The special thing cannot be identified by its institutional form.

Schmidt: Yes, the basic antagonisms that run through any society must be reflected in any of its sectors.

Rehfeld: This theory is opposed by the contention that the university is something special, it represents the idea of the university as conceived by Humboldt²¹⁷ in 1810.

Schmidt: Quite right.

Rehfeld: This is, then, how the radical students justify their demands for a say in university committees. According to this way of arguing the university cannot claim to be an *élite* by maintaining that it is organized differently from any other institution in our society. We shall not talk in detail about the consequences this demand has; we have mentioned the "Frankfurt School" for the reason that it is part of the development of Marxism during the last decades.

To conclude, a complicated question. Marxism by definition aims at becoming practical. Marxism is impossible merely as an academic discussion, without practice. Thus there are political parties all over the world that claim descent from Marx; Marxist ideology was or is the basis for the setting up of clear-cut alternatives. Then there was a phase of liberalization, of de-ideologization; immediately the danger arose of people saying pragmatism and really meaning opportunism; of wielding power without having any basic ideological principles to justify it. Meanwhile, voices can be heard again calling for a re-ideologization.

In recent times my share in this theory has been repeatedly pointed out, and for this reason I can hardly avoid at this point disposing of this question in a few words. I myself cannot deny that before and during the forty years of co-operation with Marx I had a certain independent share in the foundation as well as particularly in the elaboration of the theory. But the greatest part of the guiding principles, especially in the field of economy and history, and in particular their final precise formulation, belong to Marx. Whatever I contributed – possibly with the exception of a few special questions – Marx might well have managed to do without me.

What Marx has achieved, I could not have done myself. Marx stood higher, saw further, surveyed more and more quickly than all of us others. Marx was a genius, the rest of us at the most talents. Without him the theory would today be nothing like what it is. For this reason it is right that it should bear his name.

Schmidt: You are using the term “ideology” in the watered-down sense in which it is frequently used today.

Rehfeld: Yes, I am doing this on purpose. For, if we leave the strictly philosophical sphere and enter the discussion that is going on in our newspapers and in the night studios of our radio and television stations, then it becomes necessary to water down and, as it were, popularize such concepts as “ideology”; and you will forgive me for doing so.

Schmidt: Perhaps I may remark – but we cannot enter into a longer discussion on this point – that, if the East is talking of a “Marxist ideology” today, this is sheer nonsense from Marx’s point of view. For Marx the concept of ideology is a pejorative one; it stands for a socially necessary illusion, false consciousness. You are thinking of a general concept?

Rehfeld: Yes indeed, the main line, the foundation for one’s actions.

Schmidt: It is probably much easier, if on the whole I defend the *status quo*, or am, at the most, prepared to improve on it in detail, to free it from minor blemishes, to take a few pragmatic steps, intellectually to live from hand to mouth and to observe the immediate reflexion of group interests.

Rehfeld: And what is it that is more difficult?

Schmidt: Not only to improve on the already existing, but to bring about something qualitatively new.

Rehfeld: But are these big alternatives still possible? I think they belong to the past; they also, if I may say so, coarsen the political picture and lead to a political black-and-white style that reminds one of that of woodcuts; and luckily we have progressed beyond that. Is it not true that the experts in all camps are today dependent on details for their fights, that details lead to differences of opinion, just because the simple alternative that can be covered by a slogan is no longer possible, is even dangerous, since it misleads the masses? The rabble-rousing slogan . . .

Schmidt: Yes, that is correct; but it is also correct that, let us say, a party aiming to make conditions and man himself more human, cannot work without a theoretical conception. But, of course, we must distinguish between rigid stays, a dogma, a doctrine that claims to have a say in all questions concerning individual sciences, as we had it during the Stalinist era, and a humanist critical conception that is constantly being corrected and enriched by changing conditions; which itself becomes part of the dialectic of the course of history and social development. Rosa Luxemburg²¹⁸, opposing the revisionists, answered Bernstein’s declaration that “The road is everything, the goal is nothing” by saying “The road is also nothing if the right whole, the intended goal, does not become visible at each of its stages”. This was the depressing experience of Stalinism, that

people were trying to convince themselves and others that a blood-stained road, a road of terror, was one day going to lead effortlessly into the realm of freedom. Insofar as the goal and the various steps towards it remain dialectically related to each other it will become impossible, and particularly if someone takes daily politics really seriously, to do without general considerations about the significance of a single step to be taken, about the extent to which it might contribute to or endanger the right whole.

Rehfeld: Of course, tactics and daily manoeuvres are perfectly compatible with a moral, or shall we say, ideological idea of the goal. On the contrary, if the goal is to be reached, detours are necessary today; in a complicated society like ours there are no longer any paths leading straight towards the goal; but we are forced to aim at a partial rather than a total fulfilment of our intentions in order to be at all successful. This question, however, is again too complicated to be fully discussed by us today.

I hope that our discussion has shown how carefully the concept of "Marxism" must be applied. The sources of Marxism have been so thoroughly obscured by the way his opponents have fought him no less than by the aberrations of his own adherents that any discussion about Marxism ought to take seriously the call *Ad fontes!*, back to the original sources! Marx himself cannot be called to account for the way others, friend or enemy, have dealt with his works, with good or bad intentions. Most certainly Marxism has been misunderstood if it is being reduced to a revolutionary recipe. The 150th anniversary of Karl Marx ought to be an occasion to call to mind that Marx – and this you have pointed out again and again – was thinking of man, of his chances to become conscious of himself by means of his surroundings, to realize himself according to his possibilities. It is for this that he was trying to create the conditions; seen in this light he is a great humanist, though of course not in the sense of traditional idealism. Thank you very much for this discussion.