Author(s): Laine-Frigren, Tuomas

Title: Marxist Influences in Psychology

Year: 2020

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

Marxist Influences in Psychology

Tuomas Laine-Frigren

Summary

Marxist ideas influenced and inspired psychological thinking and practice in the 20th century in a range of ways. In different parts of the world, unique versions of Marxist psychology emerged as answers to questions and problems raised by specific historical contexts. As shown in recent scholarly interventions in Lev Vygotsky studies, the Soviet psychologist's work was deeply embedded in the sociopolitical, cultural, and ideological context of early Soviet Russia. In countries such as Brazil and Italy, Marxism had a more indirect influence as an emancipatory discourse. In the wider framework of Latin American liberatory ideas and struggles, the educational philosopher Paulo Freire and psychologists Ignacio Martín-Baró and Maritza Montero wanted to increase the autonomy of those in poverty with their radical ideas and practices. In Italy, mental health reformers Franco Basaglia and Franca Ongaro Basaglia wanted to end the social alienation of psychiatric patients by allying with contemporary Italian Marxists and other social movements to change the institutions from within. In the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, psychology and Marxism had a complex relationship. Marxist psychology could be used rhetorically to make psychology somehow safe for socialism, but there were also psychologists who were truly inspired by Marx and used his work to further their wider social and educational agendas. These cases all highlight the importance of the interplay between local, regional, and global aspects in the history of Marxist psychology. Taken together, they show how Marxism has been a discourse utilized for various social, cultural, and scientific ends within psychology. Rather than existing in a purely political form, Marxist ideology and thinking has often manifested in the field as (re)interpretations, travelling ideas, and conceptual hybrids. The history of Marxist psychology can be regarded as a continuous effort to reinterpret and reprocess Marx's ideas about the human condition. The history of Marxism and psychology also reveals an inner contradiction between control and emancipation, between the ideological aim of molding "collective men" and encouraging individual autonomy.

Introduction

"To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself." (Marx, 1844)

In 1845 Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) published his study on the Manchester industrial underclass, depicting life there as determined by poverty, illness, and mental despair. Engels was hardly a psychologist, but he was psychologically sensitive enough that his sociography belongs to the canon of community-oriented research dealing with the impact of poverty and destitution on peoples' physical and mental health (Engels, 2015/1845). Many pamphlets and inquiries into the conditions of the proletariat were published in the 1830s and 1840s, but Engels' book was distinguished by its scope and ambition: it was a wide-ranging analysis of the social consequences of capitalist industrialization and urbanization for the working class as a whole (Hobsbawm, 2011, pp. 89–100). Some ninety years later, in 1933, researchers from the Austrian Research Unit for Economic Psychology published the now classic *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community,* a study of the living conditions, social life, and psychological wellbeing of the unemployed men in Marienthal, Austria. Inspired by Austromarxist ideas, the researchers used an impressive variety of methods and data— including statistics, institutional records, family diaries, and interviews—to show that long-term unemployment not only caused economic turmoil but also emotional problems, apathy, and social disintegration (Porter & Ross, 2003, pp. 598–599; Sulek, 2007; Hodgetts & Griffin, 2015, p. 149).

As critically argued by Darrin Hodgetts and Christine Griffin, mainstream academic psychology has failed to adequeatly recognize this stream of historical thought (Hodgetts & Griffin, 2015). It tends to avoid (self-)critical debates concerning social class and psychological knowledge-production. This lack is all the more regrettable when considering the global discontent with concentration of wealth, social, and health inequalities, and the much discussed cultural and logical connections between neoliberalism, or "neuroliberalism," and the behavioral science industry (Pickren, 2018; Whitehead et al., 2017; Marmot, 2015; Parker, 2009, p. 77).

This article examines how Marxist ideas have influenced or inspired psychological thinking and practice in the 20th century. It has three main sections. Section 1 covers recent scholarly interventions in Lev Vygotsky studies by paying particular attention to how his work was embedded in the sociopolitical, cultural, and ideological context of early Soviet Russia.

Section 2 presents examples of Marxism's more indirect influence as an emancipatory discourse. In Brazil, the educational philosopher and activist Paulo Freire (1921–1977) aimed at raising the consciousness and increasing the autonomy of peasants and workers who were living in miserable conditions. Freire's work was linked to the wider experience of liberation social psychology, a movement inspired by Marxist ideas but essentially rooted in Latin American liberation theology, making it an enlightening example of how globally circulating ideas have been indigenized to serve local needs (see Pickren & Rutherford, 2010, p. xxii). In Italy, the radical mental health reformer Franco Basaglia (1924–1980), together with his wife Franca Ongaro (1928–2015), wanted to end the social alienation of psychiatric patients by allying with contemporary Italian Marxists and other social movements to change the institutions from within. Section 3 takes an empirical look at post-World War II Hungary as an example of the conditions of psychology in a Communist country. The case of Hungary suggests that Marxist psychology could be used rhetorically to make psychology somehow safe for socialism, but there were also psychologists who were truly inspired by Marx and used his work to further their wider social and educational agendas. The Hungarian case highlights the need to further study the interplay between local, regional, and global aspects in the history of Marxist psychology.

Marxism is approached in this article as a discourse, or an intellectual resource, utilized by more or less known Marxist or radical academics and professionals to various ends. The focus is on (re)interpretations, travelling ideas, and conceptual hybrids rather than on assessing the Marxist "purity" of a past idea, institution, or thinker. Importantly, there are not one but several Marxist psychologies, each of which was elaborated as an answer to unique questions and problems raised by particular historical contexts. For this reason, the article, rather than providing a comprehensive overview of historical developments, refers to a set of interesting cases from different parts of the globe to show that variety.

This decision also means that many significant themes and actors are left out of the article's scope. For example, the Europan experience of so-called critical psychology (see Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009) is not addressed, nor is the role of psychological concepts in radical politics (e.g., Frosh, 2018). Furthermore, the multifaceted history of the relations between the ideas of Freud and Marx[1], along with the influential Freudo-Marxism (with its libertarian and humanist variants), is only briefly touched upon in reference to the concept of alienation in the work of Erich Fromm (1900–1980). Finally, the empirical focus on Hungary means that several potentially interesting ideas and practices in other Communist countries do not receive the attention they deserve (Marks, 2015; Antic, 2019).

Two general theses are proposed as starting points for further research. Firstly, the history of Marxist psychology can be regarded as a continuous effort to reinterpret and reprocess Marx's ideas about the human condition. Secondly, the history of Marxism and psychology reveals an inner contradiction between control and emancipation, between the ideological aim of molding "collective men," on the one hand, and encouraging individual autonomy, on the other. As the case of Communist Hungary suggests, this paradox should be integrated into the general narratives of Marxist psychology

Historical materialism and the human condition

Some key elements of Marxist thinking may have had a bearing on psychological theory and practice. Firstly, the basic tenet of historical materialism argues that human life and self-understanding "in large measure" have been determined by the way societies organize and produce the means of their existence (see Mather, 2003). Secondly, there is the idea that human beings are "social animals," who by their practical joint activity create the conditions of their existence in a relationship with nature, and in the process, also change themselves. As socially organized labour provides the basic context for the way people think and act, this also means that consciousness can be understood as emerging from social interaction— as dialectical and developing (Hobsbawm, 2011, 130; Roche 2018). Thirdly, the concepts of alienation and commodification were used by Marx to describe how the proletariat has been forced to hand over the fruits of their labor to those who control the means of production. From this follows the critique of a socioeconomic system which sees the worker mainly as a resource. Fourthly, there is a strong belief in rationality and truth against all kinds of superstition and 'false consciousness' that characterizes the thinking of Marx and Engels, from which follows a fundamentally critical approach to (capitalist) society, but also the belief that human beings can become aware of their shackles, change the conditions of their existence and pursue happiness (Hobsbawm, 2011, pp.14–20).

After the publication of the *Economical and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1932), the problem of (failed) human potentiality became the centre of attention, especially in the humanist readings of Marx. The notion of "species-being" has a special relevance here. It refers to a peculiarly human condition, to ingrained biological and psychological needs we must fulfill in order to survive, including the fundamental need for creativity, sociality, and free activity. Tragically, however, the capitalist order of things alienates the "species from man"; as formulated by Marx himself, it makes "his life activity, his *essential being*, a mere means to

his *existence*" (Marx 1844/1932). Hence, the vision of a communist society included the idea of the transformation of labor into a non-alienated mode of self-activity, which would give individuals the possibility for fulfilling their true needs as a species-being (Pekkola 2010, p. 211). These ideas were particularly crucial to Erich Fromm, a psychoanalytically oriented Marxist, who in many of his works explicated how modern capitalist society cause psychological disturbances, anxiety, disorientation, insecurity and feelings of loneliness (see Fromm, 1962/1955). Characteristically for the wider Freudo-Marxist movement, Fromm wanted to uncover various forms of control, but he also aimed at finding ways to regain human agency to go beyond the state of alienation. The task of psychology was to remove the "illusions" and serve as a liberating power towards individual and social change (Pekkola, 2010, pp. 60–69, 96–100).

