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**FROM INTERPRETATION TO REFUTATION OF MARXISM.
ON LESZEK NOWAK'S NON-MARXIAN HISTORICAL
MATERIALISM**

Foreword

The purpose of this article is to outline the theory of a historical process developed within the framework of the Poznań School of Methodology, mainly by Leszek Nowak and a team of his co-workers. The presentation of the peculiarity of Marxism developed in the Poznań School will be more complete when it is compared, at least perfunctorily, to similar research programs. It seems that the Marxism of the Poznań School of Methodology resembled the most the Anglo-Saxon analytical Marxism initiated at the end of the 1970s (see: Lebowitz 1988, Nowak 1998, Wright 1994, Tarrit 2006) with a discussion about Gerald A. Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (Cohen 1978).

On the meta-philosophical level, this branch of analytical Marxism had the following characteristics (not necessarily evident in the work of all representatives of the group but definitely shared by a large part of them):

- a critical approach to the existing Marxist tradition, perceived as devoid of clarity and logical rigorousness in defining basic terms and concepts,
- systematically explicating and defining the core terms and concepts of Marxism,
- rejecting the Hegelian heritage present in Marxism, especially dialectical logic,

- rejecting the thesis of the methodological identity and specificity of Marxism, which leads to the acceptance of the positivist (or hypothetical) philosophy of science,
- rejecting the hypothesis of the methodological and theoretical unity of Marxism – instead, viewing Marx's and Engels's texts as a set of more or less intertwined theories and social concepts,
- formulating a functional dependency which describes the relations among the global components of historical materialism,
- accepting the principles of methodological individualism and explicating basic Marxist ideas with the use of the rational choice theory and the game theory.

This stream of research is presented in the “Studies in Marxism and Social Theory” publishing series of Cambridge University Press.

There were important differences between the Western European analytical Marxism and its counterpart in Poznań with respect to meta-philosophical assumptions such as:

- the methodological specificity of Marxism, based on the idealizational theory of science,
- the possibility of a holistic and not only fragmentary reconstruction of Marx's and Engels's writings,
- the existence of the need to reconstruct the Marxist-Engelsian dialectics derived from Hegel's thought, and
- the adaptive dependency which describes the relations among the global components of historical materialism.

The scientific output of the School was published in the “Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities”, printed by the Rodopi (from 1975), and later by the Brill publishing house (since 2014). Polish counterparts of this philosophical book series were “Poznańskie Studia z Filozofii Nauki” and “Poznańskie Studia z Filozofii Humanistyki”.

The meta-theoretical assumptions of the Marxism of the Poznań School of Methodology

The adaptive reconstruction of historical materialism presupposed the idealizational theory of science (Nowak 1970, 1971, 1974, 1977a 1980b; Nowak, Nowakowa 2000) and categorial interpretation of Marxist dialectics (Nowak, 1977b).

The categorial interpretation of Marxist dialectics made it possible to characterize, in ontological terms, the nature of the historical reality described by the adaptive reconstruction of historical materialism. It is assumed that a given phenomenon is influenced by a number of factors. An essential structure is a set of factors which affect a given phenomenon in different ways. These factors are ordered with respect to the power of their influence on a given phenomenon. In this structure, one may discriminate between the main factor for a given phenomenon, characterized by the greatest influence, and a number of secondary factors, exerting smaller influence than the main factor. The nomological structure of the studied phenomenon, that is, the relationships between the factors and the phenomena determined by them, could be recreated in an analogous way. The dependency of the studied phenomenon on the main factor is called a regularity or inner dependence. A regularity could have different forms, depending on the influence of secondary factors on the phenomenon.

The dialectical position (in the categorial interpretation) presupposes changes of the main factors and, what follows, of the regularities pertaining to the studied phenomena. We can distinguish two basic types of changes of essential structures: *transformations* and *alterations*. Transformations occur within the scope of the main factors of the essential structure of the studied phenomenon; alterations – within the scope of the secondary factors. Transformations lead to a correction of the assumed regularities, while developments cause a change of a regularity itself.

According to the idealizational theory of science, a research process consists of two stages: first, the first model is created, with a radical deformation of the studied phenomenon, and then this model is modified in order to grasp closer a reality under investigation. A scholar assumes that a host of factors have an impact on the phenomenon and that their impact can be of primary or secondary nature. The

idealizational law has the form of a conditional sentence. The antecedent contains counterfactual assumptions on the basis of which the influence of factors considered to be secondary is omitted. The consequent describes how the studied phenomenon depends on its main factor. This dependency is valid when all the idealizing assumptions expressed in the antecedent are in force, which is rare in the empirical world.

In the course of concretization, the idealizing assumptions are canceled and the initial idealizational law is modified. It is shown how the studied phenomenon depends on the secondary factors. A sequence of idealizational statements obtained in this way is closer and closer to empirical data. Concretization takes place in a certain order. First are removed the idealizing assumptions which relate to the secondary factors exerting the greatest influence on the studied phenomenon. Then, the secondary factors which exert a smaller influence are taken into account. Finally, all idealizational assumptions are canceled and a factual statement is obtained.

In research practice, however, the final concretization is never performed. Usually, after a series of concretizations has been made, the influence of the remaining, less important secondary factors is determined by way of an approximation, however, on condition that the level of the admissible divergences between the empirical data and the result obtained from the theoretical formula is not greater than the one generally accepted in the given domain of science.

The explanation of a given phenomenon consists of showing the dependence between this phenomenon and its main factor. Next, from an idealizational law obtained in such a way, one derives more and more realistic concretizations. The sentence being explained results from a factual (or approximative) statement and from the initial conditions.

The main ideas of the adaptive interpretation of historical materialism

On the nature of adaptive dependencies

In a common sense interpretation of Marxism, the global relationships between productive forces and relations of production, a social base and a legal and political superstructure, social and economic conditions and particular states of social consciousness are interpreted in causal way. This has given rise to the well-known interpretive difficulties as it has not been clear how productive forces are to cause the appearance of particular relations of production, a social base—of a legal and political superstructure, and social and economic conditions—of particular states of social consciousness.