Since 2000 a number of studies have begun to reasses the relationship between psychology and Marxism (Mather, 2003; Parker, 2009; Hayes, 2015; Pávon-Cuellar 2017; Elhammoumi, 2017). In *Vygotsky and Marx* (Ratner & Silva, 2017), the authors openly engage with the intellectual project of constructing a Marxist psychology, defining it as a "discipline based upon Marx's social philosophy and politics." In line with revisionist Vygotsky studies (Yasnitsky, 2018; Yasnitsky & Van der Veer, 2016; Calvo Tuleski, 2015), they also criticize the "sanitized" mainstream interpretations of Vygotsky for their tendency to obscure the dialectical materialist roots and ideological dimensions in his work, thus making it lose much of its historical and conceptual originality. Vygotsky's Marxism can be assessed in a variety of ways, but Ratner and Silva propose a "strong view," arguing that Vygotsky used the main features of Marxism to explore and create a distinctively psychological sphere of reality, one that did not reduce it to economics and politics (Ratner & Silva, 2017, p. 2).

Mohammed Elhammoumi has pointed out that a "wealth of insights" can be found from the canon of Marxist psychology, from Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), Georges Politzer (1903–1942), and Henri Wallon (1879–1962) to Klaus Holzkamp (1927–1995) and Lucien Sève (1926–), but he also claims that their work is "largely ignored" by contemporary academic psychologists (Elhammoumi, 2012). Julien Roche paints a similarly pessimistic picture when he sees that even in major social psychology textbooks references to concepts like "capitalism" or "inequality" are very marginal (Roche, 2018). Yet it is important to realize that Marxists, too, have been suspicious of psychological disciplines as overly focused on the "self-contained" individual. This was a characteristic feature in the high-flown ideological debates in the so-called Eastern bloc during the Cold War, when psychology was denounced as "bourgeois pseudo-science." During the last decade, however, the historical research has

shown the growing prominence of psychological concepts and experts—a process described as "psychologization" in the anglophone West—in the countries beyond the Iron Curtain as well (Eghigian, 2007; Savelli, 2019; Laine-Frigren, 2019).

One of the reasons why Marxist thinkers have traditionally been critical towards all kinds of "psychologizing" likely stems from the conviction that there is a clear causal link between socioeconomic misery and mental problems. It has not been in their interests to focus on the individual psyche, because the individual is not to blame (e.g., Engels, 2015/1845). As Politzer famously declared: "psychology by no means holds the 'secret' of human affairs, simply because this 'secret' is not of a psychological order" (quoted in Sève, 1974). It is true that Karl Marx (1818–1883) never really thematized the "psychological man" or wrote a treatise on psychology. Marx was interested in the individual mainly as an ensemble of social relations (Silvonen, 2010), or as a personification of economic forces, but he did not really theorize the actual mechanisms mediating between society and the psychological subject. Furthermore, Marx was sometimes self-contradictory and unclear (Hobsbawm, 2011; Moisio, 2011, pp. 12–13). For example, he often described the historical process in deterministic ways, thus disregarding the questions of agency and consciousness. In other contexts, his take on the revolutionary process was more inclined towards stressing political contingency and action. In short, his emancipatory vision was ambiguous.

However, as the late Finnish social psychologist Antti Eskola (1934–2018) observed, nobody asks, "What does Mead say of the self and is it true?" A better question, he suggests, is the following: "What kind of reading of Mead can help us to understand what is happening to the self today?" (Eskola, 1992, p. 102). This open-minded sensibility should be applied to Marx as well, because he elaborated a number of psychological themes. The whole starting point of Marx's program of historical materialism was to see human beings as *active* narrators of their own stories. As Terry Eagleton has pointed out, Marx's brand of materialism also ran counter to the 18th-century materialist associationist psychology, which tended to conceptualize the individual in very passive terms (Eagleton, 2011). According to Marx, humans are primarily physical, bodily creatures, meaning we have to eat before we can think. Yet we stand out from other animals by our object-oriented, tool-mediated activity, a quality which was crystallized in the term 'human industry': in the process of producing the means and conditions of our lives, we also change ourselves (Marx, 1857–1861). Marx notes, however, that history shows how the true potential of versatile and creative human beings has always been compromised by the existing political and economic regime. As formulated theoretically by Ronald Mather, Marxist psychologists have thus been attempting to

conceptualize a site where human agency and socioeconomic constraint encounter each other and "collide" (Mather, 2003, pp. 470–472). This starting point of historical materialism should be interesting for students of the human mind because it pays serious attention to goal-oriented human activity and self-understanding in concrete material conditions of life.

Lev Vygotsky and the child of tomorrow

> In the new society, our science will be in the center of life. "The leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom" will inevitably give rise to the question of the mastering our being, of subordinating it to ourselves […] The new society will create a new man […] in the future society psychology will indeed be a science about superman […] (quoted in Zavershneva, 2016, 133)

These lines, written by Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), the famous Russian developmental psychologist and the originator of the cultural historical school, show how deeply he was embedded in the early Soviet futuristic projects. The widely shared belief about the "new man" was not only Marxist, however; it also represented the general Nietzschean sensibilities of the early 20th century (Etkind, 1997). For Vygotsky, the child of tomorrow was a mature human being who speaks and thinks, and reforms nature, including his own; a poet who "gives names to things," and is truly free (Zavershneva, 2016).

The utopian plans of the Bolsheviks were encouraged by the practical needs of a society recovering from a destructive civil war. Industry and agriculture needed to be modernized. Schools and other educational institutions had to be rebuilt. Illiteracy and child homelessness had to be overcome, and the state of public health and hygiene was menacing (Yasnitsky, 2016, pp. 5–6). In the background, Daniel Beer (2008) explains, was a generation of medical experts from the Tsarist era stressing the distinctively Russian manifestations of "degeneration." This emphasis was similar to that of their Western counterparts, but with the intention of showing that Russians were simply incapable of rational self-control, and thus in need of education and "renovation." As Beer suggests, these considerations were not so far from the values and goals of the Bolsheviks. They provided, in fact, part of the rationale for their illiberal policies.

In line with Marx's ideas about the role of philosophy, Bolsheviks expected science to be practical, to work towards the transformation of the world. Because of urgent challenges of

social practice and ideological blueprints for overcoming them, psychoneurological sciences were given the task of remolding the redundant "old man" (Yasnitsky, 2016, p. 5). As noted by Anne Edwards, this was the cultural-ideological context which also influenced Vygotsky and his close colleagues, notably Alexander Luria, by providing them a particular kind of metatask: to create conceptual tools for a new "transformational psychology" (Edwards, 2007, p. 98).

Vygotsky was a widely learned scholar who was well versed in both Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud.[2] In fact, his work relied so heavily on the work of Western psychologists, such as Alfred Adler, William James, Jean Piaget, and William Stern, that he was at times accused of "bourgeois" tendencies (Hyman, 2012). However, as Ludmila Hyman has pointed out, borrowing ideas from Western sources and recontextualising them to meet the unique local demands was one of the characteristic aspects of the early Soviet regime. In his major book, *The Historical Meaning of the Psychological Crisis* (1927), Vygotsky aimed at providing the building blocks for a unified science of general (social) psychology, which would bridge the gap between introspective psychology and behaviorism, between understanding and explanation (Joravsky, 1989, pp. 262–264). According to Vygotsky, the main psychological schools of thought started from different primary concepts ("mind," "the unconscious," "behavior"), which led to very different generalisations and finally to parallel worlds (Vygotsky, 1927). As pointed out by Yrjö Engeström, Vygotsky's move was "revolutionary," because the basic unit of analysis now "overcame the split between the Cartesian individual and the untouchable societal structure" (Engeström, 2001, p. 34). Indeed, Vygotsky criticized both the mechanical behaviorism of his Soviet contemporaries ("reflexology") and the subjectivist currents in European psychology.

He blamed the behaviorists (at home and abroad) in particular for their failure to distinguish between human beings and "lower species" (a central distinction for a Marxist). According to Vygotsky, they justified their science by following the model of "zoopsychology": "Whereas previously traditional psychology has considered the animal as a more or less remote ancestor of man, reflexology is now inclined to consider man, with Plato, as a 'featherless biped'." Instead, Vygotsky recommended a reverse approach. Following Marx, he used an analogy of "higher and lower economic forms" to justify his cultural-historical and evolutionary approach. "Higher psychological functions" should be used as a starting point, because having arrived at the end path, "we can more easily understand the whole path" (Vygotsky, 1927).

Vygotsky and Marx: reassessing the hero cult

Many scholars have stressed Vygotsky's debt to Marx. It has been argued, for example, that Vygotsky reformulated, on a psychological plane, Marx's thesis that the human being is an "ensemble of social relations" (Silvonen, 2010, 50; Elhammoumi, 2017, pp. 31–32). According to Vygotsky, the higher mental functions are first interpersonal and then transformed to be internal: they are appropriated and internalized social relations. Vygotsky also further developed Marx's notion about the invention of tools as a revolutionary change in the history of humankind. For Vygotsky, *language* was the crucial tool: its signs and symbols were instrumental in cognitive development. The social environment, in turn, is pictured as a kind of storage from which the developing individual appropriates "tools" in active collaboration with the others. Yrjö Engeström's activity-theoretical perspective is useful here: the socially embedded individual cannot be understood "without the cultural means or artifacts s(he) is using. And the society cannot be conceptualised at all without the agency of the tool-using individual" (Engeström, 2001, p. 34).

The new historical studies of Vygotsky have focused on two areas: finding unpublished manuscripts as well as other archival materials, and examining Vygotsky's work in the political and cultural context of his time. The significant role of his colleagues, particularly Luria, and his immediate community has also been brought up in order to reassess the hero cult that grew up around him (Yasnitsky, 2018; Yasnitsky & Van der Veer, 2016). To take an archival example, Ekaterina Zavershneva found one of the earliest elaborations of the cultural-historical theory and the problem of consciousness as an internalized system of social relationships, with frequent quotations of Marx. Zavershneva also briefly refers to diary entries written during Vygotsky's trip to London (his only trip abroad), which seem to show that the revolutionary events in his own country made a great impression on him, thus supporting the argument that his endorsement of Marxism was genuinely part of his personal conviction (Zavershneva, 2016). It should be noted, however, that Vygotsky advised his readers to *avoid* speaking categorically about "Marxist psychology," because it only existed as a distant goal: "[…] in the contemporary state of affairs it is difficult to get rid of the impression that this name is used in an unserious and irresponsible manner" (Vygotsky, 1926).

Vygotsky's central conclusions were based on observation of children. He saw children as the key to understanding the determinative role of social structures in the way human beings learned to use abstract terms, act intentionally, and solve problems. In short, he was interested in how they stopped being "slaves to the environment" and became the "masters of their own

behavior" (Bodrova & Leong, 2015, p. 374). Studying children also provided the answer to the perceived crisis in psychology resulting from the insurmountable gap between those who focused exclusively on humans' higher mental functions (accessible only through introspection), and the behaviorists, who favored what they viewed as objective methods and applied them equally to humans and animals. In fact, wide-ranging interest in children was characteristic of Russian culture in the 1920s. It manifested itself in art and literature as well as in Soviet science policy. In so-called *pedology*, the psychological study of the child, early 20th century transnational psychological trends intertwined with the peculiarly Soviet educational utopias (Etkind, 1997).

Vygotsky's theory of *play* finely illustrates the role of child studies for his work. Where contemporary cognitive stage theories (e.g., Piaget) assumed that imagination and certain sufficient intellectual abilities *preceded* play, Vygotsky saw play not only as a predominant form of activity but also as the most important *source* of development for small children. In his view, human beings satisfied certain needs and "incentives" in play, with every advance from one stage of development to another "connected with an abrupt change in motives and incentives to act" (Vygotsky, 1933). Yet children were also kinds of apprentices, who use the tools offered by the culture to transform their cognitive processes, such as perception, attention, memory, and thinking. Creating imaginary situations, they learn to govern their own behavior by internalizing meanings and rules from the social environment (Bodrova & Leong, 2015). Therefore, play is anything but free; it is actually full of rules. The role of play as a source of psychological development can be concretized by the example of the horse and a stick:

> Thought is separated from objects because a piece of wood begins to be a doll and a stick becomes a horse. Action according to rules begins to be determined by ideas, not by objects […] At that critical moment when a stick […] becomes a pivot for severing the meaning of horse from a real horse, one of the basic psychological structures determining the child's relationship to reality is radically altered. (Vygotsky, 1933)

For Vygotsky, play was instrumental in furthering symbolic activity, a transitional stage in the development of imagination. Some other projects and theoretical arguments of the cultural-historical school have been more explicitly intertwined with political and ideological interests. The famous controversy between neuropsychologist Alexander Luria and German-American gestaltist Kurt Koffka provides an interesting case in point (Lamdan & Yasnitsky, 2016). In the summer of 1932, the two famous neuropsychologists travelled to remote areas of

eastern Uzbekistan, first to what were considered relatively civilized and mostly collectivized parts of Fergana Valley, and then to Shakhimardan, a mountainous region populated by people seen as somehow more primitive and who actively resisted the collectivization drive. As Luria wrote in *Sovietskaia Psikhonevrologia*, socialist reconstruction "provided exceptional opportunities for psychological research" among these peoples, who had preserved the "long ago surpassed socioeconomic types." During the trip, Luria and Koffka tested how susceptible different social groups were to classic optical illusions. Luria argued that the results proved complex psychological functions were, indeed, determined by social and cultural development. For Luria, it was also a shock to realize that real *changes* in these psychological functions were now taking place under the influence of large-scale Bolshevik social engineering. However, Koffka was not convinced. He had observed that the experiments among the natives showed basically the same results as previous experiments in Europe had.

According to Koffka, the differences were due to the relationship between the experimenter and his subject: the kolkhoz members and emancipated Uzbek women ("open-minded and socially naïve" people) succumbed to optical illusions without exception because they perceived their experimenter as an equal and did not consider him to be testing their abilities. Distrustful subjects, however, studied the images repeatedly before they answered and seemed to be less susceptible to illusions. As noted by Lamdan and Yasnitsky, it seems that by interpreting the results in the way they did, Vygotsky and Luria actually disregarded the social components of psychological research. Perhaps due to ideological reasons, they did not seem aware of the possibility that the local population, which they viewed as "primitive," could be suspicious of the study. Indeed, the researchers were accompanied by a large convoy of state officials, including the secret police.

Vygotsky goes global

The spread of Vygotskian psychology to the West during the 1960s is well known, particularly the enthusiastic response it received among the American researchers of educational psychology, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, and neuropsychology. In comparison, we do not know as much about different national readaptations of Soviet-Marxist psychology in Europe (not to mention other parts of the globe) during the post-World War II era. In the transfer and diffusion of Vygotsky's ideas in Cold War Europe, the role of go-betweens, editors, and translators like Luciano Mecacci in Italy and Alexandre Métraux in continental Western Europe seemed to have been crucial (Mecacci, 2015; Métraux, 2015; see also

Woodward, 2013). The political conditions have influenced the field of psychology in various ways. To take an example from northern Europe, Soviet-Marxist psychological discourse was central for a large number of Finnish psychologists during the 1970s (Eskola 1992). It provided a tool for the younger generation of educational psychologists with socialist leanings, some of them ideological hardliners, to criticize the sterile mainstream psychology of the postwar era. Yet it was not Vygotsky but rather Leontjev, Galperin, and Elkonin that were the main influences. Finnish psychologists mostly became familiar with Vygotsky through American scholarly exchange programs. In Finland, one of the lasting legacies of the Vygotskian cultural-historical school is the activity-theoretical approach to expansive learning and collective intelligence created by Yrjö Engeström. On the other side of the globe, in Brazil, Vygotsky's ideas merged with the indigenous tradition of critical pedagogy, in the experience of alternative schooling and its drive towards liberating people to increase their possibilities to participate in the democratic process (Lima, 1995).

Psychology and emancipation

Marxism has provided theoretical tools and inspiration for many kinds of emancipatory psychological projects around the globe. One towering example of fusing different ideas with emancipatory Marxism is the activism of the Brazilian educational philosopher Paulo Freire (1921–1977). Freire adopted his ideas from many sources, including Hegel, existentialism, and Christianity, to inspire his "liberating praxis" (Mayo, 2004; Suoranta, 2005; Kirkendall, 2004). Particularly, his early writings were inspired by the humanist materialism of the young Marx. Later on, he adopted a more Gramscian approach to social empowerment of the people through the concept of *concientización*: the raising of awareness by liberatory pedagogical praxis, that is, encouraging people to reflect upon their socioeconomic and political position in order to transform it (Suoranta, 2002, p. 38). But first they had to know how to read and write: this was the basic starting point of the innovative literacy programs he first put into practice in 1962.

The environment of Freire's activism was northeastern Brazil (Pernambuco), a territory struck by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and lack of political integration. In the wake of the Cuban revolution in the 1950s, the region experienced the rise of the left and the first efforts to organize the rural workers by the Communists and the Catholic Church. Freire's literacy techniques developed out of local and regional impulses and encounters, but moved beyond educational programs (offered by the state) towards transforming peasant mentalities (Kirkendall, 2004).

Freire clearly believed in critical human agency, but as a political Marxist (realist), he acknowledged that some groups in society certainly had more power than the majority of the others (Roberts, 2017). Only the oppressed themselves, however, could change the existing political conditions, hence the significance of *concientización* to influence the prevailing situation where the oppressors approached the oppressed only in order to preserve the status quo by using powerful myths, such as the idea that they could freely choose their own work. Freire's liberatory pedagogy was crucially based on dialogue and joint interaction. As shown by Peter Roberts, the connection to the Marxist critique of Hegel's dialectics is clear: the way people think, feel, and desire things is the result of the dialectical relationship with material reality (Roberts, 2017; Au, 2005).

The concept of *concientización* links Freire to wider Latin American experience of liberation social psychology (LSP, *la psicologia social de la liberación*), in which psychology was seen as a positive force for the people to realize their active and fully human potential. As Wade Pickren and Alexandra Rutherford note, the roots of liberation psychology are in the agency of Catholic priests and their theology-based calls for social justice. Indeed, it was the University of Chicago–trained Jesuit priest and social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942–1989) who, before his assassination in 1989 during the Salvadoran civil war, advocated a psychology based on peoples' everyday lives, rather than one that is a "laboratory science" that just reproduces middle-class sensibilities (Pickren & Rutherford, 2011, p. 255).

According to Martín-Baró, the task of critical social psychology was to uncover the alienation in peoples' everyday lives. He wanted to demonstrate how the elites were reproducing the oppressive system through disseminating the belief that people were passive and submissive, and thus unable to change their world into a better place. As a social psychologist, he developed the critical use of neopositivist methods to show, for example, how the results of the opinion polls actually mediated the voice of those in power. However, public opinion polls could also be utilized in generating a new sense of collective identity—if only they were used in a "constructive dialogue" with social organizations on the grassroots level. In line with *concientización*, Martín-Baró's "de-ideologization" was based on a dialectical relationship between everyday and academic knowledge so that the people might be able to revive the cooperative practices and thus transform the oppressive conditions (Jiménez-Domínguez, 2009).