Those difficulties have been solved by adaptive understanding of those dependencies. Nowak (1973, 1982b) assumed that we were dealing with two states of affairs: state of affairs α , (called a set of possibilities) and state of affairs β (called a set of conditions). Let state of affairs A (from set α), in conditions B from set β , lead to state of affairs x . The set of those results (e.g. states of things x and y) is ordered according to a particular criterion. Namely, the distinguished states of affairs are characterized by property k to different degrees. Therefore, they can be ordered according to the degree of the intensity of that property. For example, a state of things x which is characterized by property k to a greater degree will precede a state of things y characterized by k to a smaller degree. The adaptive dependency of a set α on conditions B of a set β with respect to property k is presented by means of the formula:

$$A_{opt} = ad_k(\alpha, B)$$

which is read as follows: from the set of given states of affairs of type α that state of affairs becomes widespread, which, in given conditions B , will lead to a result having property k to the greatest degree; the state of affairs from a set α is called A_{opt} . Property k is called 'a criterion of adaptation' and function ad is a function of adaptation.

The author illustrated his proposal with the example given below. Let us assume that a person has invented a new device for increasing work efficiency and, what follows, the possibility of increasing a surplus

product. Owners who compare various systems of the organization of production (traditional, invented by specialists, etc.) select the one which they believe to be capable of ensuring the growth of the surplus product—with the use of that device. However, if the expected growth does not happen, the owners will still be looking for an advantageous system of the organization of production. If any of them delays the reorganization of production, that owner's profits from an additional surplus product will shrink and, in the end, the owner will go bankrupt. After a sufficiently long time, by trial and error, and the elimination of those who do not learn fast enough, an optimal system of the organization of production, with respect to the used tool, will become common in the observed economic sector. The mechanism of adaptation of systems of production to the level of productive forces, which operates in the way described above, has been formulated as follows:

(I) that system of the organization of production, from a set of historically given systems of the organization of production, is adopted on a mass scale which, at a given level of productive forces, ensures the highest surplus product for the owners of the means of production.

There is an analogous adaptive dependency between the superstructure and the economic base. On a mass scale, those systems, from among the various legal and political systems (traditional or invented by philosophers), become common which ensure the most effective introduction of the optimal system of the organization of production from the point of view of the owners class, given a particular state of the base. That dependency is formulated as follows:

(II) that political system, from a set of historically given politico-legal systems, is adopted on a mass scale in a society which ensures a system of the organization of production which is optimal for the ruling class, at a given level of the economic base.

The dependency of social consciousness on social being is similarly adaptive in nature. In that case, the interests of the owners classes, guaranteed by the legal and political system, function as a

selector of individual ideas. On a mass scale, such ideas become common as they ensure, in given social and economic conditions, the durability of the political system. That is expressed by way of the following dependency:

(III) those ideas, from a historically given set of ideas, become widespread on a mass scale which ensure, in given social and economic conditions, the highest stability of a legal and political system.

Dependency (I) describes the adaptation of systems of the organization of production to the level of productive forces. Together, the level of productive forces and the optimal system of production (relations of production) constitute an economic base. Dependency (II) describes the adaptation of legal and political systems to the economic base. The optimal political and legal system is called a superstructure. Together, an economic base and a legal and political superstructure form social and economic conditions. Social consciousness adapts to them, which is described as dependency III. The adaptation statements obtained in that way and binding for numerous idealizational assumptions constitute the initial model of the social-economic formation. Their later (in 1970s and at the beginning of 1980s) gradual cancelation (one of the key assumptions was that of the stability of productive forces, Łastowski 1982) became the basis for the development of the adaptive interpretation of historical materialism (see: Buczkowski 1982; Nowak 1998; Brzechczyn 2005, 2010b). Graphically the system of adaptive dependencies can be presented as follows:

The means of production	The system of the organization of production		
Economic base		Political and legal system	
Economic and social conditions (being)			Economic consciousness

The categorial reconstruction of Marxian-Engelsian dialectics made it possible to formulate the paradox of historicism. Namely, the Marxist dialectics presupposes the changeability of the main factors of studied phenomena (Nowak 1977b, pp. 89–90), while the Marxist historical materialism presupposes that productive forces and the relations of production are the main determining factors in social life, in all societies and in all historical periods. This presupposition gives rise to the question of whether the repertoire of main factors is or is not subject to change in historical process. If the answer is positive, then another question arises about the nature of those non-economic but still material factors.

Epochs and formations in the historical process

Within the framework of AIHM researchers have tried to deal with the aforementioned paradox of historicism by creating an idealizational-adaptive interpretation of Engels's historical materialism (Burbelka 1980, 1982). According to that approach, the reproduction of immediate life and not economic production was the main factor in primitive societies. The production of goods became the main factor in the epoch of class societies.

According to the reconstruction of the basic concepts of Engels's historical materialism (Burbelka, 1980, pp. 38–39), the reproduction of immediate life and kinship relationships form an “ancestral base”. The economic and political superstructure and the ancestral base constitute together an “ancestral” being (socio-ancestral conditions). Socio-ancestral conditions, understood in that way, determine the consciousness prevalent in the whole society. As the above considerations concern a pre-class society, the consciousness is tribal and not the consciousness of the dominant social class. Therefore, the essential structure of a typical formation of the tribal epoch looks as follows:

R, Kr

R, Kr, e-pS

R, Kr, e-pS, trC

Abbreviations used: R – reproduction of immediate life, Kr – kinship relationships, e-pS – economic and political superstructure, trC – tribal consciousness.

Jolanta Burbelka also reconstructed the basic laws of the theory of the family formation:

(I. R) That kinship relationship, from a set of historically given types of kinship relationships, is adopted on a mass scale which ensures the highest survival ratio in given conditions of the reproduction of immediate life.

(II. R) That economic and political system, from a historically given set of economic and political systems, is adopted on a mass scale which ensures the most effective augmentation of the optimal kinship relationships in a given 'ancestral' base.

(III. R) That system of ideas, from a set of historically given systems of ideas, is adopted on the mass scale which ensures the highest stability of an optimal economic and political superstructure in given socio-ancestral conditions.