The ethical and theological dimensions of Latin American critical psychology are clearly reflected in the idea that psychologists should develop and nurture the virtues of the people and contribute to recovering human solidarity (purportedly lost in the midst of daily toil). The

ethical component has also been stressed by the Venezuelan social psychologist Maritza Montero—a leading theorist in contemporary LSP and critical community psychology. As Montero opoints out, LSP incorporated theoretical imports from continental Europe, such as Marxism, psychoanalysis, social constructionism, and Vygotskyan theory. Indeed, the impact of Marx and Engels's works (e.g., *Economical and Philosophic Manuscripts*) was considerable. Significantly, however, community psychologists have also drawn from the indigineous historical experience and homegrown advances of liberatory theory and practice (Montero & Varas Díaz, 2007, pp. 67–68). According to Montero, LSP is a moral project, which raises its social orientation beyond the theoretical level (Burton & Kagan, 2005). Her take on overcoming dependency (at both the individual and community level) also pays attention to the importance of able leaders (Montero, 2004). Besides being energetic, they should respect the people and be able to express fraternity with them in a religious and emotional sense as well.

In the Latin American context, Marxism and theology have both been reinterpreted to promote better conditions for peasant workers. Importantly, the notion of social contradiction and conflict has not been reduced to a class struggle in a classic Marxist sense, because there are great tensions in the region also among natives and non-natives (*ladinos*), for example, which makes the processes of exploitation more complex (Montero & Sonn, 2009, p. 12).

Radical mental health reformers

In the 20th century in Latin America and elsewhere, many influential psychologist-emancipators also entered into a critical dialogue with Marx, not necessarily adopting his theses directly (or accepting them as truths), but rather using them as an intellectual resource for working on their agendas and elaborating further "what is happening to the self today" (Eskola, 1992, p. 102). Algerian psychiatrist Franz Fanon (1925–1961) famously criticized colonial ethnopsychiatry for using imported biological categories to harness the "maladjusted" behavior of the natives, who were considered impulsive, child-like, non-rational beings incapable of logical reasoning (Keller 2008, p. 171). Importantly, he also criticized his contemporary Marxists for forgetting racial oppression (Vèrges, 1996), and thus showed how hegemonic European Marxism did not correspond to their cultural reality:

It is neither the act of owning factories, nor estates, nor a bank balance which distinguishes the governing classes. The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, "the others." (Fanon 1963, 39)

Whereas, in Algeria, Fanon saw colonial psychiatrists and therapists "patrolling the boundaries between reason and unreason," in Italy the radical mental health reformer Franco Basaglia (1924–1980) saw hegemonic psychiatry guarding the premises of the asylum and deciding who belonged and who did not (Foot, 2014; Menozzi, 2015; Lowell & Scheper-Hughes, 1987). Basaglia's phenomenological starting point was to shift the emphasis away from illness and rediscover the individual life stories lost behind objectifying and reifying psychiatric disease categories. Starting from his early efforts in a provincial asylum in Gorizia, Basaglia's anti-institutional crusade evolved into an influential social and political movement in Trieste, culminating in 1978 in what is known as Law 180, Italy's radical de-institutionalization bill.

Inspired by Fanon, Erving Goffman, Michel Foucault, and the British pragmatic therapeutic communities, Basaglia's radical practice developed during his years as a director of the psychiatric hospital in Gorizia (1961–1969), near the border with Yugoslavia (today Slovenia). In close collaboration with his wife, co-writer and political ally Franca Ongaro Basaglia (1928–2015), they gradually transformed the inner life of the conservative hospital, opening wards, dismantling the rigid spatial gender divisions, and introducing the famous democratic ward meetings, the *assemblea.* The collective practice was meant to allow the patients to speak out without being afraid that their emotional outbursts would be labelled as symptoms of psychiatric disease. There was also a critical element involved: Basaglia applied negative dialectics and even consciously encouraged conflicts in order to reveal the contradictions of the institution for the patients (Scheper-Hughes & Lowell, 1987, p. 17). Later, these meetings would form an influential model for the forms of organisation that dominated radical Italian grassroots politics in 1968–1969, from the universities to factories, local housing estates, and schools.

The practice of the *assemblea* was motivated by two kinds of observations. First, in line with Goffman's social psychological findings, the patients were seen to have become passive and submissive, the power relations within the asylum having "dehumanized" them and creating an illness "specific to itself." Second, most of the patients seemed to represent the social underclass. In Basaglia's analysis, bourgeois Italy was organised along the division between "the haves and the have nots," and this led to dichotomies between the good and the

bad, the healthy and the sick: "the employer exploits the worker; asylums destroy mental patients" (Scheper-Hughes & Lowell, 1987, p. 61). The core of the question was power and institutionalized dominance: the hegemony of the ruling class was embodied and reproduced in the paternalism of the doctor–patient relationship. It was not enough that experts learned to see the individual behind the medical discourse. As the couple critically argued in one of their joint texts, this realization would only lead, at the most, to the creation of British-style therapeutic communities, leaving the socially determined medical structures intact (Basaglia, 1982, p. 119).

In Trieste (1971–1979), the anti-institutional project grew into a wide-ranging social movement, reaching out beyond the walls of the asylum deep into the surrounding society. Work cooperatives were set up to integrate the patients back into the community. In line with the "praxis of 1968," abandoned buildings were occupied and institutions replaced with alternative institutions. The crucial development was the transformation of the hospital grounds into an experimental space for artists, theater projects, concerts, conferences, and international meetings of psychologists, sociologists, and activists (Rotelli, 2015). As had already happened in Gorizia, the whole project was characterized by heated debates and crises, one of them caused by a former patient who, after his release, murdered his parents in 1972 (Foot, 2014).

Basaglia found political allies among Italian Marxists, feminists, and other anti-institutionalists. The strategy of the Italian Communist Party was to transform the institutions from *within* and to focus on groups and institutions that mediated between socioeconomic power structures and the individual. Indeed, as can be seen in the title of the famous photobook *Morire di Classe* ('To die because of your class'; 1969) the Basaglias edited, their crusade had a strong class aspect (Foot, 2015). However, simply labelling Franco Basaglia as a Marxist would be highly inaccurate. For example, he did not argue for any simple causal connection between socioeconomic background and mental illness, because the way human body and mind interacted with the surrounding environment was a much more complex issue. His struggle was explicitly anti-institutional. Unlike in Fanon's Algeria, the politically committed psychiatrist in Italy had no revolution to choose: the solution was the idea of *continuous negation,* "to reject the therapeutic act as a resolution of social conflicts" (Scheper-Hughes & Lowell, 1987, p. 70).

Basaglia's project had clear affinities with the Anglo-American antipsychiatry practiced by the likes of R.D. Laing and David Cooper. Yet under the wider umbrella of transnational antipsychiatry, Basaglia's praxis belonged to the more radical end of the spectrum in making clear conclusions about the whole system of mental health care under capitalist power structures. Antipsychiatry was not simply a claim about the social construction of mental

illness; it was also about exchanges of people and ideas, collective publications, and volunteers moving in from other countries. For example, Trieste attracted visitors and volunteers from the Socialist Patients Collective from Heidelberg after it had been closed by the authorities. As Ian Parker has noted, it was the drive beyound the psychiatric frame, in cooperation and solidarity with other groups (in northern Italy this meant the far left), that inspired radical psychologists in Britain as well. For instance, the influence of the Italian radicals was behind the British Magazine *Asylum*, established in 1980 by a group of sufferers and professionals, and they also provided a model for the later transnational Psychology Politics Resistance network, which explicitly aimed at building "disturbing" alliances between experts and service users (Parker, 2014).

Basaglia's project sheds light on the tense relationship between the *critical* and the *clinical*, between political voluntarism and the "resistance of the psyche" (Menozzi, 2015; see also Vèrges, 2006). First the clash of conflicting aims: why readjust people to a society which seems to produce the insanity in the first place? The second question goes straight to the heart of the Marxist ideology of liberation: if emancipatory Marxism is based on consciousness, reason, agency, and self-determination, do the so-called insane have any value other than their symbolic value as victims of capitalism? Basaglia answers that they certainly do.

Marxism and psychology in Communist Europe

Historians used to claim that psychological concepts and approaches from the Eastern Bloc were in a marginal position, or at least hopelessly flawed by Communist politics and Marxist–Leninist ideology. According to the authors of a pioneering publication on psychiatry in Communist Europe, the dominant tendency has been to see psychiatry as colonized by Soviet science policy and characterized by Pavlovized interpretations, the rejection of Freud and psychoanalysis, and the dominance of physiological as well as biological explanations (Savelli & Marks, 2015, pp. 1–2). The beginning of the Cold War, the Stalinist industrialization drive, the collectivization of agriculture, and the introduction of one-party dictatorship meant that the emancipatory hopes attached to the socialist project seemed to be in vain. In Hungary, the Communist takeover (1948) and the personality cult of Mátyás Rákosi (Apor, 2018) was demoralizing also for many psychologists who had been genuinely excited about the prospects that state-led social planning held for education and mental health in the years immediately

after World War II. In line with Soviet demands, psychology was now labelled, more or less throughout the bloc, as bourgeois pseudoscience (Laine-Frigren, 2016, pp. 50–55).

This Stalinist background has likely made it more common to highlight the power of dogmatic ideology to put psychology in shackles. Roger Smith, for example, has made a convincing argument about the inherent paradox of Marxist–Leninist science. The Soviet theory of the party-state, he suggests, was simultaneously a human science and a distinctive argument about how humankind is socially and historically constructed. It was an inherently scientific worldview, which claimed to be objective about the parameters of human action as well. In its crudest and most dogmatic form, Marxist–Leninist psychology argued that the human mind was determined by the position one occupies in the system of production (Smith, 1997, p. 783). It tended to provide readymade answers to questions on what emotionally affected (or ought to affect) people.

However, the power of ideology over social practice should not be overestimated (Yurchak, 2005). One-sided emphasis on a monolithic ideology tends to obscure the changes that were happening within the Communist project (see Kolář, 2012). As a number of scholars have demonstrated, culturally specific psychological concepts and forms of expertise were being developed in these regimes, both officially and in the margins, especially after the death of Stalin in 1953 (Leuenberger, 2001; Eghigian, 2007; Marks, 2015; Laine-Frigren, 2016). In a field that is more varied than is assumed, psychologists fused Western models with homegrown ideas and Marxist discourses, often in collaboration with the state policies of human engineering (Antić, 2019; Laine-Frigren, 2019). As the case of Hungary shows, rather than focus on psychologists as hapless victims of a hostile ideological regime, it is important to consider the various contexts in which they used the discourses.

Reinventing the active human being

As part of the more general drive towards anti-Stalinism in the Soviet Bloc, the new general secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (1956), János Kádár (1912–1989), aimed at building the legitimacy of the regime by not only improving the living standards for the whole (working) population, but also by actively demonstrating that the system wanted to separate itself from the Stalinist political culture of the past. From the ashes of the 1956 revolution, a paternalist regime arose which increasingly supported sociological and psychological research and expertise in trying to build its legitimacy and future viability. By focusing on essentially human factors, psychologists were also trying to incorporate the

discourse surrounding the individual into this system (Haney, 2002, pp. 99–101; Horváth, 2012, pp. 21–29).

However, the post-revolutionary situation also required careful balancing between political and pragmatic expectations. This was a tense moment for psychology in Hungary: the basic academic institutions for psychology were set up either during or immediately after the violent political purges[3] related to the revolution of 1956 (Laine-Frigren, 2016, pp. 63–169). Against this backdrop, Marxist psychology was rhetorically used to revive and rehabilitate psychology after the years of Stalinist science policy—it was a "tool for legitimization, acceptance, and inclusion" (Laine-Frigren, 2016, p. 163). Although 'Marxist psychology' was a rhetorical construct in many ways, sometimes the results were genuinely interesting. For example, the way social psychologist Ferenc Pataki succeeded in translating the Soviet educator Anton Makarenko's collectivist educational ideas to the language of modern group psychology (1966) was regarded by many contemporaries as an outstanding achievement (Laine-Frigren 2016, pp. 151–152; Erős 2016, p. 65).

In post-Stalinist Hungarian psychology, there was a trend towards seeing human beings as active creators of their worlds. As much of Hungarian biology and psychology had become strictly Pavlovian during the 1950s, many of the younger psychologists were quick to embrace another approach. According to Csaba Pléh (2008), a kind of loosely defined opposition emerged between the two approaches to the human mind. Whereas the official standpoint maintained, in line with Lenin's theory of knowledge,[4] that perception was just the passive intake of information, interpreting perception as an active process was seen as a major leap forward (Pléh, 2008). Pléh argues that the two approaches came to symbolize not only two different visions of human nature but also how society should be organized (top-down vs. bottom-up); those who endorsed the active view of humanity tended to be suspicious of the establishment. However, this shift towards an active view was also manifested in the more ideological Marxist psychological discourse—and not only in Hungary. In fact, it can be argued that the active human properties—human personality and behavior in all its psychological complexity—had to be highlighted before psychology could even be considered relevant for the Communist planners of science policy.

The research by the Hungarian educational psychologist Ferenc Lénárd (1911–1988) presents an enlightening case to illustrate how Marxist psychology worked as a site for negotiating different but reconcilable interests between psychology experts and politicians. Lénárd was looking to find ways to improve teaching methods in mathematics and history, and was therefore authorized in the early 1960s to establish a psychological laboratory in one

school located on János Arany Street in Budapest, which soon became integrated with the Institute for Psychology as an experimental school.

Lénárd described his theories of educational psychology publicly on several occasions, always emphasizing in a true Marxist manner how children's psychological processes were to be studied in practical "real-life situations." In a public lecture in 1960, he set out to define educational psychology in proper Marxist terms (Lénárd, 1960). In his view, it would be wrong to simply "deduce the goals and demands of teaching and education from psychological laws," as if there was some universal nature for all schoolchildren. This would amount to "psychologism," he argued, because it would fail to take into account the social needs and aims of education, which were historically determined.

Lénárd then went on to describe just how educational psychology could help in creating a "collective spirit" in children and teenagers, and how socialist collectives significantly differed from simple groupings, such as "gangs" (who were clearly using their autonomy in an improper manner). Indeed, educational psychologists were trying to determine what exactly created the optimal conditions for real "collectives," and by doing so, it would also become possible to "diagnose" the state of them with "scientific exactness." In agreement with Sergei Leonidovich Rubinstein (1889–1960), the distinguished Soviet psychologist, he stated that "external causes" were always mediated by the inner factors of the human mind. [5] It was precisely because environmental stimuli tended to produce an unexpected variety of behavioral effects in the individual that the old mechanistic (i.e., Pavlovian) behaviorism was flawed. There was always the possibility for both "good and deviant deeds," so the role of the psychologist was to give lessons in rationally handling those real-life situations in which a socialist personality could be carefully honed. This was, of course, fundamental in education, too.

Lénárd's message was that the planners of education needed more knowledge on psychological phenomena in their "concrete forms." Recognizing that "action" and human properties mutually affected each other in a dialectic manner, he wanted to develop "socialist personalities" from individuals: "we have countless lists of virtues […] but we know only a little about how these could be made conscious" (Lénárd, 1960, pp. 21–23). These ideas were also incorporated into official research plans. Lénárd quoted Rubinstein, stating that research should focus on the complexity of events in the social field: on human desires, motives, and aims as these were realized within the concrete social and material context. Goal-oriented action in the field of "real life and existence" determined human personality, but at the same time, individuals themselves were actively "internalizing" the surrounding values. When one

considers the everyday lives of children and teenagers in a society increasingly open towards the West, stressing agency and complexity was a rather realist stance. The modern-sounding ideological task, however, was to create "harmonious and multifaceted" personalities, active and self-conscious human beings who were conscious of their own actions because they created them. But was there an inherent tension between the ideological aim of molding collective men, on the one hand, and encouraging individual autonomy, on the other?

As late as 1975, a young psychologist criticized the prevailing "anarchy" around the term "Marxist psychology" by noting that the problem was not only psychologists using the epithet "Marxist" in front of "psychology" in a struggle for state-controlled funding, but that the loose usage of "Marxist" throughout psychological sciences revealed its lack of real substance. The competing fields each claimed to be more Marxist than the others (Laine-Frigren, 2016, pp. 166–167). This criticism reflected the disappointment in the scientific political establishment in Hungary, which had failed to support social psychological theorizing based on Marx. It is a complex question, beyond the scope of this article, of why the leaders of the psychological field distanced themselves from the critical project of Marxist psychology. One of the reasons might be that they wanted to safeguard the scientific autonomy of psychology against political intervention. Indeed, not so long ago the Stalinists wanted to liquidate psychology altogether – therefore, many leading Hungarian psychologists now saw it wise to use the opportunities of the pragmatic Kádár regime for professionalizing and depoliticizing the field, and integrating it more fully to the global psychological community.

In Hungary at the turn of the 1970s, László Garai (1935–) and his colleagues were, in fact, exploring Marxist personality psychology from the Vygotskian perspective, with an aim of overcoming the false dichotomy between the "self-contained" individual and the material world. As Garai later recalled in a personal narrative (Bodor, Pléh, & Lányi, 1997, pp. 62–69), his starting point was a deep curiosity about what distinguished man (as a natural being) from other animals. Outstripping his early love affair with Pavlov, he travelled via Freud to Aleksei Leontjev, and formulated his theory of a "specifically human basic need": a need for freedom. This was an argument about human beings driven by a "paradoxical" need towards "free activity without any needs." Garai's project represented an innovative and critical variant, but the mainstream social psychologists did not accept it, and he was regarded as a "provocateur" (Erős, 2016, pp. 69–70). Ironically, Garai's theories strongly supported psychology as a fundamental Marxist science of human and social engineering (Garai, 1964).

Ferenc Mérei's Marxist social psychology

The final part of this article introduces a Hungarian Marxist social psychologist whose academic and political career perhaps illustrates also the more general expert identities and orientations in the political roller coaster that was eastern central Europe in the mid-20th century. Ferenc Mérei (1909–1986) was a pioneer of socially oriented (*társas*) child psychology, but his professional activities also extended to social psychology, clinical psychology, psychodrama, and the psychology of art. In his psychological theory, Mérei combined a Marxist interpretation[6] of French functionalism with Kurt Lewin's philosophy of science in its conviction that a group was not just an aggregate of individuals but a living reality (Moscovici & Marková, 2006, p. 45). As Ferenc Erős notes, Mérei's work represents a particular eastern central European variant of "role-hybridization," a historically common feature in social psychology: in his life and work, psychological expertise intertwined with his role as a radical social reformer motivated by communist convictions (Erős, 2006).