The structure of the kinship-social formation was analogous to that of the social-economic formation:

The reproduction of immediate life	Kinship relationships		
Ancestral base		Economic and political system	
Socio-ancestral conditions			Tribal consciousness

Burbelka distinguished three kinship formations with respect to family relationships (the form of marriage): As regards the first kinship formation, group marriage of the first degree was common, which precluded, first, sexual relationships of parents with children and, then, of siblings. Group marriage of the second degree became popular in the next kinship formation; it precluded sexual contacts between close and more distant relatives. The monogamous marriage became more common in the third kinship formation. It constituted a further restriction on people's sexual relationships. According to the interpretation presented above, this diachronic evolution of the forms of marriage resulted in the production of the healthiest possible

offspring. The author also postulated that the history of the development of humanity could be divided into two principal epochs: the tribal one and the class one. Within those two epochs we could distinguish the social-kinship formations and the social-economic formations.

The author also defined the principles of transitions between the epochs. The main factor for the development of societies in the tribal epoch was the reproduction of life, while in the class epoch it was production. The transitions between these two periods were to occur as follows:

1. In the last formation of the previous epoch the main factor from the next epoch occurs above the surface essentiality level.
2. In the first formation of the new epoch the main factor from the previous epoch occurs above the surface essentiality level.
3. In the new epoch the main factor from the previous one cannot occupy a position at the lowest essentiality level (Burbelka 1980, p. 127).

The essential structure of the last formation of the social-tribal epoch and of the first formation of the social-class epoch, then, looks as follows:

R, Kr	P, Spr
R, Kr, P	P, Spr, R
R, Kr, P , e-pS	P, Spr, R , polS
R, Kr, P , e-p S, trC	P, Spr, R , polS, clC

The political momentum in the adaptive interpretation of historical materialism

Distinguishing between two types of materialism: Engels's and Marx's entailed the problem of generalizing them and of constructing such a third form of materialism that would be applicable to systems of real socialism. Piotr Buczkowski, Andrzej Klawiter, and Nowak (1982) tried to construct such a version of materialism. The authors assumed that the structures of the political and cultural spheres were analogous to that of the economic sphere. In the political sphere we could distinguish

the means of coercion and a system of the organization of power which constituted a political base; the political base and the system of political institutions combined to produce social and political conditions, and political consciousness.

The means of coercion	The system of the organization of power	
Political base		The system of political institutions (superstructure)
Socio-political conditions		Political consciousness

Between those constituents of the political momentum, adaptive dependencies occurred which can be described in the following way:

(I. P) That organizational system of power, from a set of historically given systems of the organization of power, becomes adopted on a mass scale which ensures the highest sphere of regulation to the class of rulers at a given level of the means of coercion.

(II. P) That system of political institutions, from a set of historically given systems of political institutions, becomes adopted on a mass scale which ensures the introduction of the most optimal system of the organization of power at a given state of the political base.

(III. P) That system of ideas, from a set of historically given systems of ideas, becomes adopted on a mass scale in a society which is the most effective tool for legitimizing the optimal system of political institutions in given socio-political conditions.

The cultural momentum of a society was reconstructed in a similar way. The means of producing knowledge are material tools for spreading ideas. The particular arrangement of social roles fulfilled by people forms a system of producing knowledge. The cognitive base of a society is made up from the material means and the system of producing knowledge. The cognitive base with the system of the cognitive organization created socio-cognitive conditions having an impact on the spread of metacognitive consciousness. Adaptive

dependency also linked the distinguished elements of the structure of the cultural momentum.

The means of producing knowledge	The system of producing knowledge		
Cognitive base		The system of cognitive organization	
Socio-cognitive conditions			Metacognitive consciousness

These dependencies were expressed with the following formulas:

(I. K) That system, out of a set of systems of producing knowledge, becomes widespread on a mass scale, at a given level of the means of producing knowledge, which is the most effective for increasing the circle of the followers of the ideas introduced by the people who have at their disposal the means of knowledge production.

(II. K) That cognitive organization, out of a set of cognitive organizations, becomes widespread on a mass scale, at a given state of the cognitive base, which ensures the introduction of the most optimal system of producing knowledge.

(III. K) That system, out of a set of historically given systems of meta-cognitive consciousness, becomes widespread in a society which is the most effective for legitimizing the optimal system of cognitive organization in given socio-cognitive conditions in that society.

Those considerations led to the explication of the historical-material momentum of a society (Buczowski, Klawiter, Nowak, 1982, p. 241–242). It is a relatively autonomous sphere of social life which reflects in its internal structure the global structure of social life. The historical-material momentum has three levels. The material one consists of means of a certain type and a set of social relations among the people who use those means. A system of institutions augment that state of interpersonal relations, while consciousness motivates people to perform the social roles ascribed to them. Between those components of momentum of a given type there occur adaptive dependencies. The interpersonal relationships are adjusted to material means of a given type, an institutional system adjusts to a level of

material means and social relations, etc. However, ultimately it is the material level that decides—in adaptive way—about the other levels of social life. A characteristic feature of a social momentum is a division into those who decide about the use of material means and those who do not have such influence, which leads to an internal contradiction of social interests.

The authors assumed that the dominance of the economic momentum over the remaining momentums meant that the level of technological development decided directly, i.e. in a causal manner, about the effectiveness of the means of coercion and of the means of the propagation of knowledge. Moreover, when the assumption about the independence of the political momentum from the economic momentum was canceled, then the acceptance of the optimal system of power depended, in an adaptive way, on the level of the means of production and coercive measures. Those systems, from a set of historical systems of the organization of power, become common which ensure the preservation of the most optimal system of the organization of production. That power system, from a set of power systems compliant with the optimal system of the organization of production, becomes prevalent which ensures the greatest sphere of power regulation. There are analogous relations on other levels of social life. The same relations occur between the economic and cultural momentums.

The authors have considered a situation in which the economic momentum loses its distinguished position (Buczowski, Klawiter, Nowak, 1982, p. 268). This happens when the momentum is not capable of maximizing its criterion of adaptation (surplus product). Then one of the subjugated momentums begins dominating social life and ensures, through its domination, the survival of the society as a whole, as well as maximizes its own criterion of adaptation (in the case of the political momentum that criterion will be the increase of power regulation). According to the authors, the so-called Asiatic social formation resulted from the dominance of the political momentum.

Non-Marxian historical materialism as a refutation of Marxian historical materialism

For Nowak, attempts at applying the generalized form of the adaptive interpretation of historical materialism to the construction of a theory of socialism appeared to be unconvincing, which inspired him to construct non-Marxian historical materialism (Nowak 1998, p. 228-229, Klawiter 2013). The theory overtakes the AIHM view of the isomorphic structures of three realms of social life: politics, culture, and economy, and it strengthens the antagonistic nature of historical materialism. Consequently, the concept of a social class is generalized. Nowak assumes that social classes exist not only in economy but also in politics and culture. In political life the rulers class, which has at its disposal the means of coercion, increases the global sphere of influence and restricts citizens' autonomy. In economic life, the owners class, which has at its disposal the means of production, maximizes its surplus product at the cost of producers' direct income. In culture, the monopoly of the means of spiritual production allows the priest caste to augment its spiritual authority and restrict believers' autonomy. The social antagonisms based on unequal access to material social means (means of coercion, production, and indoctrination) in each of the three realms of social life are, then, autonomous. Class divisions from the adjacent spheres of social life can only act as strengthening or weakening factors. Class divisions can also cumulate and, for example, one social class, in order to boost its social power, can overtake the means of coercion and of production or the means of coercion and of indoctrination, etc. Nowak notes that the phenomenon described above leads to a situation in which:

“[t]he economic momentum loses its exceptionality in a more general perspective. It turns out to be one of the three material momentums of society with the same internal structure [...]. Now, when it is known that not only the economic momentum is marked by the fact that the dominant role is played in it by the disposal of the material means of society and the needs of the masses, when it is known that not only the economic sphere of society generates the class division, then the role played in society by economy ceases to be self-evident and requires an explanation. [...] Now, there appears the possibility of taking into account—within the materialist, not the idealist, and class, not the individualist perspective—that there are at least theoretically admissible types of societies where not the economy but e.g. politics plays the dominant role [...]. Now this has become not a matter of speculative considerations

but simply a matter of facts. [...] in fact, such speculations are without any relevance – no society is possible without the working of gravity, an appropriate interval of temperature, appropriate rules of heredity and thousands of factors of similar kind” (Nowak 1983, p. 177–178).

Non-Marxian historical materialism consists of multi-model theories of property (Nowak 1983) and of power (Nowak 1991), a one-model theory of a hierocratic society (Buczowski, Klawiter, Nowak 1987; Nowak 1988), and a model of an economic-political society with a static and dynamic economy (Nowak 1983). I will present, shortly and in a simplified manner, selected models of historical development created in non-Marxian historical materialism.

A model of an economic society

The basic model of an economic society assumes a simplified structure of a social system, consisting of two social classes: owners and direct producers, without the influence of institutions and of social and economic consciousness. The society in question is externally isolated. Apart from the standard idealizing assumptions mentioned above, economic assumptions are also made in that model. It is assumed that the accumulation fund in the considered society equals zero (simple reproduction takes place there) and the number of the fields of production is constant.

The basic theoretical category is the alienation of work, defined as the difference between the level of direct producers' economic needs and the variable capital used to satisfy those needs. The level of economic conflict among classes depends on the degree of the alienation of work. Namely,

- when the level of the alienation of work is low, that is, when most of direct producers' needs are satisfied, there is social peace;
- when the level of the alienation of work is high, that is, when most of direct producers' needs are not satisfied, there is also peace in the social system because destitution breaks up direct producers' solidarity and their ability to organize mass protests;
- a revolution happens in the case of a medium level of the alienation of work – exploitation is then painful for most of

direct producers but it has not destroyed their ability to jointly organize revolutionary protests yet.

Let us present an idealized simulation of the development of a model of an economic society constructed in the way described above, consisting of three phases.

The phase of the increasing alienation of work. The mechanism of economic competition allows owners to maximize their profits by limiting employee income. On the social scale, this practice leads to an increase of the alienation of work and, consequently, growing social resistance. At first, the symptoms are lower work efficiency, single strikes, etc. In the end, there are mass protests of employees, on such a scale that the social system enters the phase of revolutionary disorder.

The phase of an economic revolution. In the face of mass protests the owners, deprived of the support of people who have at their disposal the centralized means of coercion, increase direct producers' remuneration. However, that does not help much because when direct producers return to work, the mechanisms of economic competition continue to drive the alienation of work and lead to another escalation of social unrest. The only durable long-term solution of that social conflict is a change of the property relations between owners and direct producers, such as would increase direct producers' autonomy of production and, in that way, motivate them to higher productivity. The owners who do so will be able to maintain or even increase their profits while simultaneously increasing direct producers' income, earned by those producers.

The phase of an evolution of property relations. Some owners modify property relations and come out of the phase of revolutionary disorder. Within the framework of the old economic system, then, new, progressive property relations are formed which give more autonomy to direct producers. The revision of property relations restores social peace in economy and brings about better material results: higher production and profits. Other owners also transform their property relations with their direct producers. There is an evolutionary transformation of property relations in that phase of social development. When most of global production takes place within the framework of the new, progressive property relations, there comes the transition to a new social-economic formation.

Extensions. That model was further concretized. Nowak (1981) canceled the assumptions about the zero level of an accumulation fund (i), constant level of productive forces (ii), and constant number of fields of production (iii). These concretizations made it possible to conceptualize the mechanisms of the economic development of the slave, feudal, and capitalist formations.

The removal of the first assumption (accumulation fund equals zero) poses the problem of the realization of a surplus product. The economic development in model II of an economic society (the approximation of the slave formation) is propelled by the owners' consumption.

The assumption about the constant level of productive forces has been replaced with a more realistic assumption about periodical technological development which leads to the appearance of a new field of production. That is supposed to be the characteristic of the feudal formation in which, as a result of the technological development at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century, there appeared a new sphere of production: urban economy. Therefore, additional value was realized in a different way in that formation. Generally speaking, the rural sphere of production created demand for products made in the urban sector of economy, and vice versa.

Capitalism in that approach is a formation characterized by constant growth of productive forces. For that reason, on the micro-social level, particular owners can leave revolutionary disorder behind not by changing property relations but by raising direct producers' salaries. This is how, on the global level, the owners class solves the problem of the realization of a surplus product, by raising the global value of variable capital.