In his youth in the 1930s, Mérei studied under Henri Wallon[7] in Paris, where he also got involved with the central European and Hungarian left wing, including Marxist psychologists Rene Zazzo and Georges Politzer. On his return to an increasingly right-wing Hungary, he received an unpaid position from the State Institute of Child Psychology, but was also an active member in an illegal circle of activists and avant-garde artists (K. Horváth, 2006, 39–40). During and after WWII, he not only taught social psychology and child psychology in various institutions, but also wrote some of his most significant works. The article "Group leadership and institutionalization" (Mérei, 1949), for example, was published in *Human Relations* (1949), making him both internationally famous and highly influential for many later Hungarian social psychologists.

The article was based on a previous Hungarian study, entitled *Együttes élmény* (Group experience), and like in the case of Vygotsky, the author's generalizations were based on working together with children. Mérei organized children into groups and gave them tasks: gradually the groups created their own habits and routines. Then a strong individual was chosen as a leader of the group. It turned out that the leader could only be successful if he or she adopted the community's unwritten rules. As the group banded together to form a community, this experience was based on and manifested itself in shared gestures and signs, which combined to form a kind of mother tongue of the community. This was the added value of community: the powerful idea that group experience (*élmény*[8]) was more than just the sum of its parts (i.e., people's individual experiences).

Along with several of his contemporaries in Europe at the time, Mérei's analysis of group psychology also tied in with studying the social psychology mechanisms of Central European Fascism. However, the manifest aim was to support the contemporary needs of socialist educational reform. In the utopian spirit of the time, he aimed at showing how authentic communities should have an experiential added value. In contrast to the experience of fascism, these true communities would cherish and promote the uniqueness of individuals instead of controlling and suffocating human personalities.

But while Mérei was contributing to the nationalisation process of Hungarian schools, he also had an academically compromising role in the politically influential Science Council, which was led by Ernő Gerő, one of the country's leading communists. Through this position in the Council, Mérei was charged with organizing the fields of psychology and education, and his role became somewhat like that of an ideological commissar (Huszár, 1995, pp. 94–101). Political winds turned against him, however, and he was forced out of his position and into exile (albeit within Hungary), first as a Trotskyite in the early 1950s (the infamous proceedings against pedology), and finally in 1958 to prison due to his supposed counter-revolutionary activities after the Soviet invasion. After being released in the general amnesty in 1963, Mérei was prevented from working in official academia, but managed to continue his work in other institutions.

Child psychology remained important to Mérei throughout his career. Later in the early 1970s, in his influential book *The Network of Hidden Communities*, Mérei presented his ideas on "genetic social psychology." Jumping into the dispute between Wallon and Jean Piaget on the socialization process of children, he wrote that the starting point of human development was not based on "egocentrism," but rather it "unfolded" and crystallized from the "fog-cloud" of relationships, linkages, and orientations. Children would gradually evolve to be mature individuals as long as they were surrounded by a network of healthy social relationships. Mérei saw that human beings evolved to be an individual through the mediation of others. He emphasizes Wallon's theory about the seminal role of the social environment which, from birth, makes man a social being. This included a tacit reference to Marx, who in the first part of *Das Kapital* writes about a man who "comes into the world neither with a looking glass in his hand, nor as a Fichtean philosopher, to whom 'I am I' is sufficient, man first sees and recognizes himself in other men" (Mérei, 1988/1971, pp. 12–13).

Mérei's followers (and the charismatic teacher himself) later applied the concept of *együttes élmény* ('group experience') in different contexts during the Communist period. One intriguing example would be the group therapy practices organized in some workplaces during

the early 1970s (Laine-Frigren, 2019). Among other things, these socialist "self-knowledge groups" were informed by the idea of "emotional surplus," understood as a powerful experience (*élmény*) in the midst of living, concrete relationships between individuals in a group. However, Mérei also engaged with the social engineering discourse of his time, advising factory managers to take into account the social dynamics at the informal level on the factory floor (Mérei, 1972). Yet the relationship between his recommendations and the bureaucratic style of government was tense. He wrote that the manager should see human beings as "active creators of social structures," not passive receivers of commands, and argued that to monopolize decision-making was dangerous for the community: it would be threatened by conflicts, work efficiency would deteriorate, and the workers' human personalities would become diluted and insecure. Instead, Mérei suggested that leaders and managers should endorse an "active" view of their respective community members. What Mérei proposed was an alternative form of self-government, which would overcome the dead ends of the prevailing top-down approach and emancipate the individual in the process.

Although Mérei seldom explicitly referred to Marx, there is a one interesting small Marxist text in his oeuvre, written in 1973 but not published until 1989. In "Togetherness and self-knowledge: The determinants of behaviour on the verge of the third millennium". Mérei dwells especially on the "warmth" of small groups, and while being futuristic and utopian in style, it is also about the current state of human relations in Hungary as they were in the 1970s (Mérei, 1989).

He starts the article by treating the future as an amplified projection of present social conditions and value-systems onto the future. According to Mérei, three different models of thinking had usually followed from this commonly accepted starting point for considering the future: the overly optimistic "utopian idyll," which could be found in Fourier; prophesies of the apocalypse (e.g., pollution, nuclear war and meltdown); and the conservative claim that nothing would essentially change. Mérei distanced himself from each of these, however, offering instead his "Marxist model of anticipation" (Mérei, 1989, 182–123).

For Mérei, Marxism highlighted the contradictions and conflicts of the present day and encouraged them to be brought out into the open, so as to create the right intellectual and political conditions for progressive action. Mérei detected an anticipation of the future and a "cathartic" tension in Marx's criticism of, for instance, child labor – between the squalor of children in this real-life situation, the present-day solution, and the ideal future. Thus, he implied that politics informed by this kind of anticipation of the future should not be based on any "idyllic" version of the present, but on improving what he depicted as unbearable, conflict-

ridden, and unpleasant. Indeed, he saw some particularly worrying developments that were rooted in present conditions, which seriously threatened peoples' personal integrity. For example, a centralized system of "regulation" and "a dense system of control" were a burden on people. Huge organizations were a weight on peoples' shoulders, and universal "registers" were being gathered, which in the future would penetrate into the "most intimate territories" of life (Mérei, 1989, 185).

Mérei made it clear that there was an ongoing "exodus" from the pressure of such an over-regulated world. Here he referred to the recent New Age phenomena of hippies and a renewed interest in spiritual or religious beliefs and practices. But he also stressed that however colorful and varied this exodus was, their route was a "deviation." Because, if this exodus proved to be a very real and lasting one, then all "productive work" would disappear, production of consumer items would stop, and people would "slide from the level of civilization into the inner world of experience." At the same time, he felt that the existence of these sects and subcultures could be explained by people's need for the "warmth of small groups," the safety of being together, and the social comfort which reached even into the intimate spheres of life. Based on this present condition, amplified towards the future, Mérei predicted that there would be spheres that would be beyond the control of the "state apparatus," characterized instead by the comparative freedom of self-control and "self-activity."

At this point in the article, Mérei shared a utopian anecdote about some young workers he encountered in a big unnamed factory in the early 1970s. The factory's cultural group had been performing theatre, reading poems and producing pantomimes and they were all from a working-class background that loved music, dancing, and poetry. Mérei was enchanted by the "deep humanism" they showed, and the "excited manner in which they [spoke] about theater." According to Mérei, they called themselves the *egyorrúak* (one-nosed). For Mérei, this group presented a particular ideal: there was the "joy of togetherness" combined with the feeling of an "independent-minded" aspiration for creativity, humor, and spontaneous action. These young workers consciously wanted to "protect themselves" and their personal integrity from the damaging, psychological amputation caused by the nature of their work and its countless sub-tasks on the assembly line.

These workers were the seeds of the positive future that Mérei foresaw: "autonomous small-groups" that would be capable of independent "intellectual production," and would necessarily supplement the current ways of life. As the future avant-garde, they would form autonomous "thinking workshops," and help prevent the "dogmatism of institutions" by posing new questions and "shaping the scientific public opinion."

The encouraging message was that, besides protecting their personal autonomy, these small groups would turn out to be one of the primary "forces of socialism." By their common work they would produce real social values, with the implication that socialism in its present form had failed to do this. Yet the birth of these groups would not be an "idyllic" process; on the contrary, it would breed trouble, give birth to resistance and meet with opposition—of that Mérei was sure. For any kind of truly "collective existence" to exist, the values needed to be allowed to form freely. But because these groups tended to cherish the freedom of intellectual expression, they would inevitably get into conflict with controlling central authorities. The real challenge facing socialism was how to deal with these small groups: "For the central regulating institutions in this country the real problem is not the existence of gangs hijacking airplanes […] but they have a problem with self-motivated small-groups, whose artistic attempts, aesthetic needs, or philosophy deviates from the prescribed" (Mérei, 1989, p. 188).