A model of a political society

Static assumptions. Every person has a set of preferences which guide his or her actions. Those actions can be divided into autonomous ones and those which are regulated by rulers. The regulated actions are undertaken under the threat of repression from the rulers. Autonomous actions are not affected by such pressure. That distinction should not be treated in too simplistic a manner because actions regulated by the

rulers may include administrative actions which maintain social order and are beneficial for all members of the society.

There are two basic methods of the etatization of social life: terror and bureaucratization. Terror consists in the physical elimination of those citizens who are centers of social relations independent from rulers. Bureaucratization consists in the replacement of autonomous social relations of the citizen-citizen type by etatized social relationships of the citizen-ruler-citizen type. In that way, state authorities gradually permeate the structure of social life, which makes it impossible to undertake any social action without their approval.

The proportion of regulated (but not administrative) actions to the universe of all citizens' actions is an indicator of the level of civil alienation. The intensity of the social resistance of the citizens' class depends on that proportion and can be expressed with the following formulas:

- when the percentage of citizens' actions (and, consequently, also the degree of citizens' alienation) controlled by rulers is small, there is social peace in the society,
- when citizens' alienation is at a medium level, a civil revolution breaks out,
- when the degree of citizens' alienation is high, there is social peace again because the increased power regulation atomizes and disrupts the citizens' class.

The state of declassification, however, is not stable. It is presumed that when the level of enslavement in a given society exceeds a certain threshold, there appears a trend in that society to gradually reevaluate autonomous citizens' relations. Bureaucratic social relationships, mediated by rulers, are replaced with autonomous, unmediated ones, for example, the control of information fosters gossiping, the control of economy – trading on the gray market, and the control of politics – the appearance of informal or even conspiratorial organizations.

Let us, then, present an idealized development of political society constructed in such a way. It is assumed that there are only two political classes: rulers and citizens (so the distinction of the studied society into economic and spiritual classes is omitted); the society is

externally isolated, the technical level of the means of coercion is constant, rulers use the means of coercion directly, and the influence of political institutions and doctrines on the social and political processes in question is disregarded.

The phase of increasing civil alienation. Political competition causes an increase of the regulation of social life in the initial stage. Those rulers who do not increase the regulation of social life will either be eliminated from the structures of power or they will also learn to do that. Such competition for power results in a limitation of citizens' fields of autonomy and in an increase of civil alienation. Consequently, citizens' political resistance grows and gradually transforms into an open political revolution.

The phase of a civil revolutions. Such a confrontation can end with citizens' victory or defeat. Let us assume that the revolution ends in citizens' victory. In such a case the power of the *ancien regime* is overthrown and replaced with a revolutionary elite. Just like in the case of the previous rulers, the sphere of control is accumulated. The revolutionary elite, having at its disposal the revolting masses, not to mention armed paramilitary units which form new means of coercion, constitutes the germ of a new rulers class. That is why after a victorious revolution the elite of the citizens' movement, as it overtakes control over the means of coercion, becomes a new rulers class. The mechanisms of competition for power also lead to the maximization of power for itself. The true revolutionaries who do not want to extend their influence are either eliminated from the political structure or learn to take care of their (material) interests. Consequently, power regulation increases, giving rise to social resistance which transforms into another revolution, in this way closing the *civil loop*. There is another political revolution, this time against the new rulers class, and once more there are two possibilities: of a victory or a failure. Let us assume that the revolution fails and citizens are enslaved.

The phase of total enslavement. The declassification of citizens at that stage of social development allows rulers to further maximize the sphere of state regulation, without any resistance on the part of citizens. When all spheres of social life are controlled by rulers, the system reaches the state of total enslavement. In that phase of development there are no longer any autonomous spheres of social life

which could be subdued. As the mechanisms of competition for power continue to force a typical ruler to enlarge his or her sphere of regulation, political competition takes place at the cost of those realms of social life which have already been subordinated to other members of the ruling class. This could lead to a destruction of the power system as a whole, so the only way to sustain the political structure are purges. Purges eliminate the surplus of candidates for power and make it possible to once more subdue the social areas freed in that way. At that stage of social development there are periodical waves of terror directed, this time, against the members of the power structure. They interrupt the periods of totalization.

The phase of cyclical declassations. In the stage of enslavement, according to the static principles of the model, there appears a trend to revalorize autonomous social relations. A revolution breaks out and it ends in citizens' defeat because of, among other things, the small number of participants and the resulting advantage of the authorities. Rulers repress the revolting citizens and, in order to prevent a new revolutionary wave, make concessions to the citizens' class, namely, they withdraw from the regulation of selected spheres of social life. Those concessions make it possible for the authorities to break the vicious circle of purges because new spheres of the autonomy of social life are created which, after the stabilization of political rule, can be subjected to control. That happens through the mechanisms of political competition, regardless of the intentions of particular rulers. The global effect of the actions undertaken by particular rulers is the growth of citizens' alienation culminating in an outbreak of another citizens' revolution, this time with a broader social base. The authorities are forced to make even greater concessions. A political society evolves according to the following pattern: a citizens' revolution – declassification – concessions – increasing power regulation – another citizens' revolution with a broader social base – etc.

The phase of cyclical revolutions. As the society awakens, more and more citizens participate in political revolutions. Then, such a massive revolution takes place that rulers, instead of turning to oppression, must initially make concessions big enough to bring about social compromise. At that point, the mechanism of social development changes as well. A political system evolves according to the following

scheme: revolutions—concessions—growing power regulation—a revolution with a broader social base—even greater concessions. The cycle of revolutions is continued until the system has reached the state of class peace in which the level of power regulation becomes acceptable for citizens.

A model of an economic-political society with static economy

In the models mentioned above property and power were analyzed in isolation. Besides, in non-Marxian historical materialism there is a model of a three-class society with rulers, owners, and a people's class. It is also assumed that the level of the means of production is stable and economy does not develop. In that model there is, apart from the class struggle of owners against direct producers, and of citizens against rulers, also the supra-class rivalry between the two classes of oppressors.

The phase of increasing alienation of work and of the diffusion of power. In the initial stage of development the owners class dominates the rulers class. The mechanisms of economic competition bring about economic exploitation. In order to counteract people's revolutionary outbursts, owners overtake some prerogatives of the authorities. That allows for more efficient control and economic exploitation of direct producers. In the long run the trend toward owners overtaking the prerogatives of the state would lead to a rise of an *E*-totalitarian society and a transformation of the class of owners into a double class of owners-rulers. However, in accordance with the isolated theory of property, after a certain level of the alienation of work has been reached, there appears social resistance which transforms into a people's revolution.