Conclusion

Let us jump ahead a quarter of century. We stand on the verge of the third millennium. Housing problems are solved, material conditions are incomparably better than today, everybody is travelling, both at home and abroad, and even to distant parts of the world. Being more mobile and open in their views, people now have extraordinary technical possibilities for their self-expression. Those with at least one nose, and the other hundreds and thousands like them can rent small independent studios, arrange special materials for sculptors, and build their own fireplaces; they can direct and screen films which they have worked on by themselves, publish their works with their own duplicator in five, ten, or twelve copies. If their interest is scientific, they can buy computers (Mérei, 1989, pp. 187–188).

In light of this forecast by Mérei, why should Marxist psychology be of interest to us today, thirty years after the fall of Communism? Grahame Hayes mentions at least the following reasons: the depoliticisation of psychology, the need to criticise the "deformatory and alienating" impact of capitalism in everyday life, interest in developing a materialist theory of subjectivity; and finally, the need to enhance peoples' self-reflective ablities and create a better world (Hayes, 2015). Ian Parker states it directly: "the self-contained psychological subject is a miserable reduced element of what we are as an ensemble of social relations" (Parker, 2009).

As stated in the introduction of this article, there now seems to be an increasing number of scholars whose explicit aim is to rejuvenate psychological thinking by going back to the sources and finding out how Karl Marx could help us to understand "what is happening to the

self today." But as William Woodward highlights, for psychologists to be really progressive, they should want to learn more about the impact of global capitalism not only on our*selves*, but also on the environment and the conditions of global freedom and social justice (Woodward, 2013). More broadly, Marx and Engels might also help society ask critical questions about the way capitalism has changed humanity's relationship with the environment and nature—the birds, the fish, the insects, mammals, and other species whose natural habitats humans are now destroying at an alarming rate. As Friedrich Engels warned in the "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man," we should have no reason to "flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature":

> For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. (Engels, 1876)

This article has discussed a number of cases around the globe to suggest how Marxist ideas influenced or inspired psychological thinking and practice in the 20th century. The emphasis has been on the significance of digging deeper into the social and cultural contexts of psychological discourses, and on the role of travelling ideas and models in concrete action in different local contexts. This history of Marxist influences in psychology has also been an effort to highlight some more marginal voices, from one Communist country in particular. General discussion surrounding the history of psychological sciences—or of how it should be written—has recently paid considerable attention to internationalizing the field. Too often the discussion continues to overrepresent the history of the winners and presuppose that history is a linear and teleological development towards the present, a story told from the perspective of centres and metropoles, rather than one of many alternative histories and potentials. By further studying the interplay between local, regional, and global levels, including those from outside the traditional centres of knowledge, more layers can be added to the current understanding of the history of Marxist psychology, and more forgotten critical and emancipatory voices can be found.

References

Antić, A. (2019). Raising a true socialist individual: Yugoslav psychoanalysis and the creation of democratic Marxist citizens. *Social History, 44*(1), 86–115.

Au, W. (2005). Epistemology of the Oppressed: The Dialectics of Paulo Freire's Theory of Knowledge. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, 5*(2). http://www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/05-2-06.pdf.

Basaglia, Franco (1982). *Scritti. II. 1968-1980,* edited by Franca Ongaro Basaglia. Turin: Einaudi, II, 119.

Beer, D. (2008). *Renovating Russia. The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity*, *1880–1930*. Cornell University Press

Blunden, A. (2011). Vygotsky's idea of Gestalt and its origins. *Theory & Psychology, 21*(4), 457–471.

Burton, M., & Kagan, K. (2005). Liberation Social Psychology: Learning from Latin America. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 15*, 63–78.

Calvo Tuleski, S. (2015). *Vygotsky and Leontjev: the construction of a Marxist psychology*. New York: Nova Publishers.

Eagleton, T. (2011). *Why Marx was Right?* Yale University Press.

Edwards, A. (2007). An Interesting Resemblance: Vygotsky, Mead, and American Pragmatism. In H. Daniels, M. Cole, & J.V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky*, edited by Daniels, H., Michael Cole, James V. Wertsch (pp. 77–100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eghigian, G. (2004). The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945–1975. *German History, 22*(4), 181–205.

Elhammoumi, M., & Alnajjar, A. (2017). Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Theory and Marx's Ethnological Notebooks. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 7*(16) https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/RHSS/article/view/38469/39544.

Elhammoumi, Mohamed (2012). Marxist psychology: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas), 29*(1), 3–11. https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0103-166X2012000100001

Engels, F. (2015/1845). Työväenluokan asema Englannissa: kuvattuna omien havaintojen ja alkuperäislähteiden avulla. Helsinki: Into.

Engels, F. (1876), The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1876/part-played-labour/.

Engeström, Y. (2001) Expansive Learning at Work: Toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization. *Journal of Education and Work, 14*(1), 133–156.

Erős F. (2012). Some Social and Political Issues related to Ferenczi and the Hungarian school. In J. Szekacs-Weisz & T. Keve (Ed.) *Ferenczi and his World. Rekindling the Spirit of the Budapest School*, 39–53. London: Routledge.

Erős, F. (2006), "Élmény és hálózat. Mérei Ferenc a Magyar szociálpszichológia történetében." In: *Mérei Élet-mű. Tanulmányok*. Budapest: Ú-M-K.

Erős, F. (2016). Három pályakép a magyar szociálpszichológia történetéből. *Múltunk, 61*(4), 57–71.

Eskola, A. (1992). The legacy of Marxist influences in Finnish psychology. *Nordisk Psykologi, 44*(2), 97–103.

Etkind, A. (1997). *Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Fanon, F. (1963), *The Wretched of the Earth.* http://abahlali.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Frantz-Fanon-The-Wretched-of-the-Earth-1965.pdf.

Foot, J. (2014). Franco Basaglia and the radical psychiatry movement in Italy, 1961–78 *Critical and Radical Social Work, 2*(2), 235–249.

Foot, J. (2015). Photography and radical psychiatry in Italy in the 1960s. The case of the photobook *Morire di Classe* (1969). *History of Psychiatry, 26*(1), 19–35.

Fox, D., Prilleltensky, I., & Austin, S., ed., (2009). *Critical psychology: an introduction.* London: Sage publications.

Fromm, E. (1962/1955). *Sane Society.* New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Frosh, S. (2019). Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Society: What Remains Radical in Psychoanalysis? In R. Gipps & M. Lacewing (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*. Oxford University Press.

Galmarini-Kabala, M. C. (2018). Psychiatry, Violence, and the Soviet Project of Transformation: A Micro-History of the Perm 'Psycho-Neurological School-Sanatorium'. *Slavic Review,77*(2), 307–332.

Garai, L. (1964) A tudományok fejlődési tendenciája és a pszichológia perspektívája. *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, *8*(4), 701–717.

Gonzáles Rey, F.L. (2014). Advancing Further the History of Soviet Psychology: Moving Forward From Dominant Representations in Western and Soviet Psychology. *History of Psychology*, *17*(1), 60–78.

Haney, L. (2002). *Inventing the Needy. Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary*. New Jersey: University of California Press.

Hayes, Grahame. (2015), "The Spectre of Communism is Not Haunting Psychology." *Annual Review of Critical Psychology,* *12*, 20–26 https://thediscourseunit.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/arcp12.pdf.

Hobsbawm, E. (2011). *How To Change the World. Reflections on Marx and Marxism.* Yale University Press.

Hodgetts, D. & Griffin, C (2015). The place of class: Considerations for psychology. *Theory & Psychology, 25*(2), 147–166.

Horváth, S. (2012). *Két emelet boldogság.* Budapest: Napvilág kiadó.

Huszár, T. (1995), *Hatalom rejtett dimenziói. Magyar Tudományos Tanács 1948-1949.* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Hyman, Ludmila 2012. Soviet Psychologists and the Path to International Psychology. In J. Renn (ed.), *The Globalization of Knowledge in History*. Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge. http://www.edition-open-access.de/studies/1/30/index.html#1.

Jarovsky, David (1989). *Russian Psychology.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Jiménez-Domínguez, B. (2009). Ignacio Martín-Baró's Social Psychology of Liberation: Situated Knowledge and Critical Commitment Against Objectivism. In M. Montero, & Christopher C. Sonn (Ed.). *Psychology of Liberation. Theory and Applications.* New York: Springer.

K. Horváth, Zs. (2011). *Kívül - Peremhelyzet és a habitus formálódása Mérei Ferenc élettörténetében.* Budapest: ELTE. http://doktori.btk.elte.hu/hist/horvathzsoltkelemen/diss.pdf.

Keller, R. C. (2007). *Colonial Madness. Psychiatry in French North Africa.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Kirkendall, A. J. (2004). Entering History: Paulo Freire and the Politics of the Brazilian Northeast. 1958-1964 *Luso-Brazilian Review*, *46*(1), 168–189.

Kolář, P. (2012). The party as a new utopia: reshaping communist identity after Stalinism. *Social History, 37*(4), 403–424.

Laine-Frigren, T. (2016). *Searching for the Human Factor: Psychology, Power and Ideology in Hungary during the Early Kádár Period.* Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä Press. https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/handle/123456789/48507

Laine-Frigren, T. (2019). Psychology and Management of the Workforce in Post-Stalinist Hungary. *Slavic Review, 78*(2).

Lamdan, E., & Yasnitsky, A. (2016). Did Uzbeks have illusions? The Luria-Koffka controversy of 1932. In A. Yasnitsky & R. Van Der Veer (Ed.). *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky studies*, 175–200. London: Routledge.