The phase of people's revolutions. In an isolated economic society a revolution might transform into a confrontation—in a three-class society, however, it must do that. If the people class wins that confrontation, the society will transform into a *P*-totalitarian system as the revolutionary elite, thanks to the mechanisms of political competition, will take over the control over the means of coercion and production. However, the victory of the people class over the mobilized social resources of the two classes of oppressors is rather unlikely. When suppressing direct producers' revolts, owners rely on the

authorities' assistance. They allow the rulers to suppress employee rebellions and use short-term selective terror but they do not permit direct producers' lasting declassation because too deep an interference on the part of the rulers in the economic relations would go against the owners' economic interest. However, after the terror has subsided, the employee masses regain the ability to revolt and there is another revolution. Social development progresses according to the following scheme: a revolution – short-term political repression and pacification of the society – decreased declassation – another revolution. After a whole series of employee revolutions some owners conclude that only a revision of property relations can bring long-term social peace.

The phase of the evolution of property relations and of the etatization of social life. A revision of property relations entails a division of the owners class into two strata: progressive and conservative. In that way, the authorities free themselves of the chains of property; social life undergoes etatization. Rulers are supported by the weaker category of owners – the conservative one. The growing regulation of the new economic structure makes progressive owners identify themselves more and more with the increasingly resistant citizens class. The growth of citizens' alienation leads to a citizens' revolution.

The phase of a civil revolution. The outcome of that revolution very much depends on the current stage of the phase of the etatization of social life. If the outbreak happens too early, when the new economic sector, including the new owners class, has not been fully formed yet, the revolution will end in a defeat and rulers will take over the means of production and accomplish P-totalitarization of society. If, however, the outbreak happens when most of the social product is being produced in the new property relations, then the revolution can be victorious. As the new revolutionary power is a weaker partner in an alliance with the progressive segment of owners, there is a reduction of the rulers' control of economy. Most barriers which restrict the development of the new economic sector disappear.

A model of an economic-political society with a dynamic economy

In this model, it is assumed that a steady growth of the means of production occurs in a society. The increase of a surplus product depends on the technological progress, which influences the relations

between classes of owners and direct producers, rulers, citizens, and also the supra-class rivalry between rulers and owners.

The phase of increasing alienation of work and of the collapse of power. The owners dominate the rulers in the initial stage of social development. For that reason they can, by way of the mechanisms of economic competition, increase their own profits at the cost of direct producers' income. On a global scale, there is an increase of the alienation of work and, consequently, growing social resistance.

The phase of people's revolution. This resistance transforms into a revolution. In the static model of economy, the owners class had the choice of either calling upon the coercive forces or revising property relations. In a dynamic economy owners have one more option: they can finance a raise of direct producers' remuneration, using the profits derived from the development of productive forces.

The phase of autonomous cyclical development. Initially owners use the easiest method, namely, they request the support of the state to suppress the protests. By trial and error, though, more and more owners realize that suppressing employee protests is not a sustainable solution. One disadvantage of such an approach is that the production process is interrupted. Another is that the rulers gain a pretext for increasing interference in economy. It is much more efficient to preempt employee protests by stimulating the growth of their salaries. There are two benefits of that practice: the owners who do that ensure social peace in their production units and all owners—the class as a whole—can realize a surplus product. Interestingly, in that phase of social development there is a decrease of the alienation of work without a revision of property relations, and a cessation of economic class struggle.

The phase of an economic collapse. Long-term social peace makes the class of direct producers less and less willing to risk mass revolts, in the view of the possibility of losing not only chains but also a car, a summer house, or similar goods. When the direct producers' readiness to protest is lowered, the owners become less willing to increase variable capital. Thereupon, problems with the realization of a surplus product reappear. Increased production means that additional demand begins to surpass the social demand determined by the needs of the state and the direct producers. The economy begins to collapse and the workers'

masses, disarmed by long social peace, are not able to organize a revolution on an ad hoc basis and to restore economic balance by enforcing a raise of salaries.

The phase of the etatization of economic life. Then, the class who have at their disposal the means of coercion come into play. The increased interference of the state in the economic life achieves two aims at the same time: it solves the overproduction crisis and ensures the maximization of power regulation. It assumes the form of the construction of a 'military state' or a 'welfare state'. The progress of the etatization of economy is but one aspect of the general etatization of social life.

The phase of citizens' revolutions. According to the static principles of the theory of power, the increase of power regulation gives rise to growing social resistance. Initially, only marginal sections of the citizens class decide to revolt because, first, the owners class has been deprived of social significance and a real influence on economic processes by way of bureaucratization of economy and, second, the class of direct producers does not have any reasons to revolt as it is satisfied with the level of the alienation of work. Thus, lost citizens' revolutions are not capable of obstructing the totalization of the system while victorious ones only accelerate that process because the mechanisms of a civil loop come into play.

Extensions. That model of the development of the capitalist formation was further concretized. The author examined, among other things, the influence of a victorious workers' revolution, of an evolution of forms of government, and of transformations of social consciousness on the development of a capitalist society (Nowak 1989). In a series of more detailed articles Nowak (1996, 2003, see also: Ciesielski 2013, Zarębski 2003) discussed the methodological status of the prediction of the totalization of capitalism, as well as the problem of the verification and possible falsification of that prediction.

A historical interpretation of models of non-Marxian Historical Materialism

Non-Marxian historical materialism is, in its main conceptual framework, an interpretation of class societies belonging to the European line of development (some examples of its application to the

interpretation of non-European societies history, see: Nowak, Paprzycka 1989; Brzechczyn 2004ab; 2007, Bręgiel-Benedyk 2013, Karczyńska 2013, Rogacz 2016). In the slaveholding formation, the phase of the increasing alienation of work and the collapse of the state has its counterpart in the period of patriarchal slavery, which gradually transformed into classical slavery. Ancient forms of democracy were an expression of the control of power by property in that historical period. When the exploitation of slaves became more severe, there was a series of slave revolutions. Those revolts were suppressed by public authorities but the slaves' persistent resistance enforced an evolution of property relations. In the frame of slavery formation the institution of colonate (*colonatus*) emerged—a prototype of feudal ownerships relations. Owners of great estates settled free people as lease-holders (*colonus*) on their arable lands. After paying the rent, the *coloni* kept the rest of income for themselves. At that time there was a growing bureaucratization of the empire. Its Western part collapsed under attacks of barbarian tribes—a factor neglected in the model - but the Eastern part continued to exist until 1453.