Lénárd, F. (1960). Neveléslélektan problémai. *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, *17*(1), 20–29.

Leuenberger, C. (2001) Socialist psychotherapy and its dissidents. *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences, 37*(3), 261–273.

Lima, Elvira Souza (1995). Culture Revisited: Vygotsky's Ideas in Brazil. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly 26*(4), 443–457.

Marks, S. (2015). Ecology, Humanism and Mental Health in Communist Czechoslovakia. In M. Savelli & S. Marks (Ed.) *Psychiatry in Communist Europe*, 134–152.

Marmot, M. (2015). *Health Gap. The Challenge of an Unequal World.* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Marx, K. (1844/1932). Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. Estranged Labour. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm.

Marx, K. (1844). A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction. *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* 7 & 10 February 1844. Paris. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm.

Marx, K. (1857–1861). *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy.* https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/index.htm.

Mather R. (2003). Hegemony and marxist psychology. *Theory and Psychology, 13*(4), 469–487

Mayo, P. (2004). *Liberating Praxis. Paulo Freire's legacy for radical education and politics*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers.Mecacci, Luciano. (2015). Vygotsky's reception in the West: The Italian case between Marxism and communism. *History of the Human Sciences 28(2)*, 173–184.

Menozzi, F. (2015). Fanon's Letter. Between Psychiatry and Anticolonial Commitment. *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies, 17*(3), 360–377.

Mérei, F. (1949). Group Leadership and Institutionalization. *Human Relations 2*, 23–29

Métraux, A. (2015). Lev Vygotsky as seen by someone who acted as go-between eastern and western Europe. *History of the Human Sciences, 28*(2), 154–172.

Győri, G. (1977). Küzdelem a lélektannal és a világgal. Beszélgetés Mérei Ferenccel. *Kortárs 21*(4), 629–644.

Mérei, F. (1988/1971). *Közösségek rejtett hálózata*. Budapest: Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont.

Mérei, F. (1989). Együttes és önismeret: viselkedésmeghatározók a harmadik évezred küszőben. *Társ és Csoport*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Mérei, Ferenc (1988/1971), *Közösségek rejtett hálózata*. Budapest: Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont.

Moisio, O-P. (2011). Marxilaisesta emansipaatioteoriasta, työväenluokasta ja kriittisestä teoriasta. In M. Pekkola (Ed.) *Kriittinen teoria ja Marx,* 7–34. Jyväskylä: Sophi. https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/27177.

Montero, M. (2004). Community Leaders. *Journal of Prevention & Intervetion in the Community, 27*(1), 29–52.

Montero, M., & Varas Díaz, N. (2001). Latin American Community Psychology: Development, Implications, and Challenges Within a Social Change Agenda. In S. Reich, M. Riemer, I. Prilleltensky, & M. Montero (Ed.) *International Community Psychology. History and Theories.* New York: Springer

Moscovici, S., & Marková, I. (2006). *The making of modern social psychology: The hidden story of how an international social science was created*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Önarckép Háttérrel (1998). *Magyar pszichológusok önéletrajzi írásai.* Edited by Bodor, P., Pléh, Cs., & Lányi, G. Budapest: Pólya Kiadó.

Parker, I. (2009). Critical Psychology and Revolutionary Marxism. *Theory & Psychology, 19*(1), 71–92

Pávon-Cuellar's, D. (2017). Marxism and Psychoanalysis: In or Against Psychology? London: Routledge.

Payne, T.R. (1969). *S.L. Rubinštejn and the Philosophical Foundations of Soviet Psychology.* Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Pekkola, M. (2010). *Prophet of Radicalism. Erich Fromm and the Figurative Constitution of the Crisis of Modernity.* Jyvaskyla: University of Jyvaskyla.

Pickren, W. & Rutherford, A. (2010). *A History of modern psychology in context.* London: Wiley.

Pickren, W. (2018). Psychology in the social imaginary of neoliberalism. Critique and beyond. *Theory & Psychology, 28*(5), 575–580.

Pléh, Cs. (2008). *History and theories of the mind.* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Porter, Theodore & Dorothy Ross (Ed.) (2003). *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 7, The Modern Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press.

Ratner, C. & Silva, D. (2018). *Vygotsky and Marx. Towards a Marxist Psychology.* London: Routledge.

Roberts, P. (2017). Paulo Freire. *Oxford Research Encyclopedias. Education.* http://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-10.

Roche, Julian (2018). *Marxism, Psychology and Social Science Analysis. Taking Sève Seriously.* New York: Routledge.

Rotelli, F. (2015). *L'Istitutione Inventata. Almanacco Trieste 1971–2010.* Archivio Critico Della Salute Mentale. Alphabeta Verlag.

Savelli, M. &. Marks, S. (Ed.) (2015). *Psychiatry in Communist Europe.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Savelli, M. (2018). Beyond Ideological Platitudes. Socialism and psychiatry in Eastern Europe. *Palgrave Communications, 4*(45).

Scheper-Hughes, N. & Lovell, A. (1987). *Psychiatry inside out. Selected writings of Franco Basaglia.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Silvonen, J. (2010). Vygotsky's plural discourse on the human mind. In P. Aunio (Ed.) *Piaget is dead, Vygotsky is still alive, or?*, 37–60. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä University Press.

Smith, R. (1997). *Fontana History of Human Sciences.* London: Fontana Press.

Sulek, A. (2007). The Marienthal 1931/1932 Study and Contemporary Studies on Unemployment in Poland. *Polish Sociological Review, 157*, 3–25.

Suoranta, J.(2002) From Gothenburg to Everywhere: Bonfires of Revolutionary Learning. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies,* 24(1–2), 29–47.

Vergès, F. (1996). To Cure and to Free: The Fanonian Project of 'Decolonized Psychiatry'. In L.R. Gordon, T. D. Sharpley-Whiting, & R.T. White (Ed.). *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, 85–99. Oxford: Blackwell.

Vygotsky, L. (1967). Play and its role in the Mental Development of the Child. *Soviet Psychology*, 5(3), 6–18.

Vygotsky, L. (1927). *The Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology: A Methodological Investigation.* https://www.marxists.org/archive/vygotsky/works/crisis/index.htm.

Whitehead, M., Jones, R., Lilley, R., Pykett, J., & Howell, R. (2018). *Neuroliberalism. Behavioral Government in the Twenty-First Century.* London: Routledge.

Woodward, W. (2013). From Unter den Linden, with love: a transnational history of Russian psychology in East Germany. *Dubna Psychological Journal 3,* 167–184.

Yasnitsky, A. (2018). *Questioning Vygotsky's Legacy: Scientific Psychology or Heroic Cult.* London: Routledge.

Yasnitsky, A., & Van der Veer, R. (Ed.) (2016). *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky studies.* London: Routledge.

Yurchak, A. (2005), *Everything was forever, until it was no more: The Last Soviet Generation.* Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Zavershneva, E. (2016). Vygotsky in 1932. In A. Yasnitsky, & R. Van der Veer (Ed.). *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky studies*. London: Routledge.

---

[1] David Pavón-Cuéllar's *Marxism and Psychoanalysis: In or Against Psychology* (2017) is a rich resource for studying further the interconnections and common threads between Marx and Freud (e.g., their materialism). The book also considers the critical possibilities of Marxist and Freudian methodologies in uncovering how psychologies have been functional to the capitalist system.

[2] Alexander Etkind has argued that Vygotsky was in a way much closer to Freud (through Sabina Spielrein) than he was to Marx, particularly when he stressed the emotional aspect in the child's communication with the parents. See Etkind,1997, p. 174.

[3] A period of massive reprisals, characterised by mass arrests and trials, lasted from April 1957 until the spring of 1959. The last death sentence was carried out in the summer of 1961. Altogether 341 people were hanged, 35,000 people faced legal action for insurrectionist activities, and 22,000 were given prison sentences. In addition, approximately 13,000 people went to newly established internment camps, while tens of thousands of others were banned from their homes, dismissed from their jobs, or placed under police supervision (see Békés, Byrne, & Rainer, 2002, pp. 374–376).

[4] The so-called mirror theory (expressed in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*) claimed that human consciousness was a reflection of the "objective world."

[5] Sergei Rubinstein's adventures in the world of psychological theory and Soviet politics deserve an updated historical study of their own. A lawyer's son and practicing Jew, Rubinstein studied at the University of Freiburg and defended his dissertation on philosophy in Marburg just before the IWW. In the mid-1930s, this Neo-Kantian suddenly emerged to be the leading theorist of Marxist psychology in the Soviet Union. In 1949, he was relieved of his academic duties because he was considered, along with many other Jews in the Soviet Union at the turn of the 1950s, to be a "rootless cosmopolitan." See Joravsky, 1989, 369–378; González Rey, 2014; Yasnitsky, & Van der Veer, 2016, p. 13; Payne, 1969, pp. 68–69

[6] As Mérei himself stated in an interview in 1977, he owed much to Marx's famous declaration in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* on history and the human condition. See Győri, 1977, p. 634.

[7] Henri Wallon (1879–1962) was a French child psychologist, educational activist, and anti-fascist, who was the second author of the famous yet unsuccesful Wallon–Langevin report, drafted in 1944–1947 to frame future leftist educational reform. See Ahearne, 2010, pp. 128–132.

[8] The Hungarian concept of *élmény* is closer to German *erlebnis* than to English *experience*, and therein lies its critical potential in the Communist context.