A similar developmental cycle repeated in the feudal formation. After the collapse of the state, the period of early feudalism was a counterpart of the phase of the growth of the alienation of work. At that time peasants became dependent on the lords class. A feudal lord had power over the land—he was the owner of the land used by peasants, over the people—he could dispose of the peasants, and over courts. In early Middle Ages the feudal class wielded political power as it has overtaken many prerogatives of the state.

Technological progress at the end of the 10th century created the conditions for the appearance of a separate, urban economy. As it was much easier to earn money in urban environments at that time, peasants migrated there to improve their living conditions. However, sooner or later the mechanisms of exploitation in both fields of production caused a series of protests of urban and rural people. A wave of such revolts swept over the whole Western Europe between the 14th and the 16th century. They enforced a change in property relations. The social changes brought about proto-capitalist and capitalist relations of production. Thus, the societies of the European civilization, from enslavement, through feudalism, to capitalism, have

been developing in the direction of increasing alienation of work: a hired laborer employed in a capitalist factory is to enjoy greater productive autonomy than a feudal peasant, and a peasant is to enjoy greater productive autonomy than an ancient slave.

The appearance of urban economy, craftsmen's guilds, and then of proto-bourgeoisie allowed power to free itself from the influence of both categories of property. On the institutional level these social processes were expressed by the creation of an absolutist state. The growing bureaucratization of social life led to a series of citizens' revolutions which ended in the overthrowing of government authorities: in the Netherlands in the 16th century, in England in the 17th century, and in France in the 18th century.

That cycle of development was only repeated to a certain degree in the capitalist formation. The dominance of property over power was expressed in the form of government called bourgeoisie democracy which reduced the state to the role of a 'night janitor'. The exploitation of the working class led to a series of worker strikes, the Chartist Movement in England in the 1820s, the Spring of the Nations in 1848–49 in all of Europe, or the Paris Commune in the 1870s in France. However, in contrast to the previous formations, capitalism was the first form of government characterized by constant development of productive forces. Therefore, capitalists were the first owners able to 'bribe' their direct producers by assigning greater variable capital to them. That led, on the one hand, to the cessation of the economic class struggle and, on the other hand, to problems connected with the realization of a surplus product. Here the state helped: it drove economic demand by means of increased economic interventionism and state orders. The economic role of the state grew after the economic crisis of the 1930s. On the institutional level the etatization of social life in Western Europe was expressed in the creation of a 'welfare state'. Ever greater social groups, using benefits from the state, became dependent on state bureaucracy. Marginal parts of the citizens' class revolted against that increasing dependence on the state apparatus. That is how the student occupation protests in 1968 or the pacifist movements in the late 1970s are interpreted in non-Marxian historical materialism. The totalization of capitalism was halted, for a time, by the wave of neoliberalism in the 1980s. However, those counter-trends will

not, according to non-Marxian historical materialism, stop the totalization of the system in which more and more real economic decisions will be made by economic bureaucracy instead of by real owners.

This interpretation of the development of pre-capitalist societies which belonged to the European line of development was supplemented by Krzysztof Brzechczyn (1998, 2009), who analyzed into respectively extended models of this theory the rise of manorial-serf economy in Central Europe. A factor triggering the divergence of development between Central Europe and Western Europe was the shortage of manpower. It worked in two ways. On the one hand, low density of population coupled with the weakening of the power of the state forced the feudal landlords to improve the situation of peasants, which limited the scope of peasant migration to the cities. Consequently, the cities in Central Europe were less numerous than in Western Europe. The underdevelopment of the urban component in Central European states disturbed the balance between the king, the burghers and the nobility. As long as the estate of nobles was weak, the economic development of the cities and the peasantry could continue unobstructed. However, the basic feature of political systems in Hungary, Bohemia and Poland was the domination of nobility in parliamentary institutions. This advantage gave the nobility the necessary influence to enact law and control the activity of the state, which served the interests of the predominant social class. Consequently, this social class could introduce unobstructed the so-called secondary serfdom which made possible the increase of manorial service. These social processes were accompanied by the increase of demand for agricultural products in Western Europe. Above-mentioned factors occurred in all Central European societies. Apart from them, it is possible to distinguish factors characteristic only for the developmental paths of particular societies of this region. Their presence led to an uneven development of the manorial-serf economy in these societies. In Poland, manorial-serf economy appeared in the course of the 16th century, in Hungary in the first half of the 16th century and in Bohemia in the 17th century.

According to Nowak, the basic distinguishing feature of the societies of the European civilization was the separation as well as balance

between classes of rulers, owners, and priests. This balance was seriously disturbed in the history of Russia where the state was the greatest land owner. This led to two attempts at the totalitarization of this society. The first one took place during the rule of Ivan the Terrible when the *pomeshchiki* – the double class of rulers-owners competed with *boyars* – the single class of owners. The second attempt at totalitarization took place during the rule of Peter the Great. It was then that the authorities tried to create industry and manufactures. This totalitarian anomaly caused state feudalism to transform into state capitalism without the stage of free competition. The level of state interventionism in state capitalism was on a par with state interventionism in the ‘more civilized’ contemporary western world. The growth of power regulation led to two victorious citizens’ revolutions in 1917, which, however, as a result of the mechanism of a civil loop, only accelerated the political enslavement of the Russian society. The apparatus of the Bolshevik Party transformed into a triple class of rulers-owners-priests.

The starting point in the conceptualization of real socialism is a dynamic model of power (Nowak 1991) allowing for an interpretation of as various phenomena from the history of the Soviet Union as: the revolution in Kronstadt and peasant revolts (a counterpart of citizens’ revolutions which close the civil loop), the collectivization of farming and the creation of the Gulag archipelago (the phase of enslavement), party purges (a counterpart of the self-enslavement of the authorities), and periodic civil protests: revolts of Gulag prisoners at the beginning of the 1950s, worker strikes in Kryvyi Rih and Novocherkassk in 1963, the national awakening in the Baltic countries at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, and the social activism in the period of Gorbachev’s perestroika.

The creation of a theory which encompasses, primarily, the dynamics of real socialism allowed Nowak to predict, as early as 1980, the fall of real socialism which subsequently lost civil revolutions (Nowak 1980a, 1982a, and the 1987 extended version; see also: Brzechczyn 2010a). Let us add that the fall was a huge surprise for Western sovietologists, as evidenced by the surge of discussions at the beginning of the 1990s in sovietologist journals, in which various authors wondered why western sovietologists had not been able to

predict the fall of real socialism (see e.gr: Burawoy 1992, Connor 1991, Cox 1994, Hollander 1992, Lieven 1994, Strayer 1998).

Summary

The adaptive interpretation of historical materialism developed in the Poznań School of Methodology fits well in the widely understood Marxist revisionism in Poland. Both idealizational methodology and categorial ontology can be seen as basic components leading to revisionist interpretation of historical materialism and dialectics. However, the adaptive interpretation of Marxism did not go beyond the political boundary acceptable to Communist Party. In the first half of the 1970s the creation of the adaptive interpretation of historical materialism proved that Marxism could be developed in an original way and with the use of a modern logical apparatus. The social sciences based on Marxism from the backward East could catch up with the more advanced science in the West. These were the main ideological functions of Marxism developed by Poznań milieu (Nowak 1985 [2011], pp. 590-591). In the second half of the 1970s the generalization of historical materialism leading to the creation of socio-political and socio-cognitive momentums as autonomous spheres of social life could be used in an unacceptable political critique of real socialism. Because authors from the Poznań milieu tended to use very sophisticated hermetical terminology and logical apparatus, they could still pretend that they fulfill ideological functions and be officially published in Poland.

However, the creation of non-Marxian historical materialism definitely went very far beyond the borders set by Party authorities. Namely, in the light of this theory, class divisions in real socialism reached their apogee because one ruling class accumulates the means of coercion, means of production and mass media. An empirical counterpart of this class of triple lords was a party apparatus which rules over the rest of society. This kind of a critique of social reality was unacceptable to Party authorities so books and papers on that theory could only be published only in the underground (On Nowak's involvement in Solidarność movement, see: Brzechczyn 2012). Leszek Nowak, the author of this theory, was imprisoned during the martial law (1981-1982) and dismissed from the university (1984-1989).

The original conceptualization of political power influenced the reception of this theory in official and oppositional circles in Poland as well as in the Western countries (other factors are analysed in Brzechczyn 2008). Namely, in non-Marxian historical materialism the state with its administrative apparatus is seen not only as a committee which manages the interests of bourgeoisie, as posited in Marxism, or a 'night guard' as described in liberalism, or an institution which levels out income inequalities, as is assumed in the social democratic doctrine of a welfare state, or a guardian and warrantor of moral order, as is postulated in the Catholic social science. Political power is considered to be a social form which has its own interests and which generates specific social inequalities. The interpretation of the state accepted in this theory revises the basic ideological intuitions (Marxist, liberal, social-democratic, and conservative) of various theories of state power and is, probably, the most important obstacle on the road to a wider popularization of that approach. It is so because the spread of a social theory is not only contingent upon a correct conceptualization of the social world but also on forming an alliance with the social movements, which creates the need for a certain way of interpreting social life. In 1981-89 the Solidarność movement—with its publications, especially the peripheral ones – was such a social vehicle which made it possible for that theory to become more known.

After 1989, in the era of the intellectual dominance of neoliberalism and of postmodern distrust of meta-narration, the demand for a radical social theory created analytically has significantly decreased, at least in Poland. The crisis of global capitalism in 2008 admittedly created demand in analyses written from the radical class point of view but that demand was satisfied by papers representing the view of orthodox Marxism. They were mostly foreign texts, translated into Polish, and not Polish conceptualizations. Although non-Marxian historical materialism contains interpretations of 2,500 years of the history of societies belonging to the European developmental line, the theory is still less known in the Polish humanities and social science than it deserves to be.

translated by Agnieszka Wróblewicz

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ABSTRACT

FROM INTERPRETATION TO REFUTATION OF MARXISM. ON LESZEK NOWAK'S NON-MARXIAN HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The aim of this article is to outline the theory of a historical process developed within the framework of the Poznań School of Methodology, mainly by Leszek Nowak and a team of his co-workers. In the first part of the paper, the meta-philosophical and meta-theoretical assumptions of Poznań school are reconstructed and juxtaposed with the relevant assumptions of Western analytical Marxism. In the central part of the paper, the main ideas of adaptive reconstruction of historical materialism and non-Marxian historical materialism are presented. In its final part, some problems of reception of Leszek Nowak's theory of historical process in Polish People's Republic and the Third Republic are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Adaptive interpretation of historical materialism, analytical Marxism, idealizational theory of science, Leszek Nowak, non-Marxian historical materialism, real socialism, communism.

OD INTERPRETOWANIA DO ODRZUCENIA MARKSIZMU. LESZKA NOWAKA NIE-MARKSOWSKI MATERIALIZM HISTORYCZNY

Celem artykułu jest interpretacja teorii procesu historycznego rozwijanej w poznańskiej szkole metodologicznej przez Leszka Nowaka i zespół jego współpracowników. W pierwszej części artykułu przedstawiana metafizyczna i metateoretyczna założenia poznańskiej szkoły metodologicznej, które zestawiane są z założeniami zachodniego marksizmu analitycznego. W drugiej, zasadniczej części artykułu przedstawione są główne idee adaptacyjnej interpretacji materializmu historycznego i nie-Marksowskiego materializmu historycznego, zaś w trzeciej - problemy recepcji teorii procesu historycznego rozwijanej przez Leszka Nowaka w PRL i III RP.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Adaptacyjna interpretacja materializmu historycznego, idealizacyjna teoria nauki, Leszek Nowak, marksizm analityczny, nie-Marksowski materializm historyczny, realny socjalizm, komunizm.

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*From Interpretation to Refutation of Marxism.
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